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# EARLY GRADE READING ACTIVITY

## *Final Project Report*

*Period: June 17, 2013–October 17, 2016*

DECEMBER 30, 2016

**Contract No.: AID-612-C-13-00002**

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# **Early Grade Reading Activity**

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**Period of Performance:  
June 17, 2013—October 17, 2016**

**Prepared by:** RTI International

**Submitted under:**

Contract No. AID-612-C-13-00002

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**Abbreviations**

ACCO	Assistant Center Coordinator
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
ASPIRE	Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity
BPG	Brattle Publishing Group
bTG	blueTree Group
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CERT	Center for Educational Research and Training
CIP	International Potato Center
csspm	correct syllable sounds per minute
clpm	correct letters per minute
CM	community mobilization
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
CPD	continuous professional development
CRECCOM	Creative Center for Community Mobilization
cwpm	correct words per minute
DEM	District Education Manager
DERG	Disability Education Resource Guide
DGVP	Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations
DIAS	Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Activity
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
EMIS	education management information systems
ESIP	Education Sector Improvement Plan
ETW	Expert Trainers Workshop
FY	fiscal year
GIZ	German Development Cooperation Organization
GMTLM	Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials
GUC	grant under contract
HT	head teacher
IP	implementing partner
KT	Key Teacher
LAT	learner assessment test
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MERIT	Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity
MGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education

MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MUB	Malawian Union of the Blind
MWK	Malawian Kwacha
NLS	National Library Service
NRS	National Reading Strategy
NRP	National Reading Program
OAI	O'Brien and Associates International
ORF	oral reading fluency
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PERFORM	Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi
PPP	public-private partnership
PTA	parent-teacher association
Q	Quarter
SEGREM	Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi
SEMA	Senior Education Methods Advisor
SI	Social Impact
SLP	scripted lesson plan
SMC	school management committee
SNE	special needs education
SSDI	Support for Service Delivery Integration
Std	Standard
STEPs	Supporting the Efforts of Partners Program
STEP	Standard 2 English with Phonics
STTA	short-term technical assistant
SY	school year
TFD	Theater for Development
TG	teacher's guide
TLM	teaching and learning materials
TNM	Telekom Networks Malawi
TOF	training of facilitators
TOI	teacher observation instrument
TTC	teacher training college
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCRF	volunteer community reading facilitator
VDC	Village Development Committee

VRC           village reading center  
ZTW           zonal training workshop



## Introduction

Started in June 2013 and closed in October 2017, the Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) was a three-year, four-month US Agency for International Development (USAID) activity designed to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in improving the reading performance of Malawian learners in Standards 1–3. EGRA's goals were: (i) improving the quality and availability of pedagogical materials for early grade reading; (ii) providing training to teacher trainers, teachers, and school administrators in the effective use of those materials; (iii) equipping parents and communities with the knowledge and tools to support school-based reading programming; (vi) and supporting efforts to build a policy environment conducive to improving early grade reading. EGRA is composed of the following components, each with a set of tasks (**Table 1**):

- **Component 1:** Providing Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students
- **Component 2:** Providing Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading
- **Component 3:** Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Reading
- **Component 4:** Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading
- Monitoring and Evaluation and Crosscutting Issues

**Table 1. Early Grade Reading Activity Components and Tasks**

<b>Component 1: Providing Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students</b>
<b>Task 1-1:</b> Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading
<b>Task 1-2:</b> Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training
<b>Task 1-3:</b> Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials
<b>Task 1-4:</b> Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring
<b>Task 1-5:</b> Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools
<b>Component 2: Providing Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading</b>
<b>Task 2-1:</b> Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books
<b>Task 2-2:</b> Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use
<b>Task 2-3:</b> Develop and Distribute Letter Cards
<b>Task 2-4:</b> Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates <sup>1</sup>
<b>Task 2-5:</b> Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers
<b>Component 3: Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Reading</b>
<b>Task 3-1:</b> Reading Fairs
<b>Task 3-2:</b> Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading
<b>Task 3-3:</b> Provide Classroom Level and School Support for Reading

(continued)

<sup>1</sup> *Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates* was removed from EGRA's scope of work via a contract modification on April 27, 2015.

**Table 1. Early Grade Reading Activity Components and Tasks (continued)**

<b>Component 4: Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading</b>
<b>Task 4-1:</b> Attend MoEST Technical Working Groups (TWGs) Relevant to Early Grade Reading
<b>Task 4-2:</b> Develop Memoranda of Understanding
<b>Task 4-3:</b> Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation and Crosscutting Issues</b>
<b>ME-1:</b> Internal Activity Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
<b>ME-2:</b> Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments
<b>ME-3:</b> Regular Ongoing Reporting
<b>XC-1:</b> Local Capacity Development
<b>XC-2:</b> Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities
<b>XC-3:</b> Grants under Contract (GUCs)
<b>XC-4:</b> Geographic Coverage
<b>XC-5:</b> Public-Private Partnerships
<b>XC-6:</b> Gender Equality
<b>INT:</b> Integrating USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy

EGRA was implemented in 11 educational districts across Malawi. Within these districts, the activity reached 1,610 schools across 134 zones. Schools joined the intervention in 2 phases. The first cohort (Cohort A), consisting of 1,188 schools, joined in 2013, and the second cohort of 422 schools (Cohort B) joined in 2014.

This final report provides a summary of the achievements and accomplishments during the activity period from June 17, 2013, to October 17, 2016. It is structured according to the headings listed below.

- ***Accomplishments by Component*** provides a detailed description of accomplishments and achievements made under each component and crosscutting issue.
- ***Monitoring and Evaluation*** explains the progress that EGRA made toward meeting the targets established for each indicator under the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP).
- ***Key Challenges during Implementation*** describes the major challenges dealt with during the period of performance and how these issues were managed.
- ***Lessons Learned and Recommendations*** shares the lessons learned in the course of implementation and makes recommendations for similar programs.

**Annex 7** contains a financial summary.

## **Accomplishments by Components and Crosscutting Issues**

This section takes each component and task in turn and describes key achievements made by EGRA. For each component a narrative is provided to explain the results that EGRA achieved during this period. This is followed by a discussion of achievements made for each crosscutting issue. **Annex 6** contains a detailed listing of all subtasks and progress made against them.

## **Component 1: Provide Quality Reading Instruction for Early Grade Students**

The focus of Component 1 was to provide continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers of Standards 1–3 in order to enable them to support student reading and learning in Chichewa and English.

Component 1 was composed of five tasks, as listed below.

**Task 1-1:** CPD of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading

**Task 1-2:** Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training

**Task 1-3:** Scripted Lesson Plans (SLPs) and Related Reading Materials

**Task 1-4:** Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring

**Task 1-5:** Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools

### ***Main Accomplishments***

- Over the course of the period of performance, EGRA trained more than 12,000 teachers, head teachers, and teaching assistants in quality reading instruction.
- EGRA distributed over 8.8 million reading materials (learner books, decodable readers, story cards, etc.), SLPs, and related reading materials to schools to benefit teachers and students.
- EGRA trained 134 Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) who made over 14,000 coaching visits over the course of the activity.

### ***Task 1-1: CPD of Standard 1–3 Teachers in Teaching Reading***

Using a cascade training model, EGRA, in collaboration with MoEST and Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), was able to train between 11,000 and 12,000 Standard 1–3 teachers per year in quality reading instruction in Chichewa and English. The cascades included three levels: a single Expert Training Workshop (ETW) per round, followed by a single Training of Facilitators (TOF) Workshop per round, followed by Zonal Training Workshops (ZTWs). The ETWs were led by EGRA staff, with participation and peer leadership from MoEST personnel from the various departments with which EGRA works (Department of Inspection and Advisory Services [DIAS], Department of Basic Education [DBE], Department of Teacher Education and Development [DTED]), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), and the teacher training colleges. The participants in the ETWs led the TOFs, which included Coordinating Primary Education Advisors (CPEAs), PEAs, key teachers (KTs), special needs teachers, and Senior Education Methods Advisors (SEMAs). These participants in the TOFs then became the facilitators at the ZTWs, where the audience typically consisted of head teachers (HTs) and Standard 1–3 teachers. The ZTWs included a day of practicum during which the trainees practiced and demonstrated the skills learned in a concrete fashion with a classroom of children.

The rollout process for teacher training across the three years of the Activity is summarized in **Table 2** below. While the Activity was initially slated to include training for Standard 3 English, the scope of work was changed in the final year to remove this training due to the fact that the new USAID activity MERIT was going to revise the English curriculum and conduct training for Standard 3 teachers.

**Table 2. EGRA Rollout of Teacher Training**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	(13–14)	(14–15)	(15–16)
<b>Cohort A</b>			
Standard 1 Chichewa	X	X	X
Standard 1 English		X	X
Standard 2 Chichewa		X	X
Standard 2 English			X
Standard 3 Chichewa			X
<b>Cohort B</b>			
Standard 1 Chichewa		X	X
Standard 1 English		X	X
Standard 2 Chichewa			X
Standard 2 English			X
Standard 3 Chichewa			X
Standard 3 English			

**Table 3** displays the number of pupils and teachers, across both cohorts and all districts, who received the intervention in a given year. These trainings benefitted between 11,000 and 12,000 teachers per year, who in turn reached over 500,000 students.

**Table 3. Numbers of Pupils and Teachers Receiving Intervention, per EGRA Year**

	# of Pupils	# of Teachers
Year 1	<b>506,564</b>	<b>11,001</b>
Year 2	<b>549,730</b>	<b>12,625</b>
Year 3	<b>560,456</b>	<b>12,008</b>

**Task 1-2: Teaching Practicum as Part of In-Service Training**

An essential component of each teacher training workshop conducted by EGRA was the one-day practicum session, which was included as the final day of each training. During these practicum sessions, a classroom with about 20 learners was organized in each training center, which allowed for participants to model and practice skills acquired in as close to a classroom situation as possible.

The children were happy to participate in the practicum sessions and were provided with juice and a snack as an incentive for their support. The practicums were followed by a discussion that focused on successes, challenges, and solutions. The teachers and head teachers found these sessions very useful because they helped to iron out the challenges they faced or observed during lesson presentation. This increased their confidence in using the materials and skills they had been exposed to in the trainings. The practicum also raised community awareness about EGRA,

because parents sent their children in to participate during the school holidays. Every ZTW included these practicum sessions.

During the TOFs, the PEAs were also provided with an opportunity to practice conducting classroom observations and coaching sessions using tablet computers. They were able to do so by visiting a school close to the training venue and observing an actual lesson being taught by a teacher in the classroom. This provided practical application of the new technology and an opportunity for reflection and feedback after the practicum.

### ***Task 1-3: Scripted Lesson Plans and Related Reading Materials***

#### *Scripted Lesson Plans*

Despite initial difficulties in negotiating with MIE about the Institute's role in the development of SLPs for EGRA, it was eventually agreed that EGRA would support the Ministry in developing SLPs that followed the officially approved primary curriculum materials. This provided EGRA with a unique opportunity to support MoEST in further developing and supplementing its curriculum materials with SLPs that helped teachers deliver their lessons. The SLPs were developed through a collaboration between EGRA, MIE, and MoEST, with technical support from Brattle Publishing Group (BPG).

#### *Supplementary Readers*

EGRA started by identifying already available books for use in the early grades and gaps that required additional reading materials. To fill identified gaps, EGRA conducted several writers' workshop during its period of performance involving officers from the MIE, MoEST, teacher training colleges (TTCs), and Center for Education Research and Training (CERT), along with representatives from the National Library Service (NLS) and Malawi PEN. The purpose of these workshops was to develop new decodable readers, leveled readers, and story cards to supplement the curriculum.

A particular success of the writers' workshops was in bringing together MoEST, NLS, and Malawi PEN, as participants from all sides noted that this was the first time they had come together to collaboratively develop reading materials. The Ministry participants said the participation of NLS and Malawi PEN added creativity and a fresh perspective to the writing process, while participants from NLS and Malawi PEN said they benefited from enhanced understanding of the pedagogical issues to be taken into consideration when writing stories for beginning readers that supported reading instruction and acquisition.

A list of supplementary readers for Standards 1–3 developed under EGRA is shown in **Annex 4**.

#### *Book Chain Analysis and Technical Assistance*

blueTree Group (bTG), another EGRA partner, provided technical assistance in the Book Chain Analysis. They provided technical training to local printers on how to increase their capacity and technology to ensure better quality and cost-effectiveness. bTG also worked with GIZ<sup>2</sup>, which had been supporting the MoEST in the development of its textbook policy and the *Guidelines for the Management for Teaching and Learning Materials* (GMTLM). And when GIZ support ended, bTG

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<sup>2</sup> GIZ is the German Development Cooperation organization

continued providing technical support to MoEST on the GMTLM, and in particular, helped the Ministry finalize the document.

In addition to their support on the GMTLM, bTG also discussed with MoEST, USAID, and other development partners the implications of certain policies in the book chain, such as the policy on importing paper. USAID asked bTG to draft a briefer on this import policy and its implications on the pricing and competitiveness of local companies in the printing market.

#### *Learners with Disabilities and Special Needs*

Perkins International, another EGRA partner, was responsible for ensuring that the benefits of EGRA accrued to all learners, including learners with disabilities. The Disability, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations (DGVP) Specialist ensured that all materials were appropriately inclusive with respect to gender and learners with disabilities and led the transcribing of EGRA-developed materials into braille for use by learners with low vision. Braille versions of all learner books were printed and distributed to schools with special needs education (SNE) centers.

EGRA, through Perkins International, also conducted an assessment of assistive devices available in Malawi for the purpose of SNE. Based on the gaps identified in the assessment, EGRA purchased the assistive devices and delivered them to resource centers for children with disabilities. The resources procured included 16 Perkins Brailers, 62 white canes, 109 reams of braille paper, 12 cartons of embossing paper, 170 bold-line notebooks, 90 magnifiers, 19 bell balls, 100 abaci, 85 hand frames, 50 styluses, 69 cuberithm boards, 10 spur wheels, and 34 talking calculators. See **Annex 1** for a description of these devices.

EGRA also enlisted the Visual Impairment Department at the Montfort Special Needs Education College to provide training on the use of high- and low-technology assistive devices to teachers from five resource centers for the blind. The resource centers also received 40 copies of each of EGRA's completed Chichewa-language teaching and learning materials (TLMs) (including volumes of decodable readers) transcribed into braille.

#### ***Task 1-4: Consistent In-Service Teacher Support and Mentoring***

##### *Coaching of Standard 1–3 Teachers*

In addition to the teacher training workshops, an important element of EGRA was providing ongoing teacher support and mentoring. PEAs were asked to visit all schools at least once a term to visit teachers. Each visit consisted of a lesson observation of a Chichewa or English classroom; a teacher observation instrument (TOI) filled out with information on what the teacher did well and what areas for improvement existed in each component of the lesson; and finally, a conversation between PEA and teacher to review the lesson and give support where needed. PEAs could also demonstrate good teaching behavior during the course of the class. PEAs were also expected to meet with the head teacher to discuss the classroom teachers' progress and any support head teachers could give to their teachers.

In order to support PEAs in this, EGRA provided training on classroom observation and coaching, and provided fuel to support their visits to schools. In addition, in order to improve the efficiency of the data collection, the TOI and other school surveys were loaded onto android tablets using RTI's Tangerine® software, an electronic data collection tool. Each PEA received an android-based tablet and was trained in

electronic data collection using the tablets. After the data were collected, PEAs could submit a copy to EGRA for further analysis.

**Table 4** provides details on the coaching visits made by PEAs during the period of performance, which shows that PEAs made about 6,000 visits a year that were electronically captured. Unfortunately, the frequency of PEA visits fell below expected targets. For example, in the 2015/2016 school year, only 77 percent of schools had a coaching visit, compared to the target of 95 percent. There were many reasons for failure to visit all schools, including poor management of PEAs, PEAs' spending time on a number of other activities not related to teacher support, and PEAs' preferring to visit schools closer to them rather than remote schools.

**Table 4. Coaching Visits Conducted by PEAs 2013–2016**

District	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 Targets
Proportion (%) of schools receiving at least one coaching/support visit per term	90%*	71%	77%	95%
Number of coaching visits in the school year	6067	6151	5,719	
Proportion (%) of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who received intensive coaching or mentoring with US Government support	69%	50%	37%	60%

\*Includes only Cohort A schools

### **Task 1-5: Rewarding Performing Teachers and Schools**

#### *Recognizing Teachers*

EGRA advocated with MoEST to provide certificates for teachers who successfully completed EGRA trainings. However, the Ministry was not in favor of providing merit certificates for a program that was not available to all teachers nationwide. It was agreed that EGRA could provide a certificate of completion for teachers who attended the full set of trainings for each language course trained. For example, teachers who attended all three of the training sessions for Chichewa Standard 1 throughout the school year would receive a certificate of completion for Chichewa Standard 1. The EGRA-designed certificates were distributed to all teachers who fully completed their EGRA training. The teachers were very appreciative of the certificates, which were handed over to them in person by the PEA, Assistant Center Coordinator (ACCO), or relevant head teacher.

During the final year of the program high performing teachers, schools, and learners were identified through consultation with PEAs and head teachers. EGRA recorded interviews with two high-performing teachers, and the program content was aired over the radio, after approval from USAID. During these broadcasts, the names of high achieving PEAs, teachers, and learners were mentioned, and they were commended for their efforts.

*Recognizing Schools: Grants under Contract*

EGRA's scope of work included a grants under contract (GUC) program through which high-performing schools were eligible to apply for small grants (in the range of \$1,000-\$1,500) to support their efforts to improve reading. There were two rounds of this GUC program. The eligibility and evaluation criteria developed and applied during the first round of competition were overly stringent and extremely burdensome. As a result, it took over a year to disburse the first round of funds.

To simplify the GUC process, EGRA revised the guidelines and developed a new manual, which was approved by USAID in the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2016. Over 1,500 schools applied for the second round of GUC competition, and one school per zone was selected to receive the award for a total of 134 grantees. These second round grants were disbursed in June 2016, and schools completed their project activities by August 2016.

Schools used the GUC awards in various ways to support students and reading, including painting classroom walls with letters and words, constructing libraries, creating reading shelters, renovating libraries, and buying TLMs. **Figure 1** shows an example of a classroom built with GUC funds at Daiman Primary School in Machinga.

**Figure 1. Learning Center Built with GUC Funds, Daiman Primary School, Machinga**

**Component 2: Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials for Reading**

Component 2 was focused on the provision (development, printing, and distribution) of TLMs to support students and teachers in schools. These TLMs included SLPs, learners' textbooks, supplementary readers (decodable and leveled books), and story cards. EGRA worked in collaboration with two subcontractors: BPG and bTG.

Component 2 was composed of the five tasks listed below.

**Task 2-1: Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books**



**Task 2-2:** Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use

**Task 2-3:** Develop and Distribute Letter Cards

**Task 2-4:** Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates

**Task 2-5:** Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers

### ***Main Accomplishments***

- Delivered over 9 million TLMs to schools, surpassing the Activity targets. The TLMs included decodable and leveled books, story cards, and letter cards, which were used by learners at school, at village reading centers, and at home.
- Developed *Reading Tools in a Box* initiative through which seven private-sector partners contributed \$86,000 worth of TLMs to 548 schools. These *Reading Tools in a Box* consisted of a plastic box filled with supplementary readers and story cards that were distributed to 548 schools and reading centers.

### ***Task 2-1: Develop and Distribute Decodable and Leveled Books***

As shown in **Table 5** below, EGRA printed and distributed over 9 million TLMs in both Chichewa and English to teachers and students in intervention schools. These included supplementary readers, learner's books, letter cards/story cards, training manuals, and letter cards. The Activity exceeded all targets specified in the contract. Some materials, like the story cards, were so popular that EGRA did a second print run to produce more of these materials to be distributed to reading centers as well as schools. This was a welcome contribution to the reading centers, as classroom teachers were hesitant to loan their story cards to the reading centers for fear that the cards would be damaged or not returned.

**Table 5. Total Numbers of Teaching and Learning Materials Purchased and Distributed**

Row Labels	Total # of Units Purchased	Targets
Book Boxes	8,330	3,921
Decodables	611,496	312,000
Learner's Books	2,982,492	2,423,000
Letter Cards	134,256	120,000
Leveled Readers	2,382,460	1,841,000
Training Manuals	162,885	No Target
Materials Register	43,700	No Target
Story Cards	2,768,605	1,857,000
Teacher Guides	96,755	No Target
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,225,519</b>	<b>Total</b>

### ***Public-Private Partnerships to Support Provision of Materials***

One reason why EGRA was able to provide more books than the contract called for was that our subcontractor O'Brien and Associates Inc. (OAI) was able to develop

partnerships with private companies that were interested in supporting education. OAI developed the *Reading Tools in a Box* concept, which entailed providing a secure plastic box full of supplementary readers, including the decodable and leveled readers, along with the story cards that were being developed and printed under EGRA. As part of this concept, OAI was able to secure the support of a local printing company that was willing to print the books at near cost, as part of its contribution to the Activity.

The private-sector partners who supported EGRA's *Reading Tools in a Box* initiative did so with substantially varying levels of commitment, from Eastern Produce's 3 schools to the Monsanto Fund's 260 schools. All *Reading Tools in a Box* partners were recognized at a launch event held on September 17, 2015, at the Mlumbwira School in Lilongwe Rural West. **Table 6** below details the *Reading Tools in a Box* partners, the level of their support, and the number of schools reached by their contributions.

**Table 6. Public-Private Partnership Contributions to *Reading Tools in a Box* Realized in FY 2015**

Alliance Partners	Contribution (MWK*)	Contribution (US\$ equivalent)**	Number of Schools
Monsanto Fund	MWK 21,600,000 equivalent	\$45,000	260
Old Mutual Bank	MWK 8,000,000	\$16,666.66 equivalent	100
First Merchant Bank	MWK 5,800,000	\$12,083.33 equivalent	80
National Bank	MWK 5,000,000	\$10,416.66 equivalent	65
Lafarge Cement	MWK 3,000,000	\$6,250 equivalent	40
EcoBank	MWK 380,000	\$791.66 equivalent	5
Eastern Produce	MWK 240,000	\$500.00 equivalent	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>MWK 41,320,000 equivalent</b>	<b>\$86,083.33 equivalent</b>	<b>548</b>

\*Malawian kwacha; \*\* using an exchange rate at the time of the agreement of 480 MWK: 1 US\$.

### ***Task 2-2: Develop and Distribute Story Cards for Home Use***

EGRA developed and distributed story cards in Chichewa and English for Standards 1–3. Story cards are short one-page stories printed on A4 paper and laminated, with a short story on one side and questions to gauge comprehension on the other side. Although it was envisioned that schools would allow students to take these home and to village reading centers (VRCs), many were reluctant to lend them out. Therefore, EGRA printed and distributed additional story cards that were specifically for VRCs. By the end of the Activity, EGRA had delivered a total of more than 2.76 million story cards to schools and VRCs.

### ***Task 2-3: Develop and Distribute Letter Cards***

EGRA identified all of the Standard 1 and 2 classrooms in schools that lacked walls and provided them with laminated letter cards. By the end of the Activity, EGRA had supplied schools with over 134,000 letter cards, surpassing its target of 120,000 letter cards.

Those schools in which Standard 1 and 2 classrooms had walls did not require letter cards, as letters, words, phrases, and other educational content would be painted directly on the walls. EGRA collaborated with Rainbow Paints, a paint manufacturer,

to make painting materials (paint; rollers, paint, and writing brushes; and crack filler [a sort of caulk]) available to EGRA schools and communities at cost. EGRA then procured enough materials to paint the walls of one “model school” in each zone, delivered these materials to the schools, and worked with the schools’ head teachers and teachers to coordinate the painting of the schools as a communal activity. All demonstration schools painted the Standard 1 classroom as EGRA only provided materials for the painting of Standard 1 classrooms; however, many schools used their own resources to paint multiple classrooms.

***Task 2-4: Production and Distribution of Chalk Slates***

This task was removed during a contract modification because MoEST had already procured slates for all schools and would have been a duplication of effort.

***Task 2-5: Supply of Mobile, Lockable Bookcases/Cabinets and Registers***

EGRA, with USAID approval, decided to provide schools with securable and transportable plastic cases for storing supplementary reading materials rather than the metal or wood cabinets because they would be more practical in situations where books would have to be moved from classrooms for safekeeping.

Many of these boxes were procured under the Reading Tools in a Box Initiative using funds from private companies. EGRA procured an additional 1,810 boxes to ensure that each school had a box for each class in Standards 1–3. EGRA also procured 3,220 smaller boxes destined for VRCs; 2 VRCs per school received the plastic boxes. When the boxes were delivered, they contained Standard 2 supplementary materials, letter cards, and materials registers.

**Component 3: Increasing Parental and Community Engagement to Support Student Reading**

In Component 3, EGRA engaged parents and communities and encouraged them to support student reading. We worked through our partner Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CRECCOM), which led the community mobilization activities.

Component 3 was composed of three tasks as listed below.

**Task 3-1:** Reading Fairs

**Task 3-2:** Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading

**Task 3-3:** Provide Classroom Level and School Support for Reading

***Main Accomplishments***

- EGRA communities established almost 9,000 VRCs, staffed by 16,000 volunteer village reading center facilitators, in recognition of the value to learners of having structured extra-curricular opportunities to practice their reading skills.
- EGRA successfully organized annual reading competitions for the visually impaired called the Braille Cup, which was underwritten by corporate sponsor Airtel Malawi. This was the first of its kind in Malawi and allowed the nation to appreciate the importance of inclusive education.
- Schools and communities celebrated learners’ achievements and recognized teachers for their efforts by organizing school-, cluster-, and zonal-level

reading fairs. Over 3,500 reading fairs were organized by communities over 3 years.

### ***Task 3-1: Reading Fairs***

#### *Reading Fairs and Competitions*

Starting in 2014, communities organized reading fairs to showcase the abilities of learners and to recognize high-performing teachers and learners. Illustrative activities included oral reading demonstrations by learners using both standard-appropriate and higher-level materials, performance of poems and dramatic skits, tours of reading centers, lesson demonstrations, and exercises in writing and reading comprehension. Many schools took special care to include learners with special needs in the reading fair events. In all, there were 581 reading fairs in FY2014, 1,540 in FY2015, and 1,444 in FY2016.

The reading fairs were well received and patronized by communities and drew attention and support from high-level district officials and stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, local government officials, and political leaders. Many reading fairs were supported by donations and contributions from community members, local leaders, and businessmen. EGRA also donated prizes in support of the reading fairs. One example of community support was in Kapalamula Zone in Ntcheu, where the schools and communities raised almost \$200 to purchase prizes for learners (including tablets of bath soap, Vaseline body lotion, exercise books, pencils, and pens), hired a public address system, and provided food for learners and guests.

In addition to school fairs, schools came together in clusters and zones to organize reading competitions and cluster- and zone-based reading competitions.

#### *Braille Cup*

Keeping true to its commitment to inclusive education, EGRA held Malawi's first annual Braille Cup in FY 2014. The Braille Cup is a reading competition for visually impaired learners who read using braille and was designed to recognize and reward their achievements in braille reading and writing. The Braille Cup also served to create a network among schools and institutions that support braille learners and to encourage and share best practices. It also promoted community engagement in advocating for the students who are visually impaired in order to help them succeed socially and academically.

As part of its public-private partnership (PPP) initiative, EGRA was able to get Airtel Malawi, a major telecommunications company, to sponsor the events. As the main sponsor, Airtel Malawi underwrote the event, including the costs of prizes, and provided branded T-shirts to all participants and judges.

The competition took place over 2 days and featured Standard 1–8 learners from schools with SNE resource centers. Learners competed in five events: (1) Reading comprehension, (2) Spelling, (3) Reading for speed and accuracy, (4) Proofreading, and (5) Oral presentation of an essay. The winning schools and learners received very attractive prizes including cash, brailers, magnifiers, radios, braille paper, and Airtel routers.

The Braille Cup grew in size and stature during the course of EGRA. The event was the culmination of collaboration between many partners, including EGRA, Airtel, MoEST, USAID, Montfort College, and leaders from the Malawian Union of the Blind (MUB). The event drew VIPs from USAID, the US Department of State, MoEST, and

Airtel; in attendance at the 2015 Braille Cup were the U.S. Ambassador to Malawi Virginia Palmer; the Secretary of Education, Science, and Technology, Mrs. Lonely Magreta; and Airtel Malawi Managing Director Mr. Heiko Schlittke.

Perkins International, which designed and led the organization of the Braille Cup for EGRA, developed a *Braille Cup Handbook* for the MoEST to guide the organization of future Braille Cup events.

### ***Task 3-2: Parental/Caregiver and Community Support for Reading***

#### *Communities Mobilized to Support Young Readers*

EGRA worked closely with school communities through the district-level MoEST and Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MGCDSW) officers to encourage and mobilize community support for reading both inside and outside of school. EGRA adopted a variety of approaches including community sensitization meetings and special group trainings, various forms of theater and drama performances, and establishment of VRCs.

#### Community Meetings

EGRA held community sensitization and review meetings with school governing bodies, Traditional Authorities, volunteer community reading facilitators (VCRFs), village development committee (VDC) members, village headmen, and local drama club and Theater for Development (TFD) members in all the districts. Topics varied widely, from reminding communities that they had committed to covering learners' books to checking progress on construction of permanent structures for schools and VRCs, and checking on progress on school implementation plans.

In addition to the general community meetings, EGRA had special group trainings for *Gule wa Mkulu* leaders in the central region of Malawi and *Jando/Nsondo* initiation counselors in the southern region, where initiation practices that take children out of school are prevalent. These trainings focused on the importance of keeping children in school and learning.

#### Theater Performances

CRECCOM trained students from Chancellor College on TFD, and the students held performances in EGRA districts to raise awareness of the importance of reading and the roles parents and community members can play in supporting children's learning.

CRECCOM also provided training to local drama groups in the use of participatory drama performance methodologies to communicate messages related to early grade reading improvement. Four groups were trained in each intervention district. These local drama groups conducted participatory drama performances on the importance of reading that reached over 7,000 community members of all ages.

#### Reading Centers and Volunteer Community Reading Facilitators

Communities showed their support of their children's reading by setting up VRCs and providing volunteers to help run these centers. In all 8,994 VRCs were established and 16,845 VCRFs facilitated reading sessions with the children who attended. EGRA trained the VCRF's based on the *VCRF Training Manual*, approved by USAID, using a cascade model. In all, over 16,000 volunteers were trained on how to support children who attended the VRCs.

EGRA also designed and procured 16,000 t-shirts bearing motivational slogans and other social messaging that the VCRFs wore to raise awareness in their communities.

### SMS Gateway

In 2015 EGRA started experimenting with the use of SMS to communicate with school communities. It launched the SMS Gateway system that reached Airtel and Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM) users, despite many challenges with setting this up. The majority of SMS messages targeted teachers and head teachers, with significantly less communication directed toward community members and local leaders. Teachers got messages reminding them of important literacy practices such as regularly checking out reading materials to pupils for home practice.

EGRA's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and Community Mobilization (CM) teams developed surveys to collect school-, household-, and reading center-level CM data. These datasets combined with regular meetings between EGRA and CRECCOM (at both the managerial and technical levels) provided greater insight into how CM activities should be altered or adjusted for greater effectiveness.

### *Raising Awareness about Disability and Reading*

EGRA trained parents of learners with disabilities on methods to improve literacy among their children, such as improving communication with their children and modifying the children's environment to improve their overall functioning. The training sessions focused on developing positive teacher/parent relationships, sharing information about other parents' experiences, linking parents to information and resources available for their children, and providing strategies to support their children in reading. The trainings reached over 287 parents (125 men, 162 women) across all 11 districts.

EGRA also conducted awareness-raising trainings for head teachers of schools that had SNE resource centers. The trainings were designed to meet the requirements of the head teachers in order to make their schools as inclusive as possible in terms of access, participation, and progress for the children with various disabilities. The objectives of the head teacher training were to introduce effective strategies or practices for teaching literacy to children with disabilities, including utilization of TLMs for these children, and to train head teachers in strategies to promote collaboration with the school community including parents, school management committees (SMCs), and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in support of the education of children with disabilities.

EGRA developed the *Disability Education Resource Guide* (DERG), a document that brings together information about various organizations, policies, and resources available to support learners with disabilities in Malawi. This first of its kind document was disseminated to stakeholders in the disability sector at various events throughout FY16.

### ***Task 3-3: Provide Classroom-Level and School Support for Reading***

As part of its efforts to mobilize communities to support reading, EGRA has continued to encourage parents and communities to provide reading support directly to their schools. EGRA's *Community Mobilization Handbook*—copies of which EGRA provided to all District Education Managers (DEMs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs), PEAs, and head teachers, as well as to the Directors of MoEST

and key leaders in the MGCD SW—lays out strategies for engaging parents and community members to support school-based efforts.

In order to foster a positive relationship between communities and schools, EGRA worked with schools to allow for community members, especially SMCs and PTAs, to visit, monitor, and support schools to see what is happening in the classroom.

Parents and communities supported schools in innovative ways. Many raised funds to support activities related to the reading centers, fairs, and competitions. Others rewarded teachers for their successes in getting learners to read. In some communities village headmen established bylaws concerning absenteeism and levied fines against parents of truant learners in accordance with their established bylaws.

In other places, local government structures also got involved and supported reading in various ways including visiting VRCs and donating copies of national newspapers to VRCs.

#### **Component 4: Improving Policy Environment to Support Early Grade Reading**

Component 4 is composed of three tasks, as listed below.

**Task 4-1:** Attend MoEST Technical Working Groups (TWGs) Relevant to Early Grade Reading

**Task 4-2:** Develop Memoranda of Understanding

**Task 4-3:** Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time

#### ***Main Accomplishments***

- EGRA was able to develop strong partnerships with private companies such as Airtel, Monsanto Malawi, National Bank of Malawi, First Merchant Bank, Ecobank, and Lafarge Cement Company in support of reading. Airtel was the main sponsor of the annual Braille Cup, while the other companies sponsored the Reading Tools in a Box initiative. Under this initiative schools sponsored by the private companies received a large box containing supplementary readers, story cards, and other reading materials. A total of 548 schools benefitted.
- EGRA contributed to wider policy dialogues around early grade reading. EGRA team members were part of the task force that worked on the *National Reading Strategy* and the *Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP II) Action Plan for Early Grade Reading*. The former was adopted in November 2014 and included a proposal for increased time on reading. It also became the guiding document for MoEST's national reading program, launched in 2016. The latter also included as one of its key strategies a policy to "increase time spent on literacy and numeracy," a policy that EGRA had been advocating for.
- EGRA supported MoEST in the development of reading benchmarks for Chichewa in Standards 1–4, which were then incorporated into the National Reading Program (NRP).

#### ***Task 4-1: Attend MoEST TWGs Relevant to Early Grade Reading***

EGRA attended TWGs relevant to reading including Basic Education, Teacher Education, and Standards, Research, and Development. The TWG meetings were chaired by MoEST, but were not held at any regular intervals, partly because it was difficult for MoEST to host them. Therefore, EGRA underwrote the costs of the TWG

meetings when necessary. The TWG meetings provided a space for the discussion of policy issues and for coordinating technical assistance around particular issues. They also were a way for MoEST to keep partners updated on upcoming events.

EGRA also participated in other coordination meetings around early grade reading including the EGRA Directors' Meetings, USAID's Early Grade Reading Project (EGRP) implementing partners (IPs) meetings, and the MoEST Reading Interventions Coordination meetings. The EGRA Directors' Meeting provided an opportunity for EGRA management and MoEST management to dialogue on policy issues. This became the venue for EGRA to hold discussions with MoEST around the key policy issue EGRA was advocating for, the extension of the school day to make more time for reading.

MoEST held a workshop April 21–23, 2015, to develop an action plan for ESIP II. EGRA attended and contributed to developing the action plan for the ESIP II component focused on early grade learning.

#### ***Task 4-2: Develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)***

##### *MOUs with DEMs, Schools, SMCs, and PTAs*

In 2014, EGRA developed and signed MOUs with DEMs, schools, SMCs, and PTAs. These MOUs outlined the roles and responsibilities of each party in the implementation of EGRA and support of early grade reading in their respective schools. The interested parties all received an orientation to the MOU before signing the document. Cohort A schools signed in 2014 and Cohort B in 2015.

In 2015, EGRA conducted monitoring visits to selected schools to monitor the implementation of the MOUs signed by head teachers, SMCs, and PTAs. These monitoring visits highlighted that many schools were not implementing the extension of the school day as agreed. The implementation of the extension of the school day was inconsistent across schools, with some schools extending the instructional day only on certain days of the week and others only for Standard 1. It was recommended that DIAS send a circular to all intervention schools about the extension of the school day for Standards 1–3 and that EGRA provide clear guidance on the utilization of the extra 1 hour. The monitoring visits also highlighted the fact that VCRFs and SMC and PTA members required further training on how to support activities that promote reading in their schools and communities.

##### *MOUs with MGCSW*

EGRA also signed an MOU with MGCSW, which allowed for the CDAs, who were part of the Ministry, to participate in the EGRA program. CDAs actively engaged communities in support of reading activities, advocated for EGRA during local government meetings, and worked closely with EGRA to monitor community-based early grade reading activities.

#### ***Task 4-3: Facilitate Extension of Reading Instruction Time***

The key policy issue that EGRA advocated for was the extension of the time available for reading in the curricula. From the beginning of its implementation EGRA was provided with permission from MoEST to implement an additional hour of reading instruction in its intervention districts. This was met with support from all of the DEMs, and therefore the extension of reading instruction time was also included in the MOUs for DEMs and head teachers to formalize the arrangement.



While EGRA implemented the extension of reading time in its 11 intervention districts, it also advocated for extending this policy to all schools. The issue was discussed at length in the National Reading Strategy (NRS) workshops and was incorporated into the draft strategy. The policy was also incorporated in the draft of the ESIP II document.

To clarify the implementation details, EGRA organized a meeting with the purpose of discussing the modalities for the extension of time on task for the teaching of early grade reading. The meeting was attended by senior officers from MIE, EGRA, and the MoEST, including the Principal Secretary for Basic and Secondary Education. In addition, EGRA worked with MIE to develop a detailed timetable for all standards.

These policy dialogues continued until the arrival of MERIT: The Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity, and the extension of the school day became an item on the NRP Task Force agenda. The Task Force therefore recommended that MoEST adopt the guideline stipulated in the NRS. This has been rolled out in the 2016–2017 school year.

#### ***Task 4-4: Support MoEST Policy Initiatives to Improve Policy Environment for Early Grade Reading***

##### *Policy Consultations with MoEST*

As discussed above under Task 4-1, the predominant means for consulting with MoEST was through the various coordination meetings such as the Directors', TWGs, and early grade reading coordination meetings.

##### *Support Implementation of the Approved Guidelines for the Management of TLM (GMTLM)*

EGRA, through partner bTG, worked with the MoEST on finalizing the GMTLM and in developing an *Implementation Handbook* for the GMTLM. The workshop to finalize the Implementation Handbook included representatives from local booksellers, education publishers, and MoEST. The final draft of the GMTLM Handbook was submitted to MoEST and USAID. In 2016, USAID directed EGRA to place on hold plans to print the GMTLM and accompanying handbook pending the outcome of ongoing policy discussions with MoEST on the plans to decentralize textbook procurement in the lower grades. In the end, EGRA did not print these materials for widespread distribution.

##### *Support MoEST Capacity to Leverage PPPs*

In order to ensure the sustainability of PPPs developed under EGRA, EGRA engaged MoEST in dialogues and trainings on PPP generation and maintenance. In 2015, EGRA organized a workshop on PPP and invited officials from USAID, MoEST, and representatives from its private-sector partners at the time—Airtel Malawi, Rainbow Paints, the Monsanto Fund, and National Bank. The event included presentations by EGRA on the theory behind PPP development, a panel discussion by the private-sector representatives, and comments from Department of Basic Education Director Dr. Joseph Chimombo. In FY2016, EGRA's key point person for PPPs joined the MERIT team, and management of PPP relationships through the PPP Specialist was re-cast in terms of the partners' ability to work with MERIT in the future.

### *Develop Policy Briefs in Light of EGRA's Experience*

During the last year of EGRA implementation, EGRA conducted a number of studies to document lessons from our implementation of the Activity. These included a study on teacher's use of SLPs and another on the effectiveness of the cascade training model in improving knowledge and skills of teachers. EGRA developed a policy brief on how teacher training can support special needs education that summarized our learning in this area. With support from statisticians based at RTI headquarters, EGRA analyzed coaching data and conducted a learner assessment test (LAT) equating study. Reports from all of these studies were submitted to USAID.

In terms of dissemination, Dr. Monika Mattos, the lead researcher of the study on SLPs, presented a poster of the study at the Comparative International Education Society 2016 Annual Conference in Vancouver in March 2016. EGRA also presented data on its coaching model on a panel that looked at these issues across various countries at that same conference.

### *Finalization and Approval of the Draft Benchmarks for Chichewa*

EGRA, USAID, and MoEST participated in a joint workshop in November 2014 to develop draft benchmarks for Chichewa reading in Standards 1–3. The event was funded by USAID's EdData II mechanism under Task Order 20.

A follow-up workshop which extended the Chichewa benchmarks to Standard 4 was held in early 2016 and funded by EGRA. Mr. Joe DeStefano joined EGRA in Malawi to facilitate a workshop to update the Chichewa reading benchmarks and develop benchmarks for Standard 4. The report was circulated to MoEST personnel and USAID. While no formal benchmarks for English were developed, the issue was discussed by the attendees.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

M&E was an important part of the EGRA project and consisted of three main tasks:

- ME-1:** Initial Activity M&E
- ME-2:** Coordinating with External Evaluator for Baseline and Midterm Assessments
- ME-3:** Regular Ongoing Reporting

### ***ME-1: Internal Program M&E***

#### *LAT Quantitative Assessments*

In order to track progress of the Activity in improving the reading skills of students, EGRA developed a LAT, which it administered to a set of randomly sampled learners at the end of each term within each of the 11 districts where the EGRA intervention occurred.

The LAT instruments were adapted in late 2013 from the early grade reading assessment instruments previously developed and administered under the Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support program. Similar to the early grade reading assessment, the LAT is an individually administered, 15-minute oral assessment of a learner's acquisition of literacy skills in the early grades. LAT instruments were kept the same throughout a school year, but modified across years following current best practices as defined in the *Early Grade Reading Assessment*

*Toolkit* and the toolkit's second edition.<sup>3</sup> This means, LATs 1–3 were identical; LATs 4–7 were identical; and LATs 8–11 were identical.<sup>4</sup> The three instruments were equated to ensure estimates were comparable.

The LAT instruments included the following subtests:

- Letter Naming: A timed task in which the learner identifies the names of letters presented in a 10\*10 grid. Fluency scores are reported in correct letters per minute (clpm); there is no theoretical maximum.
- Initial Sound Identification: An untimed task in which the learner identifies the initial sound of 10 words read out loud. Scores are reported as the proportion of items correct out of the total items. The maximum possible score is 100 percent.
- Syllable Reading (on Chichewa LAT only): A timed task in which the learner reads aloud the sounds represented by syllables presented in a 10\*10 grid. Fluency scores are reported in correct syllable sounds per minute (csspm); there is no theoretical maximum.
- Familiar Word Reading: A timed task in which the learner reads aloud familiar words from a 5\*10 grid. Fluency scores are reported in correct words per minute (cwpm); there is no theoretical maximum.
- Oral Reading Fluency (orf): A timed task in which the learner reads aloud a simple passage of approximately 50–70 words in length. Fluency scores are reported in cwpm (or as orf).<sup>5</sup> There is no theoretical maximum.
- Reading Comprehension: An untimed task in which the learner answers up to five comprehension questions related to the oral reading fluency passage.
- Phonemic Awareness:<sup>6</sup> An untimed task in which the learner identifies a picture that starts with the same sound as the target word and picture.

At the start of each year, the LAT was updated with new reading passages and questions. In addition, the items in the other subtests (e.g., the letters, syllables, familiar words), were reordered.

During the period of performance, EGRA administered 11 LATs with the first being in January 2014 and the final one in June 2016. The LATs were administered by a team consisting of EGRA and MoEST officials using Tangerine software. The results have been summarized in a separate LAT report, but some findings are discussed below.

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<sup>3</sup> RTI International. (2016, March). *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit*, Second Edition. Prepared for the US Agency of International Development (USAID)/Washington under the Education Data for Decision Making (EdData II) project, Measurement and Research Support to Education Strategy Goal 1, Task Order No. AID-OAA-12-BC-00003 (RTI Task 20). Available at:

<https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&id=929>

<sup>4</sup> During the first year of implementation, a LAT was not administered at the end of the first term (October), and therefore, only 3 rounds of LATs were administered during 2012–2013. In subsequent years, 4 LATs were administered per year (October, January, March, June).

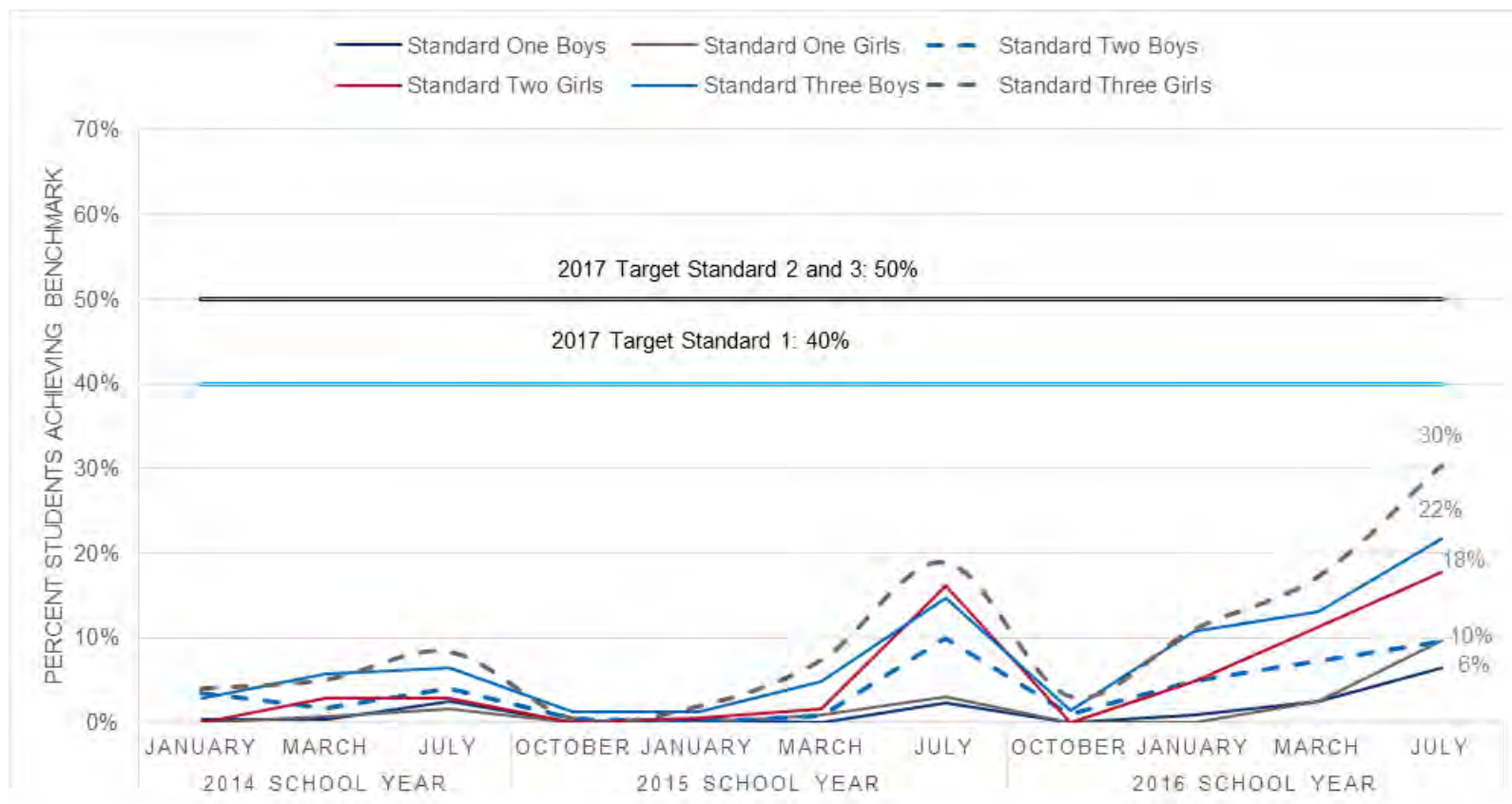
<sup>5</sup> The abbreviation “orf” (for “oral reading fluency”) is used to distinguish performance on this subtest from the performance on the familiar words subtest.

<sup>6</sup> This subtest was only included on LATs 7–11.

**Figure 2** below shows trends in student performance by indicating the percent of students achieving reading fluency benchmarks and targets by year, standard, and gender. These benchmarks were set by MoEST, with technical support from RTI, and they were based on performance in various national reading assessments. Standard 3 learners outperformed other standards in terms of achieving targets, and they also showed the most improvement in performance within a single year. Gains in performance were highest among Standard 3 learners in Year 3, which is likely correlated with the fact that these learners received treatment for three consecutive years opposed to Standard 1 and 2 learners, who had received 1 and 2 years, respectively, of intervention by the end of Year 3.

But even with the gains in the percentage of students meeting the fluency benchmark, the targets set by MoEST were not met. For example, only 30 percent of Standard 3 girls and 22 percent of Standard 3 boys met the benchmark. The MoEST target was that 50 percent of Standard 3 students would meet the benchmark.

**Figure 2. Percent of Learners Achieving MoEST Benchmarks, Cohort A, Chichewa**



*Reading Assessment for Braille Readers*

EGRA piloted a reading assessment for braille readers in 2016, as they had previously been excluded from the regular LAT assessment. This ground-breaking pilot showed that it was possible to assess the reading skills of braille readers. The pilot, though small in scale, provides a foundation upon which future work in this area can be built.

*LAT Equating Study*

EGRA carried out a LAT Equating Study in FY2016. The study was conducted in three schools (Mdyanyama, Chitedze, and Kabuthu) from Lilongwe Rural West Education District and four schools (Thavite, Senga-Bay, Kaputu, and Kanjuwi) from Salima Education District. The activity involved 12 assessors and two supervisors who were trained for two days before the commencement of the study. A total of 698 Standard 3 learners were assessed using the LAT Equating Tool that contained oral reading fluency passages and comprehension questions from the three LAT tools used by EGRA since its inception. The equating study generated converting factors that were used to weight LAT 4–11 orf and reading comprehension scores to ensure that the scores are comparable across the various LATs.

*Support to PEAs on Use of Tangerine in Observing and Coaching Teachers*

EGRA supported the PEAs to enable them to visit schools and observe teachers. This support included development of the TOI, which PEAs used in their visits to schools; training of PEAs to use the Tangerine-based TOI on tablets; and provision of fuel to enable PEAs to visit schools.

EGRA analyzed teacher and student performance data collected by PEAs using Tangerine-equipped tablets. PEAs and District Training Coordinators electronically captured over 14,000 observations during the course of the Activity period. The teacher observation had a number of purposes –it allowed PEAs to give real-time suggestions to teachers how they can improve their teaching and it also allowed the EGRA team to identify areas where improvements were needed and helped to shape the on-going trainings for teachers.

*Learning gains at ETWs, TOFs, and ZTWs*

As mentioned under Task 4-4, EGRA assessed learning gains at ETW and TOF levels of the March–April 2016 training cascade, with support from RTI's Home Office. A total of 38 ETW and 344 TOF participants took part in the pre- and post-training tests. These participants were also oriented on how to administer the same tests to a sample of 1,660 sample teachers during ZTWs.

The analysis found that ETW and TOF participants fell into three broad categories: those who achieved perfect scores on both the pre-test and post-test; those who scored better on the post-test than the pre-test; and those whose scores did not increase from pre-test to post-test. Modest improvements, as defined by the instrument, were observed for the facilitators who conducted the teacher trainings, as well as the teachers themselves. Regression analysis of the teacher data suggested that there is a relationship, though slight, between teacher performance and facilitator performance. Another finding of the study was that teachers who received more monitoring visits from EGRA/MoEST personnel tended to perform better.

**ME-2: Coordinating with External Evaluator for Evaluations**

EGRA coordinated with Social Impact (SI) throughout the lifetime of the project. During the first year, EGRA coordinated with SI on the selection of intervention zones, while maintaining the essential number of control zones. EGRA also maintained regular and open communication with SI during the baseline evaluation and attended the baseline report meeting.

In Year 2, EGRA coordinated with SI to ensure that the needed data were being collected in order to evaluate the impact of various activities under EGRA. EGRA held several meetings with SI personnel to brief them on implementation timelines and the specific details of various elements of the intervention. EGRA also submitted to SI M&E datasets regarding coaching, CM, teacher training, etc., in order to inform the analysis of SI's Midterm Impact Evaluation data.

EGRA further assisted SI in assessing whether SI's "State of the District" reports detailing the findings from the 2014 National Reading Assessment had been received by DEMs and head teachers, and if so, how they had been used.

During the final year of the activity, EGRA compiled all its datasets and handed them over to SI. These datasets included data on teacher cascade training, teacher observation, GUC selection scores, CM (reading fairs, VCRFs), and TLMs distribution. EGRA also provided a dataset containing the LAT 1–10 data to the National Opinion Research Center, contracted by USAID, to assist in validating the results of the midterm evaluation conducted by SI.

**ME-3: Regular Ongoing Reporting**

EGRA met nearly all its deadlines for reporting to USAID. The activity provided quarterly and annual technical and financial reports as required by contract.

EGRA also provided regular reports to MoEST.

**Table 7** presents the dates of initial submission, comments, revisions, and approval for the quarterly progress reports.

**Table 7. Dates of QPR Submissions and Approvals**

Quarterly Report	Date Submitted	Date Approved
FY2014 QPR 1	January 31, 2014	April 3, 2014
FY2014 QPR 2	April 30, 2014	May 9, 2014
FY2014 QPR 3	July 31, 2014	September 8, 2014
FY2014 QPR 4 / Annual Report	October 31, 2014	December 23, 2014
FY2015 QPR 1	January 31, 2015	February 13, 2015
FY2015 QPR 2	April 30, 2015	May 11, 2015
FY2015 QPR 3	July 31, 2015	September 9, 2015
FY2015 QPR 4 / Annual Report	October 31, 2015	None on record
FY2016 QPR 1	February 13, 2016	May 9, 2016
FY2016 QPR 2	April 29, 2016	May 9, 2016
FY2016 QPR 3	July 30, 2016	September 12, 2016
FY2016 QPR 4 / Final Report	December 30, 2016	To be determined

## **Crosscutting Themes**

Certain elements of EGRA's scope of work are crosscutting and therefore do not fit wholly within one component. For each of the crosscutting issues, many of the activities have already been addressed above and are listed in this section only for illustrative purposes.

- XC-1:** Local Capacity Development
- XC-2:** Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities
- XC-3:** Grants under Contract
- XC-4:** Geographic Coverage
- XC-5:** Public-Private Partnerships
- XC-6:** Gender Equality

### ***XC-1: Local Capacity Development***

Much of the capacity building for MoEST, MIE, and other partners happened through working collaboratively during the development of curriculum materials, preparation for trainings, and conducting of training sessions and workshops. Examples of EGRA'S efforts to develop local capacity in Year 1 included: workshops for writers, workshops on materials development, and field testing of M&E tools.

#### *Capacity Development for CRECCOM*

A large part of our local capacity development effort involved working with CRECCOM to develop the capacity of staff and management. EGRA organized a peer mentoring program for CRECCOM staff in each district. The district officers had conducted regular mentoring meetings throughout the year to help build each other's skills and knowledge.

EGRA conducted an institutional capacity assessment with CRECCOM on various aspects related to finance, administration, grants management, monitoring and evaluation M&E, and more. The focus was on helping CRECCOM gain the capacity to manage other reading projects or activities in the future. A report on the findings from the assessment was drafted and shared with CRECCOM and included recommendations for areas where CRECCOM can improve its capacity.

One of the areas in which RTI identified a major need for capacity development was financial management and meeting contractual requirements. CRECCOM's struggles in the areas of administration and finance led RTI to issue a cure notice directing it to address several deficiencies, and ultimately to a significant restructuring of their contract to reduce the scale and complexity of technical tasks, with the understanding that this would render the associated administrative tasks more manageable.

In addition to streamlining CRECCOM's technical responsibilities, the meetings identified steps to be taken by EGRA and CRECCOM to enhance the timeliness and quality of communication. These actions led to improvement in CRECCOM's financial management, and they were subsequently able to complete assigned tasks.

#### *Coordination with Counterpart International on Local Capacity Development*

In response to the issues raised from CRECCOM's capacity assessments, USAID placed EGRA in contact with Counterpart International, the implementers of the



*Supporting the Efforts of Partners (STEPS)* program for further capacity development support. CRECCOM and STEPs jointly identified a subset of CRECCOM's capacity development priorities that could be supported by STEPs and realistically completed within five months. STEPs and RTI then jointly supported CRECCOM's capacity development plan.

*Ongoing Implementation of Organizational Learning and Mentorship Activities with EGRA Staff*

We held a two-day retreat for all EGRA staff during which the EGRA team reviewed the challenges and successes of the first year of implementation and conducted training and practical activities on more effective planning and communication.

In 2016, EGRA and MERIT also held a joint workshop, and EGRA staff shared their experiences with implementing the Activity with the incoming MERIT team.

*Piloting of Scale and Sustainability Tool*

Under USAID's EdData II Data for Education Research and Programming (DERP) task order RTI developed a system for projecting the costs of expanding a reading intervention from the pilot stage to national scale. EGRA piloted this Scale-up and Sustainability Tool in Malawi in September 2015. The workshop included MoEST officials from the budget and education management information system (EMIS) sections of the Department of Education Planning, as well as representatives from the Department of Teacher Education Development and Department of Basic Education. EGRA was represented by officers from the accounts section, the M&E Officer, Deputy Chief of Party, and Senior Education Technical Advisor.

***XC-2: Students with Special Needs/Learning Disabilities***

Progress under this crosscutting issue has already been discussed under Task 1-3:, Task 3-1:, and Task 3-2: above.

***XC-3: Grants under Contract***

Progress under this crosscutting issue has already been discussed under Task 1-5.

***XC-4: Geographic Coverage***

EGRA was implemented in 11 educational districts across Malawi. Within these districts, the activity reached 1,610 schools across 134 zones. Schools joined the intervention in 2 phases. The first cohort (Cohort A), consisting of 1,188 schools, joined in 2013, and the second cohort of 422 schools (Cohort B) joined in 2014. In addition to the 134 intervention zones, 40 control zones were also identified in these 11 intervention districts during FY2014 by USAID, SI, and EGRA. A list of intervention and control zones is provided in Annex 3.

***XC-5: Public-Private Partnerships***

Activities related to this crosscutting issue have already been discussed under Task 2-1 Task 3-1, Task 3-2, and Task 4-1: above.

***XC-6: Gender Equality***

As an issue that cuts across all components, gender considerations were integrated throughout the planning and implementation of EGRA activities. During all materials development workshops and activities, EGRA ensured that gender and equality issues were appropriately addressed. The DGVP Specialist participated in almost all

relevant workshops with the specific role of ensuring these issues are considered during the development and review of materials.

During the collection and reporting of EGRA data, information on gender was included to ensure that data on gender equality and inclusiveness can be tracked. During all EGRA workshops and trainings, registration data were collected and disaggregated by gender.

### **Integrating USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy**

Throughout the course of its period of performance, EGRA sought opportunities to integrate its activities with those of other USAID IPs as required in its contract. EGRA collaborated with a number of different partners including: Girls’ Empowerment through Education and Health Activity (ASPIRE), *Njira* Project-Pathways to Sustainable Food Security (*Njira*), Service Sector Delivery Integration-Communication (SSDI-Communications), Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM), FHI360, and International Potato Center (CIP).<sup>7</sup> The integration activities below describe the particular nature of the activities EGRA and under IPs undertook together.

#### ***INT-1.1: Integration with ASPIRE***

EGRA and ASPIRE collaborated on the use of VRCs, training of VCRFs, training of PEAs, and disbursement of coaching funds to PEAs. EGRA and ASPIRE alternated the disbursement of funds to PEAs and held joint monthly planning meetings on the collection of monitoring data. In addition, EGRA supported ASPIRE in installing the Tangerine software on tablets for use in coaching.

#### ***INT-1.2: Integration with SSDI-Communications***

EGRA worked with USAID’s SSDI-Communications to distribute 6,000 copies of an informational leaflet on malaria. The leaflets were sent to zones in Balaka (1,000), Blantyre Rural (500), Lilongwe Rural East (500), Lilongwe Rural West (500), Machinga (1000), Salima (1,000), Thyolo (500), and Zomba Rural (1,000), which have a high incidence of malaria. EGRA’s Literacy Team assisted SSDI in revising a malaria comic book in 2014 to make it more accessible to younger readers.

#### ***INT-1.3: Integration with PERFORM***

EGRA incorporated PERFORM’s messaging around conservation, forest and land management, agricultural intensification, and cook-stove technologies into supplementary reading materials for Standard 3. PERFORM and Ministry of Agriculture officials attended a writers’ workshop organized by EGRA to facilitate the incorporation of these messages into the Standard 3 supplemental readers.

EGRA’s Literacy Team also helped PERFORM in editing and revising the informational leaflets and distributed them to the VRCs.

#### ***INT-1.4: Integration with FHI360 Feed the Future***

EGRA worked with FHI360 Feed the Future—formerly known as USAID’s Mobile Money Acceleration Project—to intensify efforts to use mobile money technology to manage funds disbursement during EGRA’s teacher training cascades. Feed the Future led by acting as a liaison with Airtel and other mobile network operators and

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<sup>7</sup> While CIP was not a USAID activity, it operated in EGRA intervention districts and showed enthusiasm for collaboration. EGRA worked with CIP as a proof of concept.

coordinated training events for teachers and mobile money end-users to brief them on the system and get them registered. EGRA and Feed the Future collaborated on a mobile money pilot in FY2016, which unfortunately, was not very successful because the mobile money infrastructure in Malawi could not deal with the large numbers of transactions required under EGRA. This is discussed further in the Challenges section.

#### ***INT-1.5: Integration with International Potato Center***

CIP, through the *Scaling Up Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato through Agriculture and Nutrition* Project, entered into a program partnership with EGRA in Thyolo District. The main objectives of the partnership were: (1) to integrate CIP reading materials in reading centers to enhance reading; (2) to motivate the VCRFs by training them how to grow the rich orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, so they can in turn train others; and (3) to improve community food security and nutritional status, with expected effects of reducing hunger and school absenteeism.

CIP distributed potato vines in Thyolo, Salima, and Mzimba North. One reading center was sampled from 10 zones of each district, and communities from these 10 zones were given potato vines to plant. When the potatoes were ready for harvest, CIP trained VCRFs on how to harvest and preserve them. At the end of the training, CIP gave VCRFs digital scales and plastic pails for use during potato harvesting. The trainers advised the VCRFs to share their new skills with other community members so more people can emulate this type of farming and improve their yields and nutritional benefits for their families.

### **Progress toward Targets**

**Table 8** summarizes current progress toward EGRA targets for each indicator in the AMEP, as of the end of FY 2016. While learners made large percentage gains in their reading scores, only students in Standard 3 made the targeted gains in oral reading fluency. The Activity also failed to meet its targets in terms of the percentage of children who took books home and the percentage of children who interacted with text. Teachers, head teachers and parents were reluctant to have children take books home because they were worried that the books would be lost or destroyed and never replaced. All other indicator targets were either met or exceeded.

EGRA management outputs and deliverables are listed in **Annex 2**, while the list of programmatic deliverables is in **Annex 5**, organized by date of submission.

**Table 8. Progress on EGRA Targets**

Indicators		Baseline	Targets for FY 2016	Actual for FY 2016
AO1 Proportion (%) of pupils who, by the end of two years of schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text		Oral reading fluency (ORF): 3.9 correct words per minute (cwpm) <sup>α</sup>	35% over baseline	To be determined <sup>‡</sup>
		Comprehension: 4.6% <sup>α</sup>		
AO2 Learning gains on core early grade pre-reading and reading tasks as measured by regularly administered reading assessments compared to baseline	Standard 1	ORF: 0.34 cwpm <sup>†</sup>	ORF: ↑15 cwpm	6.99 cwpm (↑ 6.66 cwpm; 2018% gain)
		Comprehension: 0.30% <sup>†</sup>	Comprehension: ↑20%	8.59% (↑ 6.77 pct points; 372% gain)
	Standard 2	ORF: 1.09 cwpm <sup>†</sup>	ORF: ↑ 15 cwpm	18.31cwpm (↑ 14.86 cwpm; 431% gain)
		Comprehension: 4.50% <sup>†</sup>	Comprehension: ↑30%	21.15% (↑17.02 pct points; 412% gain)
	Standard 3	ORF: 5.00 cwpm <sup>†</sup>	ORF: ↑ 18 cwpm	37.04 cwpm (↑ 24.78 cwpm; 202% gain)
		Comprehension: 14.30% <sup>†</sup>	Comprehension: ↑ 40%	44.77% (↑36.06 pct points; 414% gain)

(continued)

<sup>α</sup> Social Impact. (2013). Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity Impact Evaluation: Baseline Report.

<sup>‡</sup> Data for this indicator will be provided by the external evaluator, Social Impact, during end-of-activity assessments.

<sup>†</sup> Baseline learner assessment test (LAT) data for FY 2015 collected in October 2014

<sup>±</sup> Last LAT was done in June 2016

**Table 8. Progress on EGRA Targets (continued)**

Indicators	Baseline	Targets for FY 2016	Actual for FY 2016	
OC1 Proportion (%) of Standard 1–3 teachers demonstrating essential skills in teaching reading	33% <sup>8</sup>	75%	99.4 <sup>9</sup>	
OC1.1B Proportion (%) of teachers who complete expected number of lessons in Terms 1–3, Standards 1–3	23.5%	75%	91.3% <sup>10</sup>	
			Standard 1	88.5%
			Standard 2	91.4%
			Standard 3	94.3%
OP1.1a Number of pupils receiving reading interventions in Standards 1–3	0	838,155	560,456 <sup>11</sup>	
OP1.1b Number of teachers, head teachers, and teaching assistants who successfully complete in-service training	0	7,582 (17,272 cumulative)	12,008 (6,834 men, 5,174 women) unique teachers <sup>12</sup>	
OP1.1c Total number of person hours of teachers, educators, and teaching assistants who successfully completed in-service training	0	350,000 hours (830,000 cumulatively)	814,669 hours (2,506, 661 cumulatively)	
OP1.1d Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	257	267	
OP1.1e Total number of person hours of administrators and officials successfully trained with US Government support	0	6,000 hours (17,000 hours cumulatively)	(87,896 hours cumulatively)	

(continued)

<sup>8</sup> Comes from initial scores recorded during Term 1 of SY1 (December 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Steadily improved from 58.9% in term 1 to 99.4% by end of SY2015/16 and surpassed FY2016 target

<sup>10</sup> These teachers completed expected lessons by end of the SY 2015/2016, which was much higher than the target.

<sup>11</sup> These Standard 1–3 learners received the intervention based on average attendance rates despite the fact that 992, 629 enrolled in 1,618 schools in EGRA interventions in FY2016.

<sup>12</sup> These teachers attended multiple trainings during the year, i.e., 12,008 attended teacher cascade training in Q1, 974 (791 men, 183 women) attended training of facilitators and volunteer community reading facilitator review meetings in Q2, and 11,572 teachers attended a cascade teacher training workshop in Q3.

**Table 8. Progress on EGRA Targets (continued)**

Indicators	Baseline	Targets for FY 2016	Actual for FY 2016
OP1.1f Proportion (%) of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who received intensive coaching or mentoring with US Government support	68.7%*	60%	37% <sup>13</sup>
OP1.1g Proportion (%) of schools receiving at least one coaching/support visit per term	89.6%*	95%	77 <sup>14</sup>
OC1.2A Proportion (%) of learners in intervention districts and target grades who take home and use a book or other reading materials	13.6%*	60%	20.1% <sup>15</sup>
			Standard 1   19.5%
			Standard 2   19.5%
OC1.2B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades who interact with text on a daily basis	60.3%*	95%	57.2% <sup>16</sup>
			Standard 1   56.2%
			Standard 2   53.4%
Standard 3   62.5%			
OP1.2a Number of lesson plans designed, tested, revised, and approved by the MoEST and USAID for Terms 1–3 for Standards 1–3 that support the use of local language instruction in target districts	0	5 cumulative complete sets	5 cumulative complete sets with 845 lessons <sup>17</sup>

(continued)

\* Reflects the proportion at the end of SY1 (July 2014).

<sup>13</sup> A total of 4,387 (2,160 men, 2,227 women) unique Standard 1–3 teachers out of 11,998 teachers were coached during FY2016 by 145 coaches (134 PEAs and 11 EGRA staff members).

<sup>14</sup> 1,249 unique schools were visited out of the 1,618 schools in the EGRA intervention in FY2016 (SY2015/16), with each school visited an average of five times. These results are based on electronic captured teacher observation instrument data for PEAs and EGRA staff. All Standard 1–3 teachers were also mentored by head teachers and deputy head teachers in their respective schools through the school leadership mentorship initiative that was introduced in FY2016.

<sup>15</sup> This is annual average for all the four quarters in FY2016. Performance improved steadily from 15.0% in Q1 to 24.4% in Q4.

<sup>16</sup> This is annual average for all the four quarters in FY2016. Performance improved steadily from 45.7% in Q1 to 69.5% in Q4.

<sup>17</sup> The 5 sets that include learners' books and teachers' guides for Chichewa 2 and 3, English 1 and 2, and 845 lessons achieved to date. In FY2016, one complete set (English 2 teacher's guide with 60 lessons) was achieved in Q1.

**Table 8. Progress on EGRA Targets (continued)**

Indicators		Baseline	Targets for FY 2016	Actual for FY 2016
OP1.2b Number of schools that have received the appropriate number of full sets of materials and equipment (decodable leveled books, story cards, home-use story cards, letter cards, slates, storage cabinets, materials registers)	Sets of reading materials	0	2,108 cumulative	1,618 <sup>18</sup>
	Slates	0	0 <sup>19</sup>	0
	Cabinets/securable book cases or boxes	0	2,108 cumulative	1,610 schools received 7,626 boxes (cumulatively 8,568 boxes have been provided) <sup>20</sup>
OP1.2c Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLM) provided with US Government support		0	2,415,000; (7,241,108 cumulatively)	2,880,750
OC2 Number of community, local government, and/or private sector–led advocacy activities conducted to support increased reading skills in primary schools		0	0 new (135 cumulatively)	8,169 (9,782 cumulatively)
OC2.1 Proportion (%) of schools in intervention districts with MOUs or social contracts on reading		0%	80%	100%
OP2.1a Number of reading fairs hosted by school communities or clusters		0	2,106 (5,266 cumulatively)	1,444 (3,480 Cumulative)
OP2.1b Number of stakeholders consulted to establish and review memoranda of understanding		0	0 new (135 cumulative)	150 (1,228)
OC2.2 Proportion (%) of schools with community, local government, and/or private sector-led initiatives supporting early grade reading		unknown	80%	100%
OP2.2a Number of parent-teachers associations or similar school governance structures supported by US Government		0	2,106 (5,266 cumulatively)	2,831 (6,163 cumulatively)
OP2.2b Number of schools applying for grants to support early grade reading		0	1,685	1,532

(continued)

<sup>18</sup> 15 new schools opened in EGRA impact area during FY2016.<sup>19</sup> Slates will not be procured under EGRA. Refer to discussion under Task 2-4.<sup>20</sup> Each school has received a minimum of 5 boxes with schools under public-private partnerships receiving 6 boxes.

**Table 8. Progress on EGRA Targets (continued)**

Indicators	Baseline	Targets for FY 2016	Actual for FY 2016
OP2.2c Proportion (%) of school grant applications that meet minimum requirements for award	0	80%	37%
OC3 Standards for reading outcomes formally established for Standards 1–3 by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)	Proposed by MoEST EGRA Coordinating Committee	Adopted by MoEST	Benchmarks proposed to MoEST
OC3.1A Proportion (%) of teachers who stay in the early grades after initial training	unknown	90%	89%
OC3.1B Proportion (%) of children in intervention districts and target grades receiving an average of one hour time-on-task reading instruction per day	unknown	80%	100%
OP3.1a Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs or increase equitable access	0	1 (Special needs education guidelines for early grade reading instruction)	1 ( <i>Disability Education Resource Guide</i> developed and disseminated)
OP3.1b Number of teachers in special needs schools supported in the application of adapted early grade reading materials for special needs pupils	0	22 (40 cumulatively)	16 <sup>21</sup>
OC3.2A Improved institutional capacity for supporting reading by local nongovernmental organization	Assessment report	Major deficiencies addressed and rectified	Major deficiencies addressed and rectified
OC3.2B Number of public-private partnerships (PPPs) supporting early grade reading	0	At least 2 new partnerships established (contributing \$200,000 equivalent)	One new partnership was established with Airtel Malawi (contributing \$6,311 equivalent for Braille Cup in Q3)
OP3.2a Number of mentoring and training meetings conducted	0	80 (380 cumulatively)	6 (144 cumulatively)
OP3.2b Number of meetings held with private organizations to establish potential PPPs	0	5 (25 cumulatively)	8 (193 cumulatively)

<sup>21</sup> 16 unique teachers were supported (two training sessions) in conducting EGRA for the blind.



## Key Challenges during Implementation

EGRA faced a number of implementation challenges during the period of performance. Some of the key challenges are addressed below.

### **Competing Demands and Conflicting Schedules with Partners**

EGRA's collaborative approach relied heavily on participation by MoEST departments, MIE, TTCs, and other partners in the implementation of technical activities. A theme that emerged over the course of the Activity was the pressure that implementers of USAID's EGRP were placing on MoEST structures by relying so heavily on MoEST personnel (especially PEAs and TTC lecturers) to deliver training events. This became especially pronounced as other EGRP programs like Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi (SEGREM) and ASPIRE came online.

Until the SEGREM award was made to MIE, MIE's stated preference was to engage with EGRA through a "workshop mode" that involved large groups of writers coming together for a week-long workshop to collaboratively develop SLPs. Once the SEGREM award was made, the incentive structure changed and an increased pace of materials-development took priority. With MIE expressing frustration at what it considered the slow pace of progress under the workshop mode, EGRA moved to a different proposal, which involved pairs of writers developing SLPs independently between periodic check-in events and restricting the scope of the workshops to (mainly) editing drafted SLPs.

### **Coordination Regarding English Curricula**

EGRA's reading intervention relied upon a phonics-based approach to reading instruction. However, all materials-development work under EGRA has been conducted in concert with MIE, and one of MIE's preconditions for this collaboration was that changes to existing curricular documents be minimized to the extent possible.

The existing Standard 2 English curriculum, however, did not use a phonics-based approach to reading instruction. When the scope and sequence for the revised course was developed, the workshop participants agreed that a phonics strand had to be inserted for the course to be aligned with the approach to reading instruction espoused by EGRA and the NRS. Inserting the phonics strand into the teacher guides for the course was not problematic, and drafting of the SLPs proceeded accordingly. However, while the workshop concluded with what EGRA understood to be agreement that the learner's book could be altered to include an additional two pages of phonics material per unit, it later became apparent that MIE did not consider there to have been agreement on that matter. When EGRA submitted the camera-ready copies of the *Standard 2 English with Phonics (STEP)* course to MoEST for their review and approval prior to printing, rather than the customary several-day turnaround, several weeks went by without an approval. Extensive discussions between EGRA, USAID, and MoEST (including at the FY2015 Q4 EGRA Directors' Meeting) revealed that MIE considered the additional phonics pages to represent an unauthorized alteration of the national English curriculum, and as a result MIE refused to either accept the copyright for the materials or permit their logo to be used on the cover. MoEST and USAID ultimately agreed to permit the *STEP* materials to be printed on the condition that the copyright be given to MoEST and all MIE logos be removed. The various parties only reached this agreement after several weeks of

delay, however, and as a consequence the *STEP* learner's books were not available by the time of the August 2015 training cascade.

### **CRECCOM's Financial, Administrative, and Technical Challenges**

Throughout FY 2015 EGRA's implementation of CM activities was significantly hindered by CRECCOM's weak administrative and financial management capacity. Several months into FY 2014 CRECCOM indicated that it lacked the resources to complete its work and subsequently invoice RTI for reimbursement; as a result, the two parties reached an agreement that CRECCOM would prepare requests for funds to be advanced to them to cover one month's technical activities. Two such advances would be permitted on a rolling basis; this allowed CRECCOM to continue delivering technical activities while reconciling the prior month's expenditures and preparing the following month's advance requests.

Eventually, when things did not improve, EGRA issued a subcontract modification that drastically narrowed CRECCOM's scope and accordingly reduced the volume of financial transactions it needed to process. While this modification helped to make the grant more manageable for CRECCOM, several management issues remained. As discussed earlier, EGRA carried out a Participatory Local Capacity Assessment with CRECCOM and identified areas in which its management and governance would be strengthened. EGRA also worked with STEPs and CRECCOM to produce a capacity development action plan for CRECCOM.

### **Piloting of Airtel Mobile Money**

In order to limit the volume of cash transactions, EGRA piloted the use of Airtel Mobile Money to send money electronically. Unfortunately, the pilot was largely unsuccessful as agents could not provide the cash needed. EGRA persevered and tried a second attempt to work through the FHI360 Feed the Future program (formerly the Mobile Money Acceleration Project) to conduct a second pilot of mobile money transfers during the December 2015 training cascade.

The plan was to use Airtel's Mobile Money system to transmit funds directly to teachers where possible, and to PEAs (for cashing and subsequent disbursement to teachers) otherwise. This was to be conducted in Lilongwe Rural East and West, two districts where mobile money penetration is considered to be relatively robust. The process involved several steps:

1. Airtel and Feed the Future would conduct trainings with teachers to brief them on how mobile money works and get them registered as users so they could receive funds.
2. Airtel and Feed the Future would transmit a list of registered participants to EGRA for validation, on the basis of which EGRA would transfer funds from its bank account into the mobile wallet at Airtel.
3. EGRA would receive daily reports of attendance from the pilot zones, on the basis of which it would transfer funds each day to registered participants and PEAs via the mobile money system.

Unfortunately, this second pilot was also unsuccessful for a number of reasons, including:

1. Airtel missed the deadline for transmitting the list of participants to EGRA for verification. With only one work day remaining before trainings were to start, EGRA disbursed funds to the pilot zones via its normal mechanism (through

the banks, to the PEAs) because the mobile money could not be used without a list of registered users. The list was received on the day that trainings were to begin. Upon verification, EGRA noted that Airtel had failed to include PEAs, head teachers, or deputy head teachers, all of whom had been established as participants in the trainings.

2. Airtel had promised that >95 percent of EGRA's projected trainees would be trained in mobile money and registered; however, the final tally was roughly 70 percent of EGRA's teachers, head teachers, deputy head teachers, and PEAs in the pilot zones. This left EGRA without a mechanism to disburse funds to 30 percent of the training attendees. It also undermined EGRA's faith in Airtel's records and diligence in the pre-cascade training on mobile money; in an attempt to mitigate further complications, EGRA elected to only transmit funds to PEAs.
3. While EGRA trainings were held on December 24 and from December 26, 2015, to January 2, 2016, Airtel's staff left for the holidays at close of business on December 23 and did not respond to instructions to disburse funds until December 28. They failed to alert EGRA of their planned absence, and likewise failed to put into place any contingency plan to deal with staff absence. Airtel also proved unable to provide reports on EGRA financial transactions through Mobile Money in a timely fashion despite multiple requests over a period of weeks to do so.
4. Airtel representatives repeatedly contradicted themselves regarding the applicable daily limits for cash transfers (claiming limits of 500,000 MWK when in reality the limit was 200,000 MWK), which caused significant disruptions when the lower limit was enforced. At times transfers that were initiated on one day were not completed (received by the PEA) until several days later, apparently due to errors with Airtel's internal processing systems. Airtel claimed to have briefed its agents—the individuals who can convert electronic funds into cash—and instructed them to be available to liquidate funds at EGRA training sites. Despite this, a significant proportion of agents were unable to meet demand—even in places where the cash demand was only 65,000 MWK—and so money was often not available on the day it was due. In other cases, agents did not present themselves at the training venues as agreed.

In the end, mobile money transfers were possible for slightly less than 70 percent of the volume of funds EGRA aimed to disburse during the pilot (7.6 million MWK out of 11 million MWK). However, even those funds were transferred electronically to the PEAs, not to the teachers, who were ultimately the intended recipients. PEAs then had to liquidate the electronic funds before disbursing them.

The volume and nature of disruptions and errors drastically increased the workload and chaos during the training workshops, despite significant investments of time, money, and effort on the part of three organizations in the two months prior to the pilot. EGRA had a contingency plan in place to support zones where the pilot failed, and was able to provide cash on short notice in several places. In places where funds could not be disbursed prior to the end of the training workshops, this led to additional direct costs as EGRA had to reimburse the travel expenses for teachers to come back to the training site to receive their allowance.

In light of the difficulties experienced when attempting to use Airtel Mobile Money to administer financial disbursements to a couple of districts, EGRA elected to forego widespread use of this facility. Instead, EGRA made arrangements with the Malawi Savings Bank to have PEAs collect the funds to cover expenses at their training

venues directly from the bank tellers at bank branches near the TDCs. While large sums of cash were still handled during the final transaction between PEAs and workshop attendees, this approach minimized the amount of cash in transit from Lilongwe to outlying locations.

### **EGRA Limited Financial Review**

USAID conducted a limited financial review of EGRA in October 2015. While the limited financial review was largely positive, some recommendations were made regarding EGRA's documentation, segregation of duties, workflows, and usage of large volumes of cash. EGRA successfully completed the implementation of USAID recommendations emerging from the Limited Financial Review, but USAID officials were unable to return to verify that these changes had been made before the end of the Activity.

## **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

### **Lessons Learned**

This section presents key lessons learned from EGRA in a variety of key areas focused on reading improvement in the early grades in Malawi.

**Teachers' use of SLPs:** EGRA conducted a study to understand how teachers used the SLPs in classrooms in Standards 1 and 2 in order to better understand how and why teachers were modifying the SLPs while teaching. This study used classroom observations and interviews in low-, medium-, and high-performing schools to study what types of modifications teachers made to the SLPs, whether modifications helped or hindered the overall quality of the lesson, and why teachers were making the modifications they did. The study found that all teachers, whether in low-, medium-, or high-performing schools, made three types of modifications: content modifications, structural modifications, and classroom management modifications. Findings also suggested that teachers were making deliberate changes to the SLPs, not simply forgetting or not understanding the formatting of the SLPs. Teachers added extra content to provide students with more practice, they modified content and/or structure that they believed was too difficult or inappropriate for students, and they often inserted energizers to redirect student attention. Conclusions were mixed as to whether the modifications were high or low quality. In general, where teachers modified the structure of the lesson (e.g., omitting the 'You Do' activities), these were coded as low-quality modifications. On the other hand, changes such as checking for understanding of students through informal assessment not in the SLP were considered high-quality modifications.

**Frequency of coaching visits:** Results from studies in countries like Kenya have shown that coaching visits to schools to support teachers were important in improving pupil's outcomes. Schools that were visited frequently were likely to have stronger pupil performance. In EGRA, PEA visits to schools happened much more infrequently than we would have liked despite providing logistical support in terms of fuel. PEAs were involved in a lot of different types of activities and did not necessarily prioritize coaching under EGRA. When they did visit schools, they tended to visit schools that were closer to the district and not the remote schools. EGRA's minimum expectation was that each school would be visited at least 3 times a year or once a term, but even that was not achieved. Data showed that more than a third of schools were never visited by PEAs. What we learned was that training PEAs and providing

tools (including tablets) and fuel are not enough to get coaches to visit schools for the purpose of coaching teachers.

**Adequate quantities of TLMs matter:** One area in which EGRA was challenged was in getting teachers to allow students to take books home to read or to loan out books to the VRCs. Because teachers were worried that if books left the school they would not return or they would be destroyed, and they were not sure that they would get more, they were reluctant to let the books go. Having assurance that books will be replaced and having parents and communities take responsibility for ensuring books will be taken care of, through, for example, covering books in plastic, seemed to be effective in increasing books being loaned out.

**Opportunities to practice skills learned during training was important:** The practicum sessions that involved a model classroom with real students that were organized during the teacher trainings were an important aspect of the learning process for teachers. These sessions allowed teachers and trainers to model behaviors and teaching skills in a controlled situation and to discuss what worked with their peers. Sitting through lectures alone is not a sufficient training modality when you want to convince teachers to make changes in their classrooms.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations come from EGRA's implementation experience as well as some of the research and studies undertaken as part of EGRA. Some of them are specific to Malawi at the policy level, and others are relevant for the implementation of the NRP.

**Improvements to the SLP:** The scripting study mentioned above suggests some concrete ways in which the SLPs and teacher training could be improved including:

- During the training and coaching sessions, highlight the importance of the process of learning, instead of the final product, and that it is acceptable and even desirable for learners to make mistakes. Support teacher reflection on how to interpret and respond to student errors, and utilize student errors as teachable moments.
- When revising SLPs, explicitly make allowance in activity-planning for reasonable transition times between activities.
- During training, highlight the importance of planning for lessons (even when SLPs are available) in terms of more efficient transitions and thus better use of instructional time
- Ensure that assessment of the duration of a given activity is explicitly captured and considered during the piloting and subsequent revision of SLPs.
- Build on effective classroom management strategies that teachers are already using: songs, clapping, physical exercise to redirect attention, and marking transitions.
- Explicit teaching of classroom management strategies for access and flow of materials in the context of large class sizes; e.g., use of monitors to help with learner's book distribution, ensuring learners have turned to the correct page, transitioning from whole class to small group work and pair work, modeling for learners what small group work and pair work is supposed to look like and sound like, using slips of paper as pre-placed bookmarks to help children find the correct page more rapidly, etc.

- When revising SLPs, develop an approach to communicate decisions behind word choices.
- Provide repeated opportunities for teachers to practice how to effectively pace lessons as part of their planning and preparation.

**System change is necessary for sustained improvement:** In order to improve and sustain learning outcomes, improving technical capacity is necessary but insufficient. It is also important that the broader education system capacity be addressed. There are other issues such as high learner absenteeism, weak district management capacity, and large classroom sizes, all of which determine how teachers and coaches perform. Training teachers without tackling some of these broader issues will lead to less than favorable outcomes.

**Language of instruction:** The language of instruction was an issue that hung over EGRA from the start to finish of the project. The initial design of the Activity called for the inclusion of two other local languages—Tumbuka and Yao—but MoEST wanted to limit the intervention to Chichewa and English. This meant that there were some students who were learning to read in a second and third language. The confusion over written language policies and policy in practice also led to an abandonment of plans to support English language teaching and learning in Standard 3.

**Alignment with pre-service teacher training:** While the focus on EGRA was on in-service training of teachers, sustained change means that the pre-service teacher training curriculum should also be reformed to align with the new NRS. EGRA made some attempts to work with GIZ, which was supporting the MoEST in its pre-service training curriculum, but much more needs to be done in this area.

**Instructional time:** Although EGRA was able to get schools in intervention zones to extend the amount of reading instruction time in the calendar, implementation was inconsistent. Guidance should be provided to schools from the MoEST on how this additional time should be used, following the recommendation of the NRS.

Implementing these recommendations would increase the likelihood of the NRP's and any successor program's having high levels of uptake by teachers and head teachers, as well as increase enthusiasm for the program from local government and communities.

## Annex 1. List of Assistive Devices Procured and Distributed to Special Needs Education Resource Centers

Assistive Devices	Description	QTY Distributed
Perkins Braille	Similar to a typewriter but is used to type in braille. The machine gives a blind person the ability to take notes and read what they have written. The device can be used in the classroom as well as at home.	16 Perkins Braille
White Cane	Used for orientation and mobility	62 white canes
Braille Paper	Used for taking notes in the classroom as well as at home	109 reams
Embossing Paper	A type of paper that is used for embossing to create raised patterns that braille readers can read	12 cartons
Boldline Notebook	Used for children with low vision to support them in writing so they don't skip the lines when writing	170 note books
Magnifiers	Tools that help those with vision loss maximize their remaining vision. One of the many advantages of a handheld magnifier is that it is portable and very easy to maintain. These magnifiers also help improve the reading speed of children with low vision.	90 magnifiers
Bell Ball	A quality soccer ball with jingling bells inside to help visually impaired players locate it during play	19 bell balls
Abacus	A calculation tool for the blind that allows concrete manipulation, leading to a more meaningful understanding of numbers than calculators. It consists of a frame set with rods on which balls or beads are moved.	100 abacus
Hand Frame	A hand frame, or slate, is a metal or plastic template with rectangular openings that represent each of the six dots in the braille cell. A frame can have one to 28 lines depending on the size of the document to be brailled.	85 hand frames
Stylus	A writing utensil or a small tool for some other form of marking or shaping, for example in pottery	50 styluses
Cuberithm Board	A rubber slate with a 16 x 16 grid pattern of nests; will hold small plastic cubes numbered 0 through 9 in braille.	69 cuberithm boards
Spur Wheels	A tool that is used to draw raised diagrams for visually impaired learners	10
Talking Calculators	A talking calculator's main feature is the ability to talk. The idea behind it is to make simple calculating tasks much more convenient and efficient for someone who cannot easily read a standard display.	34 calculators

## Annex 2. Deliverables Listed in the Reporting Schedule of the EGRA Scope of Work

Deliverable	Status
Initial Work Plan: June–September 2013	Submitted September 5, 2013; approved by USAID September 10, 2013
Annual Work Plan: June–September 2014	Initial draft submitted August 1, 2013, to USAID; revised draft submitted September 13, October 10, November 1, 22, 29, December 13, 27; approved by USAID December 30, 2013
Annual Work Plan: FY2015	Initial draft submitted September 1, 2014, to USAID; revised draft submitted October 15; tentatively approved by USAID October 21, 2014 pending contract modification; resubmitted September 10, 2015 to USAID; approved by USAID October 9, 2015.
Annual Work Plan: FY2016	Initial draft submitted September 1, 2015 to USAID; revised draft submitted May 31, 2016; approved by USAID June 16, 2016
Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP)	Initial draft submitted September 17, 2013, to USAID; resubmitted October 22, 2013; feedback received from USAID December 13, 2013; resubmitted February 4, 2014; feedback received from USAID April 2, 2014; resubmitted April 29, 2014; cleared by USAID May 1, 2014
Quarterly Progress Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY 2014 Quarter 1 submitted January 31, 2014; FY 2014 Q1 reports cleared by USAID April 3, 2014.</li> <li>• FY 2014 Quarter 2 submitted April 30, 2014; FY 2014 Q2 report cleared by USAID May 9, 2014.</li> <li>• FY 2014 Q3 report submitted July 31, 2014; FY 2014 Q3 report cleared by USAID September 8, 2014.</li> <li>• FY 2014 Q4 report submitted as part of FY 2014 annual report on October 31, 2014.</li> <li>• FY2015 Quarter 1 submitted January 31, 2015; resubmitted February 11, 2015; cleared by USAID February 13, 2015.</li> <li>• FY2015 Quarter 2 submitted April 30, 2015; resubmitted May 11, 2015; cleared by USAID May 11, 2015.</li> <li>• FY2015 Quarter 3 submitted July 31, 2015; resubmitted September 2, 2015; cleared by USAID September 10, 2015.</li> <li>• FY2015 Annual Report submitted October 31, 2015;</li> <li>• FY2016 Quarter 1 submitted February 13, 2016; resubmitted March 2, 2016 and March 7, 2016; cleared by USAID May 9, 2016</li> <li>• FY2016 Quarter 2 submitted April 29, 2016; cleared by USAID May 9, 2016</li> <li>• FY2016 Quarter 3 submitted July 30, 2016; cleared by USAID</li> </ul>
Quarterly Financial Reports	Submitted as required
Grants Manual	Initial draft submitted September 17, 2013, to USAID; approved by USAID November 1, 2013
Consultant Reports	See Annex 5 below



### Annex 3. Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Zones that began intervention during SY 1	Zones added to intervention beginning SY 2	Non-intervention zones
101	33	40
134 Intervention Zones		40 Control Zones
Balaka Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chendausiku	NONE	NONE
Kankao		
Maduwani		
Mmanga		
Mpilisi		
Mponda		
Nkhonde		
Phalula		
Ulongwe		
Balaka		
Chembera		
Utale		
<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Blantyre Rural Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Dziwe	Madziabango	Chigumukire
Dzunga	Mdeka	Khombwe
Lunzu	Mpapa	Lirangwe
Mudi		Nankumba
Namwanje		
Naotcha		
<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Lilongwe Rural East Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chowo	Chadabwa	Balang'ombe
Kang'oma	Chikanga	Chiseka
Matapila	Nathenje	Kunthulu
Nkhoma		Mchemani

(continued)

### Annex 3. Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones (continued)

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Chankhandwe		
Ching'ombe		
Kanjedza		
Malikha		
Mitundu		
Mtentera		
Pimbiri		
Thawale		
<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Lilongwe Rural West Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Kabuthu	Buwa	Chikhutu
Mteza	Kalolo	Kamanzi
Dzenza		Majiga
Kabudula		Malembo
Karonga		Malingunde
Kasiya		Mdzobwe
Likuni		Ndaula
Mpingu		Nyanja
Mzumazi		
Njewa		
<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
Machinga Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Machinga Boma	Ntaja	Puteya
Namandanje	Mlomba	Namasika
St. Therese	Nampeya	
Chikweo		
Mpombe		
Ngokwe		
Nsanama		
<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

(continued)

### Annex 3. Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones (continued)

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Mzimba North Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Bulala	Echilumbeni	Bwengu
Chanyama	Ekwendeni	Engucwini
Emcisweni	Erukweni	Enkondhlweni
Emoneni	Euthini	Enyezini
Kafukule	Mbalachanda	Ezondweni
Kapando		Njuyu
Lusangazi		
Mtende		
Mzalangwe		
Rukuru		
<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Ntcheu Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Bilila	Ganya	Kanyimbo
Chikande	Kambilonjo	Lizulu
Gumbu	Kapalamula	Tsangano
Matchereza	Kasinje	Bunyenga
Nsipe	Muluma	
Nsiyaludzu		
Ntonda		
Senzani		
Sharpevale		
<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
Ntchisi Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Boma	Chikho	Chinthembwe
Chibweya	Kayoyo	Malomo
Kamsonga	Mbuyedziko	Mpalo
Makanda		Msumba
Malambo		
Mpherere		

(continued)

### Annex 3. Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones (continued)

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Mvumo		
<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Salima Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chipoka	NONE	NONE
Chitala		
Kanongola		
Kaphatenga		
Katelera		
Matenje		
Msalura		
Ngolowindo		
Thavite		
Yambe		
Lifidzi		
Ngodzi		
<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Thyolo Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Folopensi	Thekerani	Chisawani
Gombe	Goliati	Mulenga
Khonjeni	Konzalendo	Thunga
Masambanjati	Luchenza	
Molere	Mountain View	
Mpinji		
Nansato		
Ntambanyama		
<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
Zomba Rural Zones		
SY 1 Zones	SY 2 Zones	Non-Intervention Zones
Chikala	Chilipa	Chikomwe
Chingale	Namapata	Chimwalira
Namiwawa	Nsondole	Ntonda

(continued)

### Annex 3. Geographic Coverage of Intervention and Control Zones (continued)

TOTAL ZONES		
COHORT A	COHORT B	CONTROL
Ntungulutsi	Songani	St. Anthony
St. Martin		Mchengawedi
St. Michael		
St. Pauls		
Namadidi		
<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**Annex 4. List of Supplementary Titles Developed under EGRA**

Type	Language	Title
<b>Standard 1</b>		
Decodables	Chichewa	Tiwerenge Nkhani 1
		Tiwerenge Nkhani 2
Tiwerenge Nkhani 3		
	English	
Story Cards	Chichewa (10)	Amina
		Ife
		Mudzi
		Utaka
		Fulu
		Amalume ndi a Kwenda
		Khama amakonda sukulu
		Mitengo
		Padwale
		Nyanja ya Malawi
	English (5)	Pat Had a Cat
		The Cat on the Mat
		Ben and Ken
		Clap Clap Clap
My Family		
Levelled Readers	English	Pat Had a Cat
		The Cat on the Mat
	Chichewa	Thoko ndi Zione
		Ulimi
		Nyama Zosiyanasiyana

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### Annex 4. List of Supplementary Titles Developed under EGRA (continued)

Type	Language	Title
<b>Standard 2</b>		
Decodables	Chichewa	Tiyeni Tiwerenge 1
		Tiyeni Tiwerenge 2
		Tiyeni Tiwerenge 3
	English	Let's Read
Story Cards	Chichewa (15)	Ukwati wa a Chakwana
		Mfumu ya nzeru
		Mwana waulemu
		Agogo Anga
		Amayi a Mvalo amwa mvunguti
		Mzizima
		Ubwino wa sukulu
		Njanji kubwalo lampira
		Shupi asiya kuba
		Mayi Chiswe aswa chikho
		Patsa
		Onyoza mphawi achita manyazi
		Mwana wa nkhuli
		Umisiri wa Mayi Kachingwe
		Ubwenzi wa Nswala ndi Ntchefu
	English (15)	Ali and a Cat
		Eggs
		Fred Gets the Hen
		The Long Black Log
		The Market
		Lake Malawi
		Bawo
		Lost
		The Lost Dog
		Khwanya
		Luka
		Jobs at H
		The Holiday
		Rice Is Nice
Maize Is Life		

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### Annex 4. List of Supplementary Titles Developed under EGRA (continued)

Type	Language	Title
<b>Standard 2</b>		
Levelled Readers	Chichewa	Atikonda and Malieta
	English	How Animals Move
		Playing Together
		Tenson Helps His Granny
		The Bicycle Taxi
<b>Standard 3</b>		
Decodables	Chichewa	Tonse tiwerenge 1
		Tonse tiwerenge 2
		Tonse tiwerenge 3
	English	We Can Read
Story Cards	Chichewa	Kusamalira mano
		Kudandaula kwa za chilengedwe
		Ubwino wa maphunziro
		Mayi Mbedza mlimi wambatata
		Namwino wabwino
		Ndalama zipsa ndi moto
		Mayi Zapita ndi Mwayi
		Ine ndine mtengo
		Nzika yabwino
		Chenjerani ndi anthu akuba ana
		Mwezi wawala
		Kuipa kwa uve
		A msamala alangiza ana awo
		Chisi agometsa anzake
		Ulimi wa mleranthaka
	English	Fish and Rice
		Ruth and Elisha
		Zikani Gets a Goat
		A Trip to a Village
		National Parks
		A Dark Night
		Safely Home
		Tadala Cooks and Uses Tools
Mr Semu Makes Toys		

(continued)



### Annex 4. List of Supplementary Titles Developed under EGRA (continued)

Type	Language	Title
<b>Standard 3</b>		
		Save Trees and Soil
		Mean Hyena and Tortoise
		Arts in Malawi
		Mnkhwani wotendera
		Moving to the City
		A New Baby
Levelled Readers	Chichewa	Yona aphunzira kuphika
	English (5)	A Family Pride
		Jane the Hard Worker
		The Mean Hyena
		Water Is Life
		At the Hospital

**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Branding and Marking Plan	Richard Hair		Initial draft submitted July 16, 2013; Revised draft submitted September 14, 2013; Resubmitted October 7, 2013	Feedback received from US Agency for International Development (USAID) August 13, 2013; Feedback received from USAID September 26, 2013; Approved by USAID October 18, 2013
Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) Trip Report for Barbara Harvey, July 8–12, 2013	Barbara Harvey	3	September 11, 2013	Approved September 16, 2013
Community Mobilization Handbook	Dezie Trigu	3	September 30, 2013; resubmitted May 8, 2014; resubmitted May 29, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID May 13, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Beatriz Coningham, 16 September 16–September 20, 2013	Beatriz Coningham	XC-1	October 7, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID October 8, 2013
Trip Report: Stakeholder Interviews for blue Tree Group Country Assessment	Maggie de Jongh & Roel de Haas	1, 2	October 8, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID January 18, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Scott Kipp, October 28, 2013–November 4, 2013	Scott Kipp	1, 3, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	November 27, 2013	Acknowledged by USAID December 2, 2013
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien, November 10, 2013–November 28, 2013	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	January 2, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID January 14, 2014
Alliance Assessment Report	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	January 17, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID January 20, 2014
Malawi Country Assessment of the Book Chain	Roel de Haas and Maggie de Jongh	1, 2	January 20, 2014; resubmitted June 2, 2014	Cleared by USAID June 4, 2014

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Memorandums of Understanding for: Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, district education managers, head teachers, school management committees, and parent-teachers associations	Charles Gunsaru	4	February 3, 2014; resubmitted March 14, 2014; resubmitted March 31, 2014; resubmitted April 29, 2014; resubmitted May 22, 2014	Preliminary approval by USAID April 8, 2014; final clearance by USAID May 23, 2014
blue Tree Group Trip Report for Roel de Haas, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Roel de Haas	1, 2	February 25, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID February 25, 2014
blue Tree Group Trip Report for Maggie de Jongh, Human Rights Specialist, January 20–24, 2014	Maggie de Jongh	1, 2	March 3, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID March 3, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Timothy Slade, February 5, 2014–February 14, 2014	Tim Slade		March 14, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID March 23, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Martha Majors	Martha Majors	XC-2	April 4, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 17, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Albert Peters	Albert Peters	XC-2	April 4, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 17, 2014
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien	Dan O'Brien	1, 2, 3	April 23, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID April 25, 2014
Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CRECCOM) Capacity Assessment Report	Mike Nkhoma	XC-1	July 9, 2014; resubmitted September 24, 2014; resubmitted December 12, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID July 10, 2014; comments made October 2, 2014; cleared December 23, 2014
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 1		1	July 23, 2014	Cleared by USAID July 30, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 1		1	July 23, 2014	Cleared by USAID July 30, 2014

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
STTA Trip Report for Maggie de Jongh-Abebe, June 29, 2014-July 11, 2014	Maggie de Jongh-Abebe	1, 2	August 14, 2014	Acknowledged by USAID August 15, 2014
Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	Augustine Kanyendula	Special Needs Education (SNE) (XC-2)	September 24, 2014; resubmitted January 27, 2015; resubmitted February 11, 2015	Feedback provided by USAID October 3, 2014; comments made January 27, 2015; comments made February 1, 2015; comments made February 11, 2015; cleared by USAID February 12, 2015
Tiwerenge Nkhani 1 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Tiwerenge Nkhani 2 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Tiwerenge Nkhani 3 Decodable Reader		2	November 17, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 2		1	November 24, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 2		1	November 24, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 24, 2014
Chichewa Standard 2 Term 2 Teachers' Guide		1	November 26, 2014	Cleared by USAID November 26, 2014
English Story Cards for Standard 1		2	December 3, 2014	Cleared by USAID December 4, 2014
Chichewa Story Cards for Standard 1		2	December 9, 2014	Cleared by USAID December 12, 2014
Request for Key Personnel Approval (Deputy Chief of Party)			January 16, 2015	Approved by USAID January 26, 2015
SOC with National Bank of Malawi		PPPs (XC-5)	February 16, 2015; resubmitted March 3, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 4, 2015
Cure Notice for CRECCOM		3	February 17, 2015	
English Standard 1 Teacher's Guide for Term 3		1	February 17, 2015	Cleared by USAID February 19, 2015

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Chichewa Standard 2 Teacher's Guide for Term 3		1	February 17, 2015	Cleared by USAID February 19, 2015
Request for Key Personnel Approval (M&E and Learning Specialist)			March 3, 2015	Approved by USAID March 25, 2015
Presentation slide deck for CIES 2015	Tim Slade, Augustine Kanyendula	SNE (XC-2)	March 4, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 6, 2015
Policy Briefer on use of <i>Anikumeto</i> sequencing for grapheme introduction		1, 2	March 4, 2015; resubmitted with updates on March 17, 2015	
English Standard 1 Training Manual Module 3		1	March 5, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 9, 2015
Chichewa Standard 2 Training Manual Module 3		1	March 5, 2015	Cleared by USAID March 9, 2015
Request for Technical Direction regarding assessing the same child in both Chichewa and English during learner assessment test (LAT)		M&E	March 6, 2015	Technical direction provided by USAID March 9, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Dan O'Brien, January 12-30, 2015	Dan O'Brien	Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) (XC-5)	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Roel de Haas, November 3-14, 2015	Roel de Haas	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Roel de Haas, January 19-30, 2015	Roel de Haas	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Ken Obura, January 19-23, 2015	Ken Obura	1, 2	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015
STTA Trip Report for Scott Kipp, March 4-13, 2015	Scott Kipp	1, M&E	March 6, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID March 10, 2015

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Report of Participatory Local Capacity Assessment (PLOCA) Exercise	Nicole Jacobs, Caroline Bixiones		March 10, 2015	
Consultancy and STTA Trip Report for Radhika Sharma, January 10-February 6, 2015	Radhika Sharma	1, 2	March 23, 2015	
Consultancy and STTA Trip Report for Jorg Bauer, January 10-February 6, 2015	Jorg Bauer	1, 3, 4, M&E	May 15, 2015	Acknowledged by USAID May 15, 2015
Volunteer Community Reading Facilitator (VCRF) Training Manual		3	June 1, 2015	Resubmitted June 4, 2015; Approved June 4, 2015
Statement of Collaboration with First Merchant Bank for Reading Tools in a Box	-		June 25, 2015	
Statement of Collaboration with Lafarge Cement for Reading Tools in a Box	-		July 16, 2015	
Cover design for English Standard 2 Teacher Guide		1, 2	July 17, 2015	
Graphs of LAT 7 Performance		1, M&E	July 17, 2015	
Braille Cup preparation materials		3	July 18, 2015	
English Standard 2 Training Manual + Facilitators' Guide		1, 2	July 20, 2015	
Chichewa Standard 3 Teacher Guide		1, 2	July 21, 2015	
Statement of Collaboration with Eastern Produce for Reading Tools in a Box	-		July 22, 2015	
EGRA Data Gathering Manual	-	M&E	July 23, 2015	

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Revised Year 3 Activity Work Plan	-		September 10, 2015	
Trip Report – Ken Obura	-		September 14, 2015	
Trip Report – Dan O'Brien	-		September 14, 2015	
Trip Report – Angela Affran	-		September 22, 2015	
Outstanding Value Added Tax (VAT) Claims		All	October 6, 2015	
Standard 2 English Teacher Guide Volume 2		1	October 6, 2015	
Trip Report – Ken Obura (blueTree Group)		4	October 7, 2015	
Standard 2 English Teacher Guide Volume 1		1	October 8, 2015	
GPS Coordinates for EGRA Schools		All	October 9, 2015	
EGRA Comments on Draft SI Midterm Report		All	October 9, 2015	
EGRA Integration Work Plan		All	October 9, 2015; resubmitted October 19, 2015; resubmitted November 19, 2015	
Revised Grants under Contract Manual		1	October 19, 2015; resubmitted October 23, 2015	
Chichewa Standard 2 Teacher Guide for Term 3		1	October 20, 2015	
Transition plan for C. Gunsaru from EGRA to MERIT: The Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity		All	October 23, 2015	

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Data for USAID Reporting		All	October 28, 2015	
LAT Reports for Rounds 1-3		All	October 29, 2015	
EGRA Annual Report for FY 2015		All	October 31, 2015	
Scope & Sequence Schedule for Chichewa 2 and 3		1	November 30, 2015	
Refresher Training Manual for Dec 2015 Trainings		1	December 1, 2015	Cleared by USAID December 3, 2015
Chichewa 3 Term 2 Training Manual		1	December 1, 2015	Cleared by USAID December 3, 2015
English 2 Term 2 Training Manual		1	December 1, 2015	Cleared by USAID December 3, 2015
Scope & Sequence Schedule for Chichewa 2 and 3		1	November 30, 2015	
Chichewa Standard 3 Learner Book		1	December 3, 2015	
Chichewa Standard 2 Term 2 Teacher Guide		1	December 1, 2015	
Presentation on Grapheme Sequence Analysis Using SynPhony		1	December 2, 2015	
Comparison of Grapheme Sequences in SynPhony		1	December 3, 2015	
FY2016 Q1 Accruals		All	December 9, 2015	
Notification of Salary Increase due to Inflation and Labor Market Shifts		All	December 14, 2015	
Updated SynPhony Sequences		1	December 22, 2015	
EGRA Reading Competition Guide		3	Initial draft submitted April 11, 2016; resubmitted April 22, 2015 and April 25, 2015	Cleared by USAID April 25, 2015

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**Annex 5. Status of Programmatic Deliverables (continued)**

Title	Author	Component	Date Submitted	Status
Chichewa Benchmarking Report		4	Submitted to USAID May 26, 2016	Cleared by USAID May 27, 2016
Malawi EGRA Scripting Study Report	Monika Mattos	1, 4	Draft submitted to USAID May 27, 2016 Final version submitted to USAID September 1, 2016	Cleared
Comprehensive LAT Report	RTI	All	Submitted to USAID October 17, 2016	Cleared December 1, 2016
Policy Brief: Teacher Training for Learners with Special Needs	Perkins International and RTI	All	Submitted to USAID October 17, 2016	Comments received November 2, 2016
Report on EGRA assessment for Braille Readers	Perkins International	All	Submitted to USAID 17-Oct-2016	Comments received November 2, 2016
Learning Gains Study	Stirling Cummings	1	Submitted to USAID October 17, 2016	Comments received November 2, 2016

## Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
1.1.1 Appropriate continuous professional development (CPD) training materials developed in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)	1.1.1.1 Review and planning meetings held with relevant MoEST technical staff	Completed
	1.1.1.2 English (EN)2-2 CPD Training Manuals for EN2 Term 2 (school year [SY] '15-'16) developed	Completed
	1.1.1.3 EN2-3 CPD Training Manuals for EN2 Term 3 (SY '15-'16) developed	Completed
	1.1.1.4 EN3-2 CPD Training Manuals for EN3 Term 2 (SY '15-'16) developed	Canceled
	1.1.1.5 EN3-3 CPD Training Manuals for EN3 Term 3 (SY '15-'16) developed	Canceled
	1.1.1.6 EN3-1 CPD Training Manuals for EN3 Term 1 (SY '16-'17) developed	Canceled
	1.1.1.7 Chichewa (CH)3-2 CPD Training Manuals for CH3 Term 2 (SY '15-'16) developed	Completed
	1.1.1.8 CH3-3 CPD Training Manuals for CH3 Term 3 (SY '15-'16) developed	Completed
	1.1.1.9 SUPP Teaching Reading with Supplementary Readers manual reviewed and updated	Completed
	1.1.1.10 HTL Development of head teacher instructional leadership in Early Grade Reading Manual	Completed
	1.1.1.11 FTG Development of Facilitators' Guide for Refresher Training for PEAs	Completed
1.1.2 Submission of CPD training materials to MoEST for official endorsement	1.1.2.1 Submission of CPD training materials to MoEST for official endorsement	Completed
1.1.3 Submission of CPD training materials to USAID for official clearance	1.1.3.1 Submission of CPD training materials to USAID for official clearance	Completed

(continued)

## Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
1.1.4 Printing and distribution of CPD training materials	1.1.4.1 Printing and distribution of CPD training materials	Completed
1.1.5 CPD trainings delivered to Std 1–3 teachers, deputy header teachers (DHTs), head teachers (HTs), and Assistant Center Coordinators (ACCOs)	1.1.5.1 Equipping of expert trainers at Expert Trainers Workshop (ETW)	Completed
	1.1.5.2 Expert trainers deliver training at training of facilitators (TOF)	Completed
	1.1.5.3 PEAs deliver training at Zonal Training Workshops (ZTWs)	Completed
	1.1.5.4 Coordination with other Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP) implementing partners (IPs) on allocation of expert trainers' time	Completed
1.1.6 Cost-effectiveness of providing CPD training in target zones evaluated, documented	1.1.6.1 Per-teacher cost of Early Grade Reading Activity-(EGRA-) style CPD training calculated from financial records	Completed
	1.1.6.2 Alternative cost-effective methods explored with MoEST for decision and further action	Transferred to MERIT: The Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity
1.1.7 Quarterly briefing meetings held with teacher training college (TTC) principals	1.1.7.1 Quarterly briefing meetings held with TTC principals re: EGRA	Completed
1.1.8 Development of EGRA Training Video (ETV)	1.1.8.1 Retain services of video production company	Completed
	1.1.8.2 Development of training video storyboard and script(s)	Completed
	1.1.8.3 Film training video	Complete
	1.1.8.4 Complete post-production	Completed
	1.1.8.5 Pilot usage of ETV in Term 3 Teacher Training Cascade	Transferred to MERIT
	1.1.8.6 Load ETV onto Primary Education Advisors' (PEAs') tablets	Transferred to MERIT

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
	1.1.8.7 Distribute ETV on DVDs to all TTCs and EGRA Teacher Development Centers	Transferred to MERIT
1.2.1 CPD includes a practicum session where methods can be modeled as part of teacher practice	1.2.1.1 ZTWs include a practicum session with learners in the classroom	Completed
	1.2.1.2 Parents, communities engaged to identify/mobilize a minimum of 60 children for the teacher practicum	Completed
	1.2.1.4 For training venues close to Special Needs Education (SNE) Resource Centers, learners with special needs are included	Completed
1.2.2 Children recruited to attend practicum session of teacher-training workshops		Completed
1.3.1 Development of scripted lesson plans (SLPs) for English Std 3	1.3.1.1 EN3 development planning meeting with MoEST stakeholders convened	Transferred to MERIT
	1.3.1.2 SLPs for EN3 developed in collaboration with MoEST personnel	Transferred to MERIT
	1.3.1.3 Inclusiveness of SLPs' language with respect to disability and gender assured	Transferred to MERIT
	1.3.1.4 EN3 SLPs trial-tested in 1% of schools	Transferred to MERIT
1.3.2 Development of new decodable and leveled stories for Standards 2–3	1.3.2.1 Writing workshops with MoEST, National Library Service, Malawi PEN convened	Completed.
	1.3.2.2 New decodable and leveled stories trial-tested in 1% of schools	Completed
1.4.1 Coaching by PEAs and District Training Coordinators (DTCs) of Standard 1–3 teachers	1.4.1.1 Replacements for relocated PEAs and new inspectors oriented to EGRA	Completed
	1.4.1.2 Costs of quarterly PEA-DTC planning & review meetings underwritten	Completed

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
1.4.2 Provision of branded Curriculum Leadership file with EGRA monitoring tools	1.4.2.1 Curriculum Leadership files procured and delivered	Completed
	1.4.2.2 Models of properly completed curriculum support tools developed and provided	Completed
	1.4.2.3 HTs mentored on use of the curriculum support tools	Completed
1.4.3 Revision and update of EGRA Coaching Manual	1.4.3.1 Tangerine: Tutor User Guidelines incorporated	Completed
	1.4.3.2 PEA time management exercise instructions incorporated	Completed
	1.4.3.3 Curriculum Leadership file review protocol incorporated	Completed
1.4.4 Integration of key teachers (KTs) into coaching at their own schools	1.4.4.1 Planning meetings between HTs, DHTs, and KT facilitated	Completed
1.4.5 Provision of remote support via SMS Gateway	1.4.5.1 SMS Gateway utilized for sending information, coaching, and supporting teachers	Completed
	1.4.5.2 SMS research study conducted in identified zones	Approach revised – incorporated in Learning Gains study
	1.4.5.3 Analyze results of research study	Canceled
	1.4.5.4 Present findings at National Lessons-Learned Conference	Canceled
1.5.1 Recognition of high-performing teachers	1.5.1.1 Identify high-performing teachers	Completed
	1.5.1.2 Interviews with top teachers (& learners) placed on community radio programming	Completed
	1.5.1.3 Names of top teachers (& learners) submitted to radios to be read on air	Completed

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
1.5.2 Provision of certificate for completion of EGRA trainings	1.5.2.1 Teacher attendance records collected and analyzed	Completed
	1.5.2.2 Certificates submitted to USAID for official clearance	Completed
	1.5.2.3 Certificates printed and distributed to teachers	Completed
1.5.3 Grants under contract (GUC) incentive program implemented for Round 2	1.5.3.1 Zonal GUC Committee review submitted GUC applications from schools	Completed
	1.5.3.2. District GUC committee reviews shortlisted schools from submitted GUC applications from schools	Completed
	1.5.3.3 GUC incentive awardees notified	Completed
	1.5.3.4 GUC awardee workshop conducted	Completed
	1.5.3.5 GUC funds disbursed	Completed
	1.5.3.6 Implementation of GUC activities monitored	Completed
1.5.4 Coordinate with Social Impact (SI) on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	1.5.4.1 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of GUCs, teacher incentive programs	Completed
1.5.5 Implementation of Model Schools/Educators Initiative	1.5.5.1 Teachers visit model schools to learn from good practice	Completed
	1.5.5.2 Video clips of model educators delivering EGRA lessons used by PEAs and KTs	Transferred to MERIT
	1.5.5.3 Audio tracks of learners in model schools singing EGRA songs recorded	Transferred to MERIT
1.5.6 Compilation of <i>Success Story Collection</i> from intervention districts	1.5.6.1, Stories collected, edited, and printed	Completed
	1.5.6.2 Stories used for information and training	Completed
1.6.1 Ongoing review of EGRA SLPs and teaching and learning materials (TLMs)	1.6.1.1 Review of EGRA SLPs and TLMs conducted	Completed

(continued)

## Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
1.6.2 Development of a reading assessment for learners with visual impairments	1.6.2.1 Literature review conducted	Completed
	1.6.2.2 Draft instrument and protocol developed	Completed
	1.6.2.3 Draft instrument piloted in EGRA schools	Completed
	1.6.2.4 Instrument revised in light of pilot	Completed
	1.6.2.5 Revised instrument shared with USAID, MoEST Department of Special Needs Education (DSNE), and external stakeholders	Completed
2.1.1 Public-private partnerships (PPPs) leveraged to support provision of materials to intervention schools	2.1.1.1 "Project document" for new PPPs finalized	Transferred to MERIT
	2.1.1.2 PPP Specialist retained as consultant	Completed
	2.1.1.3 "PPP Status Handover Check" included as agenda item in EGRA directors' meetings	Transferred to MERIT
	2.1.1.4 Value of PPPs developed to date calculated	Completed
	2.1.1.5 Recurring orders of PPP-funded <i>Reading Tools in a Box</i> packages placed	Completed
2.1.2 Printing and distribution of decodable books, leveled books, and materials registers	2.1.2.1 Procurement sent to printers	Completed
	2.1.2.2 Books and materials registers in production	Completed
	2.1.2.3 Delivery of books and materials registers to schools	Completed
	2.1.2.4 Schools keep record of supplementary readers taken for home reading	Completed
2.1.3 Replenishment of learner books	2.1.3.1 Existing school stocks and shortfalls verified	Canceled
	2.1.3.2 Number of additional TLMs required to meet 1:1 pupil to book ratio (PBR) calculated	Canceled
	2.1.3.3 Replenishment TLMs printed and distributed	Canceled
2.1.4 Provision of a school stock of teacher's guides for mid-year teacher transfers	2.1.4.1 Replenishment teacher's guides printed and distributed for transferred teachers	Canceled

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
2.1.5 Reduction of PBR within Component 2 budget ceiling	2.1.5.1 Actual printing and distribution costs incurred compared to projections	Canceled
	2.1.5.2 Zones lacking PPP support identified	Completed
	2.1.5.3 Additional materials printed and distributed to schools	Completed
2.1.6 Compilation of a catalog of materials developed with EGRA input and support	2.1.6.1 Catalog of existing materials (including Braille TLMs) compiled	Completed
2.2.1 Story cards stocked in classroom library book boxes for daily reading at school and home	2.2.1.1 Print and distribute story cards to intervention schools	Completed
	2.2.1.2 Ensure that story cards and record keeping registers about home use are distributed to schools	Completed
2.2.2 Development and provision of story card titles for Standards 2–3	2.2.2.CH Additional Chichewa titles developed (10)	Completed. 15 titles, not 10
	2.2.2.EN Additional English titles developed (5)	Completed. 15 titles, not 5
2.3.1 Replenishment of letter cards provided to Standards 1–2 in prior school years	2.3.1.1 Existing stocks of and shortfalls of letter cards in Standards 1–2 classrooms verified	Completed
	2.3.1.2 Schools and communities encouraged to leverage Rainbow Paints PPP	Completed
2.4.1 Procurement and distribution of book boxes	2.4.1.1 Book boxes procured and shipped to Lilongwe	Completed
	2.4.1.2 Book boxes and materials distributed to schools	Completed
3.1.1 School-based fairs held to showcase learner reading abilities	3.1.1.1 Regular termly reading fairs held during Terms 1–3	Completed
	3.1.1.2 Year 3 reading fairs evaluated	Canceled

(continued)



**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
3.1.2 District-level reading competitions held to showcase learner reading abilities	3.1.2.1 Consultative meetings convened with MoEST and other stakeholders	Completed
	3.1.2.2 Cluster-level reading competitions completed by end of Term 1	Completed
	3.1.2.3 Zonal-level reading competitions completed by end of Term 2	Completed
	3.1.2.4 District-level reading competitions completed by end of Term 3	Canceled
3.2.1 Communities mobilized to support young readers	3.2.1.1 Community sensitization meetings held with school governing bodies	Completed
	3.2.1.2 Theater for Development implemented in communities	Completed
	3.2.1.3 Special group training review meetings held	Completed
	3.2.1.4 Community-based drama club training review meetings held	Completed
	3.2.1.5 Zonal meetings for change agents held	Completed
	3.2.1.6 Review meetings for local school leaders held	Completed
	3.2.1.7 Review meetings for local community drama clubs held	Completed
	3.2.1.8 Volunteer community reading facilitators (VCRFs) provided t-shirts bearing strategic messaging	Completed
	3.2.1.9 School management committees (SMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and community leaders engaged through SMS messaging	Partial. Only head teachers and teachers were engaged using SMS

(continued)

## Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
3.2.2 Promising approaches to parental support documented and shared	3.2.2.1 Catalog of community-driven activities developed	Completed
	3.2.2.2 Review meetings for VCRFs held	Completed
	3.2.2.3 Community mobilization materials translated into appropriate local languages	Canceled
	3.2.2.4 Role Model Initiative implemented	Completed
	3.2.2.5 Media engaged in publicizing Role Model Initiative	Completed
	3.2.2.6 Communications materials developed for external audiences	Completed
	3.2.2.7 Materials printed and disseminated	Not Done
3.2.3 Activities continuously monitored to allow iterative improvement	3.2.3.1 Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM)/RTI coordination meetings held	Completed
	3.2.3.2 Activity monitoring implemented	Completed
3.2.4 Communities effectively leveraging available reading materials	3.2.4.1 <i>Reading Tools in a Box</i> provided to schools in support of Village Reading Centers	Completed
	3.2.4.2 Rainbow Paints PPP leveraged by communities to paint Learning Walls	Completed
3.2.5 Community Development Assistants (CDAs) supported to monitor community mobilization activities in school communities	3.2.5.1 Fuel provided to CDAs to underwrite data collection, monitoring, and support visits to school communities	Completed
3.2.6 Development of new and renewal of existing PPPs	3.2.6.1 PPP Specialist builds upon momentum of <i>Reading Tools in a Box</i> campaign launch event	Completed
	3.2.6.2 EGRA convenes meetings between PPP Specialist and MoEST counterparts	Completed (under MERIT)

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
3.3.1 Provision of support to schools by parents and communities	3.3.1.1 SMCs encouraged to include reading activities in SIPs	Completed
	3.3.1.2 SMCs, PTAs, and Mother Groups encouraged to monitor teacher absenteeism	Completed
	3.3.1.3 Parents and communities encouraged to support schools in covering books	Completed
	3.3.1.4 Parents and families encourage their children to read materials at home	Completed
3.3.2 Parental assessment of learners using Mini-Learner Assessment Test (LAT) Kit	3.3.2.1 Parental usage of Mini-LAT Kit piloted in 6 zones	Completed
	3.3.2.2 Mini-LAT Kit and administration protocol revised prior to wider rollout in Term 2	Canceled – work plan realignment
	3.3.2.3 Mini-LAT Kit usage rolled out to additional zones	Canceled – work plan realignment
3.4.1 Dissemination of Disability Education Resource Guide (DERG)	3.4.1.1 DERG dissemination plan developed	Completed
	3.4.1.2 DERG dissemination plan implemented	Completed
3.4.2 Convening of DSNE Desk Officer Conference	3.4.2.1 DSNE Desk Officer Conference participant list developed	Completed
	3.4.2.2 DSNE Desk Officer Conference agenda finalized	Completed
3.4.3 Hosting of Persons with Disabilities Stakeholder Meeting	3.4.3.1 Persons with Disabilities Stakeholder Meeting participant list developed	Completed
	3.4.3.2 Persons with Disabilities Stakeholder Meeting agenda finalized	Completed
	3.4.3.3 Persons with Disabilities Stakeholder Meeting held	Completed

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
3.4.4 Development of Braille Cup Implementation Guide	3.4.4.1 2014 & 2015 Braille Cup events and planning processes reviewed	Completed
	3.4.4.2 Draft Braille Cup Implementation Guide developed	Completed
	3.4.4.3 Draft Braille Cup Implementation Guide circulated to stakeholders for comment	Completed
	3.4.4.4 Braille Cup Implementation Guide finalized	Completed
3.4.5 Implementation of 2016 Braille Cup	3.4.5.1 Braille Cup planning committee established, including MoEST, civil society, and teachers	Completed
	3.4.5.2 Braille Cup corporate sponsor identified	Completed
	3.4.5.3 Braille Cup planning finalized	Completed
	3.4.5.4 2016 Braille Cup implemented	Completed
3.5 Integration with USAID EdData II Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) activity	Piloting of SBCC to improve reading	Ongoing
Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Q3 of FY 2016
4.1.1 Advocate for technical working groups (TWGs) relevant to early grade reading (EGR) to be held	4.1.1.1 Costs to host TWG on Standards, Research, and Development underwritten	Completed
	4.1.1.2 Costs to host TWG on Teacher Education underwritten	Completed
	4.1.1.3 Costs to host TWG on Basic Education underwritten	Completed
4.1.2 Active participation in meetings of TWGs relevant to EGR	4.1.2.1 Meetings of TWG on Standards, Research, and Development attended	Completed
	4.1.2.2 Meetings of TWG on Basic Education attended	Completed
	4.1.2.3 Meetings of TWG on Teacher Education attended	Completed

(continued)

## Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
4.1.3 Host quarterly Reading Interventions Coordination Meetings	4.1.3.1 Cost of hosting quarterly reading interventions coordination meetings underwritten	Completed
4.2.1 Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) implemented and monitored in intervention districts	4.2.1.1 Statement of clarification regarding MOU implementation guidelines issued	Completed
	4.2.1.2 MOUs focused specifically on children with special needs developed	Canceled
	4.2.1.3 Communities' support for EGRA activities monitored	Completed
4.3.1 Advocate for implementation of guidelines for extension of instructional time	4.3.1.1 Stakeholder consultation meeting(s) convened regarding Malawi Institute of Education's (MIE's) "Extension of School Day" proposal	Completed. Issue now under MERIT.
	4.3.1.2 "Extension of School Day Status Check" included as agenda item in EGRA directors' meetings	Completed. Now policy.
	4.3.1.3 "Extension of School Day Status Check" included as agenda item in reading intervention coordination meetings	Completed
	4.3.1.4 Submission of guidelines to MoEST management advocated	Completed
4.4.1 Policy consultations with MoEST	4.4.1.1 EGRA directors' meetings hosted	Completed
4.4.2 Support implementation of approved <i>Guidelines for the Management of Teaching and Learning Materials</i> (GMTLM)	4.4.2.1 Costs to print 10,000 units of GMTLM underwritten	Canceled
	4.4.2.2 Stakeholder meetings to finalize <i>GMTLM Implementation Handbook</i> developed by blueTree Group convened	Completed
	4.4.2.3 Costs to print 10,000 units of <i>GMTLM Implementation Handbook</i> underwritten	Canceled
4.4.3 Support MoEST capacity to leverage PPPs	4.4.3.1 "PPP Handover Status Check" included as agenda item in EGRA directors' meetings	Completed

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
4.4.4 Develop policy briefs in light of EGRA's experience	4.4.4.1 Mixed-methods research study to consolidate lessons learned under EGRA conducted	Completed
	4.4.4.2 Policy brief(s) developed on MOU Implementation	Canceled
	4.4.4.3 Policy brief(s) developed on disability	Completed
	4.4.4.4 Policy brief(s) developed on additional topics as appropriate	Completed
4.4.5 Finalization and approval of draft benchmarks for Chichewa developed in November 2014 advocated	Finalization of draft benchmarks included in the agenda for TWG on Standards, Research, and Development meetings	Completed
4.4.6 Facilitation of benchmarking workshop for English Standards 1–4	English Standards 1–4 benchmarking workshops conducted	Canceled
4.5.1 Improvement of collaboration between District Education Managers (DEMs) and SNE Desk Officers	4.5.1.1 Conference participant list developed	Completed
	4.5.1.2 Conference agenda finalized	Completed
	4.5.1.3 Conference convened	Completed
ME-1.1 Carry out LAT equating study	ME-1.1.1 Carry out LAT equating study	Completed
ME-1.2 Support PEAs on use of Tangerine to collect monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data	ME-1.2.1 Technical support provided to PEAs on use of Tangerine	Completed
	ME-1.2.2 Monitor PEAs' use of Tangerine in data collection	Completed
ME-1.3 Tangerine-based M&E implemented	ME-1.3.1 Tangerine-based M&E implemented by PEAs and district staff	Completed
	ME-1.3.2 Data coordination meetings with District Monitoring and Evaluation Officers (DMEs)	Completed

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
ME-1.4 Small-scale LAT quantitative assessments	ME-1.4.1 Review phonological awareness (PA) tests and modify LAT instruments	Completed
	ME-1.4.2 Develop new passages for oral reading fluency (ORF) and comprehension subtests	Completed
	ME-1.4.3 Rendering of updated LAT instrument in Tangerine	Completed
	ME-1.4.4 Selection of new sample set of schools for SY2015/16	Completed
	ME-1.4.5 LAT assessments conducted every term	Completed
ME-1.5 Conduct lessons learned cascade workshops	ME-1.5.1 Develop facilitators' guide for lessons learned cascade review meetings	Cancelled due to work plan re-alignment
	ME-1.5.2 Orient government counterparts on facilitators' role	Cancelled
	ME-1.5.3 Conduct zonal review meetings	Completed
	ME-1.5.4 Conduct district review meetings	Completed
	ME-1.5.5 National lessons learned conference	Cancelled, conducted EGRA-MERIT Summit to share lessons learned
ME-1.6 Assess learning gains in relations to ETWs, TOFs, and ZTWs	ME-1.6.1 Conduct operations research to assess learning gains in relations to ETWs, TOFs, and ZTWs	Completed
ME-2.1 Coordinate with external evaluator (Social Impact) on impact assessment	ME-2.1.1 Coordinate with SI on end of School Year 3 assessments and EGRA final evaluation assessment in intervention districts	Completed
	ME-2.1.2 Coordinate with SI on evaluation of impact of various EGRA activities, including the GUC, reading fairs, and other incentives	Completed
	Develop one pager on key findings from midterm evaluation report for dissemination to key stakeholders	Cancelled

(continued)

**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
ME-3.1 Regular ongoing reporting	ME-3.1.1 Quarterly performance reports	Completed
	ME-3.1.2 Quarterly financial reports	Completed
	ME-3.1.3 Annual report	Completed
	ME-3.1.4 Monthly updates to MoEST counterparts	Partial. Not every month
	ME-3.1.5 Quarterly technical meetings with Chief Director, directors of MoEST and USAID	Completed
INT-1.1 Integration with Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity (ASPIRE)	INT-1.1.1 Common use of reading centers	Completed
	INT-1.1.2 Shared use of reading centers	Completed
	INT-1.1.3 Co-funding of PEA coaching visits to schools	Completed
	INT-1.1.4 Coordinate scheduling for training of PEAs	Completed
INT-1.2 Integration with Support for Service Delivery Integration (SSDI) Communications	INT-1.2.1 Revise the Malaria Comic Book	Completed
	INT-1.2.2 Distribute 4,806 copies of the revised malaria comic book	Completed
INT-1.3 Integration with Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM)	INT-1.3.1 Incorporate agricultural message in Standard 3 supplementary readers	Completed
	INT-1.3.2 Distribute supplementary readers and brochures	Completed
INT-1.4 Integration with FHI360 Feed the Future	INT-1.4.1 Assessment of mobile phone network	Completed
	INT-1.4.2 Establishment of network of mobile money agents	Completed
	INT-1.4.3 Mobilization of teachers	Completed
	INT-1.4.4 Registration of Mobile Money Accounts	Completed
	INT-1.4.5 Capacity-building of teachers	Completed
	INT-1.4.6 Monitoring & Evaluation	Completed

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**Annex 6. Progress against Planned Activities (continued)**

Subtasks	Activities	Status by End of Activity
INT-1.5 Integration with International Potato Center (CIP)	INT-1.5.1 Provide orange-fleshed sweet potato vines to VCRFs	Completed