



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ZAMBIA

EDUCATION DATA ACTIVITY

Quarterly Report Q1

Fiscal Year 2019

CONTRACT NUMBER: 72061118C0005 UNDER IDIQ AID-QAA-I-14-00057-ABE ACR

ACTIVITY START DATE AND END DATE: APRIL 09, 2018 TO OCTOBER 08, 2021

Submitted on January 15, 2019

This page is intentionally left blank.

USAID EDUCATION DATA ACTIVITY

QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 FISCAL YEAR 2019

Submitted to:

Yvonne Chomba, Task Order Contracting Officer's Representative

USAID/Zambia

Submitted by:

DevTech Systems, Inc.

IDIQ AID-OAA-I-14-00057-ABE ACR

Contract 72061118C00005

DISCLAIMER:

This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of DevTech and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	3
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	3
PROGRESS NARRATIVE	5
OTHER REPORTS	12
CROSS CUTTING ISSUES	13
CONTRACT MODIFICATION	14
ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS	14
CHALLENGES	14
LESSONS LEARNED	15
NEXT STEPS	16

ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECZ	Examination Council of Zambia
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSI	Management Systems International
ORF	Oral Reading Fluency
PISA-D	Programme for International Students Assessment for Development
QASP	Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSME	Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
TOCO	Task Order Contracting Officer
TOCOR	Task Order Contracting Officer's Representative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID Education Data activity began implementation in April 2018, with the objective to provide education assessment, data management, and research and evaluation services in support of the forthcoming USAID Let's Read Project¹ activity that targets Eastern, Muchinga, North-Western, Western, and Southern Provinces. The USAID Education Data activity also aims to strengthen the capacity of the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) and the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) to track and collect data to improve learning outcomes in Zambia. The Education Data activity is funded by USAID/Zambia, and ends by October 2021.

This quarterly report presents USAID Education Data activity's performance and progress covering the period October 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. The Education Data activity builds on nine tasks that are to be completed during the 3.5 years of the life of the Activity. During the reporting period, the Activity focused on sampling plan, piloting and finalizing instruments, training of quality assurance officers and assessors, conducting baseline EGRA, developing EGRA Data Collection Framework, and revising language mapping, transition strategy, and Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan reports based on USAID feedback.

¹ Let's Read Project will support the GRZ's Primary Literacy Program, which seeks to improve reading outcomes for approximately 1.4 million children attending public and community schools from pre-primary through Grade 3. Let's Read Project is also aligned with Goal One of the USAID Global Education Strategy: "Improving Reading Levels for a Hundred Million [primary-school]" learners. This activity directly supports the USAID/Zambia 2011-2018 CDCS Development Objective (DO) No. 3, 'Human Capital Improved,' and under that DO the Intermediate Result (IR) "Educational Achievement in Math and Reading Improved." The activity responds directly to Sub-Intermediate Result (SIR) 3.1.2 'Public and Community School Performance Improved' and contributes to the achievement of SIR 3.1.1 'Ministry of Education Systems Strengthened' (FedBiz Site, USAID Request for Proposals (RFP) Number 72061118R00001 for Let's Read Project Activity, March 2018).

INTRODUCTION

This quarterly report presents USAID Education Data activity performance progress covering the period October 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. The performance report incorporates major accomplishments by the project in collaboration with MoGE and ECZ. The report is organized according to the nine tasks that are contracted to be carried out by the Activity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Table 2 below provides a summary of the major benchmarks and accomplishment achieved during the reporting period by the contracted tasks.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON MAJOR MILESTONES (OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2018)		
	MILESTONES	PROGRESS
Task 1: Language Mapping Exercise		
1.1	Language Mapping Report (Deliverable)	Based on the in-depth verification of the language of instruction (LoI) in 816 schools that were assessed during the baseline EGRA, the Language Mapping report was revised and submitted to USAID for feedback and approval on December 19, 2018.
Task 2: Early Grade Reading Assessment Preparation		
2.1	Sampling Methodology Plan for baseline (Deliverable)	Using the language mapping exercise database as a sampling frame, the Education Data activity submitted the Sampling Methodology Plan to USAID on October 4, 2018 for review and feedback. The Sampling Plan was revised based on USAID feedback on October 12th, 2018, and approved on October 19, 2018.
2.2	EGRA Data Collection Framework for baseline (Deliverable)	Based on the experiences and lessons learned from conducting the Baseline EGRA in 2018, Education Data activity updated the EGRA Data Collection Framework and submitted it for USAID approval on December 21, 2018. Education Data activity updated the following sections of the Framework; (1) EGRA baseline tools; (2) sampling methodology; (3) the training of QCOs and Assessors; (4) EGRA pilot and; (5) EGRA data collection in the field.
Task 3: Pilot Assessment		

This was completed for baseline in the previous quarter (September 2018)		
Task 4: Finalization of Instruments to conduct EGRA		
4.1	Finalization of Instruments for baseline	On October 9, 2018, Education Data activity met at the Curriculum Development Center with representatives from MoGE and ECZ to review and finalize all EGRA data collection tools in 7 local languages. The finalized tools were cleared by USAID on October 9, 2018.
4.2	Dry Run for baseline	Dry runs and practice for QCOs and assessors were conducted in all 5 target provinces from October 29 - 30, 2018.
Task 5: Train EGRA QCOs and Assessors		
5.1	Train EGRA QCOs and Assessors for EGRA Baseline	Education Data activity recruited and trained 58 QCOs from October 17 – 20, 2018 and 119 assessors from October 22 – 25, 2018 in Lusaka.
5.2	Train EGRA QCOs and Assessors for Oral Language Module	One QCO and two assessors participating in EGRA were also trained on October 25, 2018 to assess oral language skills in Icibemba language.
Task 6: Conduct EGRAs		
6.1	Conduct Baseline EGRA	From October 31 to December 5, 2018, conducted EGRA baseline in a sample of 816 government run public or community schools located in 593 zones within the 58 districts in Eastern, Muchinga, North-Western, Western, and Southern Provinces. In the 816 schools, the baseline assessed 15,108 Grade 2 learners for early grade reading skills, and interviewed 15,108 learners, 802 teachers and 815 head teachers.
6.2	Conduct Oral Language Module	The oral language assessment was conducted in Icibemba in 10 schools (sampled for EGRA baseline) located in Chinsali district in Muchinga Province from October 31 to December 5, 2018. A total of 192 Grade 2 learners were assessed.
Task 7: Data entry, analysis and build the Examination Council of Zambia's (ECZ) capacity		
7.1	Data Cleaning and preparing for analysis and reporting	Data cleaning began on December 5 th and continued until December 31, 2019. Data analysis and reporting is planned for next quarter.

Task 8: Disseminate EGRA results to key stakeholders		
Planned for May-June 2019		
Task 9: Conduct Research		
9.1	Conduct Research Study I	Developed a research outline for examining role of ECE to potentially start in 2019 after the Let's Read Project is rolled out. Outline was submitted to USAID for further discussion on December 20, 2018.
Other Accomplishments		
1	Transition Strategy (Deliverable)	Conducted online survey monkey and in-depth interviews with ECZ staff to look at their capacity in six key areas: planning, financial and human resources, data management, training, data collection and monitoring, data analysis and report writing and dissemination. The gap analysis identified several topics for potential skills training with ECZ. These topics will be discussed with ECZ in the next quarter.
2	AMELP	USAID provided feedback on December 28, 2018 on a draft that Education Data activity submitted in September 2018. Revised report will be submitted for USAID approval in next quarter.
3	Annual Report	Submitted the Annual Report for 2018 fiscal year on November 30, 2018. USAID feedback was received on December 26, 2018.

PROGRESS NARRATIVE

TASK I: LANGUAGE MAPPING EXERCISE

The Education Data activity revised the draft report based on feedback given by USAID on September 23, 2018 and resubmitted it to USAID on December 26, 2018. Revisions included updates from the in-depth verification of information in the 816 schools that were assessed during the EGRA baseline in November 2018. The finalized database consisted of 4,626 government run public or community schools operating in 593 zones, within 58 districts in the five provinces targeted by the USAID-funded Let's Read Project. The five target provinces are Eastern, Muchinga, North-Western, Western, and Southern Provinces. The revised report with updated database was submitted to USAID on December 19, 2018 for further review and approval. The report will be finalized in the next quarter after receiving feedback and final approval from USAID, expected thereafter.

TASK 2: EGRA PREPARATION

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY PLAN

The Education Data activity reviewed the database developed under the language mapping exercise in preparation for developing a sampling framework for the EGRA baseline. Using the database, a sampling methodology plan for conducting the 2018 EGRA was developed. A total of 1,015 schools are contractually required for the EGRA baseline. However, due to time constraints posed the examination period in November 2018, a total of up to 816 schools were considered and agreed upon with USAID. The 816 schools were determined to be adequate to be statistically representative of the population of schools in the five provinces by Lol. The 816 schools represent 17.6% of the school population of 4,626 government run public or community schools in the five provinces. A stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample in each district and province by Lol and by the type of school. A similar method was recently used by the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) to conduct a nationwide EGRA in 2018. In each of the 816 sampled schools, up to 20 learners would be randomly selected (10 boys and 10 girls) to administer the EGRA. The EGRA assessed each learners' reading skills in one of the seven Lols that is designated for that area in addition to English oral language skills. The Sampling Methodology Plan, which is a contract deliverable, was submitted to USAID for review on October 3, 2018, and a revised report was approved by USAID on October 19, 2018.

EGRA DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK MANUAL

In 2016, RTI prepared an EGRA toolkit for Zambia, "*EGRA Assessment Framework: EGRA Toolkit Adapted for Zambia*".² The Education Data activity revised the 2016 toolkit based on the experiences from conducting the baseline EGRA in 2018. The toolkit explains how the EGRA tools are adapted, deployed, and analyzed with specific contextual information for the USAID Education Data activity and Zambia. The report also includes tools, training materials, and data collection steps. The document was submitted to USAID on December 21, 2018. It will be finalized based on USAID feedback and submitted for approval in the next quarter.

TASK 3: PILOT ASSESSMENT

This task was completed for baseline EGRA in September 2018.

TASK 4: FINALIZATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS TO CONDUCT EGRA

EGRA tools that were revised based on pilot assessments carried out in September 2018 were finalized on October 9, 2018. The Education Data Activity held meeting at Curriculum Development Center with representatives from MoGE and ECZ for half day to review and finalize all EGRA data collection tools in 7 local languages. The workshop was attended by 24 MoGE/ECZ officials (18 males, 6 females), out of whom 2 were from ECZ (1 male, 1 female). During the workshop EGRA subtasks (reading and listening

²

https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/sites/default/files/eddata/Man_Zambia_EGRA_Task_28_EGRA_Framework_Toolkit_Adapted_for_Zambia_Final_revised26May2016.pdf. This toolkit adapted included several elements from the second edition of the "Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit" published in March 2016. See https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/sites/default/files/resource_files/EGRA%20Toolkit%20Second%20Edition.pdf

passages, non-word decoding task, syllable identification task, letter sound identification task, English vocabulary and English listening comprehension) and SSME instruments (head teacher, teacher and learner questionnaires) were reviewed. Finalized tools were cleared by USAID on October 9, 2018. The Education Data activity then programed all the revised tools into tablets to use at baseline.

Oral language skills are a foundation for literacy acquisition. In order to construct meaning, learners must link the words read to semantic representation or meaning attached to the word, and knowing the meaning of words relates to a child's overall oral language skills. Even if learners can decode, they cannot understand a text well without strong oral language skills. Word knowledge refers to the ability to understand the meaning of words when a child hears or reads them (receptive) as well as to use them when the child speaks or write (expressive). Therefore, at the request of USAID, the Education Data activity also carried out oral language skills assessment as a pilot in one language in 10 schools along with the EGRA baseline. The purpose of the oral language module is to assess learners receptive and expressive word knowledge to gauge learners' oral language skills and attention. The Activity adapted an existing oral language module tool on October 15, 2018 to test learners in Ibibemba language. Upon final clearance of the tool by USAID on October 16, 2018, the Activity developed a data collection plan for the oral module to conduct alongside EGRA baseline, and programed the tool in the Myna format into electronic tablets to train assessors and use at baseline.

TASK 5: TRAIN EGRA ASSESSORS

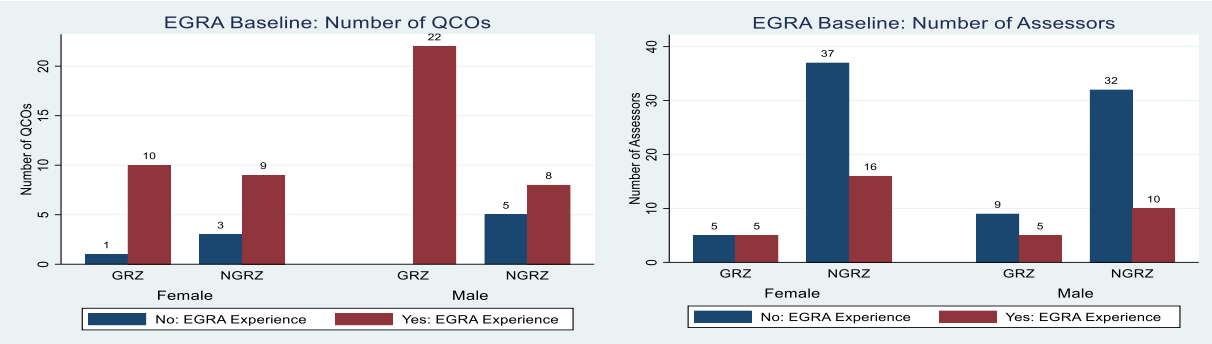
TRAINING OF QCOs AND ASSESSORS

In preparation of the QCO and assessors' training, the Education Data activity contacted ECZ and CDC and requested for help with the selection and recruitment process, and placed a call for applications in a major newspaper on September 24, 2018. A total of 125 QCOs (81 males; 44 females) and 260 assessors (142 males; 118 females) applied for the positions. Then, the Education Data activity staff phone interviewed eligible applicants and selected 58 QCOs and 119 assessors.

The Education Data activity trained 58 Quality Control Officers from October 17 - 20, 2018 and all the QCOs and 119 Assessors (60 males, 58 females) from October 22 – 25, 2018 for baseline data collection at the Golden Peacock hotel in Lusaka. The training was officially opened by the Director of the Directorate of Planning and Information on Tuesday, October 23, 2018. Three international master trainers conducted the trainings with support from Education Data activity staff and a program associate from the Head Quarters office who travelled to Zambia for the trainings.

Table 2 shows the numbers of QCOs and assessors that were trained in October 2018. Annex B shows the number of QCOs and assessors trained by the province they were posted to for data collection (An Excel document was submitted separately that included the names of the 58 QCOs and 119 assessors trained in October 2018).

Table 2: Number of QCOS and Assessors Trained for Baseline							
Previous EGRA Experience	GRZ			Non-GRZ			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Sub-Total	Male	Female	Sub-Total	
QCOS							58
Yes	22	10	32	8	9	17	
No	0	1	1	5	3	8	
Sub-Total	22	11	33	13	12	25	
Assessors							119
Yes	5	5	10	10	16	26	
No	9	5	14	32	37	69	
Sub-Total	14	10	24	42	53	95	



During the training, the participants learnt about child protection guidelines and data collection protocols, practiced using tablets to gather data, marking EGRA assessments, and on administering learner, teacher and head teacher survey tools and the school environment checklist. Trainers used several videos during the training to add value to the training.

Trainees were assessed for Inter Rater Reliability (IRR) against a gold standard of 90 percent agreement. During training, assessors alongside a highly skilled rater assess a learner at the same time using the EGRA tool. Then each assessors' marking of the EGRA are compared to that of the skilled rater to determine their IRR score, which represents the percent of agreement. In accordance with the gold standard, 149 trainees (58 QCOS and 91 assessors) or 84 percent of the trainees scored around 95 percent, and none scored less than 85 percent. Trainees who scored less than 90 percent were gap trained on areas where they scored less than the gold standard.



Assessors working in groups during training in Lusaka

ORAL LANGUAGE MODULE

On October 26, 2018 (a day after the EGRA training ended), a master trainer also trained one QCO and two assessors, who were also trained on EGRA, on administering the oral language assessment tool in Icibemba. In ten schools in Chinsali district located in Muchinga province, Grade 2 learners were tested on both EGRA and oral language skills.

TASK 6: CONDUCT EGRA

DRY RUNS

Education Data activity conducted dry runs with QCOs and assessors in Lusaka and in all five provinces. Dry runs helped the QCOs and assessors to practice what they learnt during the training in real settings and in the language(s) of instruction used in the province. Also, the dry runs helped the Education Data activity staff to carefully monitor them in schools to identify areas for any gap training. In order to facilitate the dry runs, the Education Data activity obtained approval from the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) in each province and a letter addressed to the head teachers to permit the dry runs to take place in the selected schools (see Annex C for a letter from the Permanent Secretary, and Annex D for a letter from the PEO in Muchinga).

The first dry run was conducted in one school in one language, Cinyanja, in Lusaka at Thorn Park primary school on October 23, 2018. Then, provincial dry runs took place in all 5 target provinces from October 29 – 30, 2018. None of the schools included for dry runs were among the sampled schools for baseline EGRA. Table I shows districts in which dry runs were conducted in the five provinces.

Province	District	Primary schools
Eastern	Chipata	St. Antanazio, Chipata, Katopola, Mpezeni
Eastern	Chama	Nkhanga
Muchinga	Chinsali	Mwaba, Mishishi
North Western - Luvale	Kabompo	Pokola, Indeco
North Western – Lunda	Mwinilunga	Mwinilunga, Kanyihampa

North Western - Kiikaonde	Solwezi	Tumvwanganai, Kawama
Western		Kanyonyo, Mulambwa, Mongu
Southern	Choma	Adastra, St. Patrick's, Swan

All QCOs and assessors were assessed for inter rater reliability (IRR). Based on ranking as per the IRRs above 90 percent, the Education Data activity selected 56 QCOs and 112 assessors for baseline data collection and the rest (2 QCOs and 7 assessors) were maintained as reserves should there be a need for surge support.

BASELINE DATA COLLECTION

A total of 56 teams, each comprised of one QCO and 2 assessors, were deployed to gather data in the sampled schools. Each team was assigned at least one district and the schools sampled within the district, and was provided with a list showing the names and location of the sampled schools and date by which data collection should be completed.

The EGRA baseline data collection in the five target provinces started on October 31, 2018. Fifty-three teams completed data collection in their assigned areas by November 30, 2018. But, three teams continued until December 5, 2018: a team assigned to Kalomo district in Southern province that completed data collection on December 3; a team assigned to Chinsali district in Muchinga province that conducted both EGRA and oral language module in Icibemba completed on December 5 and; a team assigned to Kabompo district in North Western province completed on December 5, 2018.

A total of 816 schools were assessed for the EGRA baseline per the sampling plan. In this quarter, a total of 15,108 Grade 2 learners (17,395 including IRR assessments) from 816 schools were assessed with an average of 18.5 learners per school. Also, a total of 815 head teachers, 802 teachers were interviewed and 816 school inventories were completed.

During the data collection, 2,287 IRRs (15 percent of total assessments) were also conducted to ensure data quality. IRRs ranged from 94 percent to 98 percent during this period, with the majority of assessors consistently scoring above 95 percent.

ORAL LANGUAGE MODULE

The oral language module was conducted in 10 schools in Muchinga province, Chinsali district in Icibemba from October 31 to December 5, 2018. Purposive sampling was used to select the 10 schools from the 15 schools sampled for EGRA in the district. In each of the 10 sampled schools, the team conducted oral language assessment a day after EGRA with the same learners tested for early grade reading skills. A total of 192 Grade 2 learners were assessed in oral language module.



An assessor conducting the EGRA with a Grade 2 learner

TASK 7: COMPLETE DATA ENTRY, ANALYSIS AND BUILD ECZ'S CAPACITY

After completing data collection on December 5, the Education Data activity began cleaning the data in preparation for analysis in the next quarter. The Education Data activity also conducted a short online survey and KIIs with ECZ officials in December (see Transition Strategy discussion below) to help develop capacity building plans in 2019.

TASK 8 – DISSEMINATE EGRA RESULTS

This task is planned for May-June 2019.

TASK 9: RESEARCH STUDIES

The Education Data activity, as part of the research task, will carry out four research studies during the contracted period. In July 2018, the Activity conducted a half day workshop with 12 participants drawn from MoGE, ECZ and EDC to discuss potential topics for research studies. There was consensus among all workshop participants to explore the effects of emergent literacy in preparing learners for successful transition to Grade 1 and on reading skills of primary learners. Therefore, as part of the research task, the Activity developed a research outline for examining the role of ECE and submitted on December 20, 2018 to USAID for further discussion in the next quarter. The study is expected to begin in 2019 after Let's Read Project is rolled out.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

USAID ZAMBIA COMMUNICATION MEETING

The Project Director from the Head Quarters office, Dr. Geetha Nagarajan, attended a communication meeting at the U.S. Embassy on October 11, 2018.

MEETINGS WITH ECZ

Sub-contractor MSI's Technical Director, Abdullah Ferdous, held a meeting with the ECZ's Senior Research Officer, Mr. Shadreck Nkoya, at the Education Data activity office on October 25, 2018 to discuss potential topics for capacity building in 2019.

OTHER REPORTS

ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PLAN (AMELP)

Contractually, the AMELP is a deliverable. The Education Data activity team drafted the AMELP and submitted it to the USAID TOCOR for review on June 22, 2018. The AMELP includes the development hypothesis and critical assumptions and; baseline values and targets to show progress over time. In the document a Performance Data Table summarizing the key performance monitoring information is included. The document also presents Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for each indicator that includes detailed description of performance indicators to be tracked, source, method and schedule of data collection. Data limitations and planned actions to address the limitations have been outlined. The plan identifies how data will be collected and stored and how data quality will be ensured by the Activity.

The draft was reviewed by USAID and feedback was provided in September 2018 along with a revised standard indicator list. The Education Data activity revised the report with detailed and updated PIRS and submitted it for USAID review. TOCOR provided feedback on December 26, 2018. The AMELP will be revised based on USAID feedback and submitted for approval in the next quarter.

ANNUAL REPORT

The annual report for fiscal year 2018 discussing the progress made by the Education Data activity during the period of April 9, 2018 to September 30, 2018 was submitted to USAID on October 30, 2018. The Annual Report will be revised based on USAID feedback received on December 26, 2018 and submitted in the next quarter for approval.

TRANSITION STRATEGY

The Education Data activity envisions to accomplish the 2018 baseline EGRA by working closely with the ECZ, and to transfer approximately 50 percent of EGRA related tasks to ECZ at midline in 2020. The Activity is developing a Transition Strategy that outlines a vision on what is needed for ECZ to independently implement large-scale EGRA in Zambia and continue the work of the Education Data activity in future. A draft report was produced in September 2018 and submitted for USAID feedback. USAID comments received in October triggered the collection of additional information on current ECZ capacity to considerably revise the report.

Recognizing that ECZ already has experience implementing EGRA through previous USAID investments, the Education Data activity conducted an ECZ capacity assessment to determine areas that still need capacity improvement at ECZ to reliably implement EGRA in future, and determine the capacity building plan during the life of the Activity. During the quarter, to develop the Transition Strategy and capacity building plans, the Education Data activity conducted the following: (i) a short online survey using the Survey Monkey application was directed towards 32 ECZ officials in late November 2018 with a response

rate of 25 percent (2 female; 6 male), and (ii) in-depth face to face individual key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in mid-December 2018 with five ECZ officials experienced in conducting EGRAs in the past (2 female; 3 male). The surveys and KIIs looked at six key EGRA related tasks: planning; mobilizing financial and human resources; data management; training; data collection and monitoring; data analysis, report writing and dissemination. The Activity began analyzing the survey and interview data to examine strengths and identify gaps that need to be strengthened or addressed for ECZ to conduct large scale EGRAs in the future. The previous draft Transition Strategy will be revised and submitted for USAID approval in the next quarter.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER

During the quarter, inclusion of equal opportunity for both male and female was considered in planning and implementation of activities. For instance, both men and women were considered for EGRA baseline training and data collection. During EGRA, consideration was given to select 10 boys and 10 girls from Grade 2 classes. All data will be collected, analyzed and disaggregated through self-identified gender status. Gender disaggregation will allow for a greater understanding of how gender affects language of instruction and literacy rates and where to address gender gaps, if there is an affect.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Categorical exclusion has been assigned in the contract for the Intermediate Result (IR3.1) Educational Achievement in Reading Improved. Nonetheless, the USAID Education Data activity team ensured all activities conducted during the reporting period did not negatively impact the environment. The Activity does not partner with or procure from organizations and/or companies that engage in environmental degradation. The Activity team regularly checks project deliverables and communication materials to ensure that information sharing does not promote practices that would negatively impact the environment, and that the information sharing sessions themselves have negligible impact on the environment. For instance, the Activity primarily uses electronic communication to minimize use of paper and print ink, and also used electronic data collection using Tablets to reduce use of paper in addition to minimizing data entry errors.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

A key component of the USAID Education Data activity is engaging the GRZ to promote sustainability. Two ECZ staff took part in EGRA training, and 13 ECZ staff participated in survey and key informant interviews for developing the Transition Strategy.

One of the goals of the Education Data activity is to provide local capacity development to MoGE and ECZ for future assessments. During the reporting period, 57 GRZ officials such as Senior Planning Officers, District Resource Center Coordinators and teachers were engaged in EGRA data collection. But, due to national examinations which were taking place in November, only two ECZ officials participated in the training for EGRA baseline data collection. The Education Data activity plans to train ECZ staff in the use of Merado software used for conducting EGRAs on tablets in the next quarter, and to help ECZ in increasing their capacity to perform over half of EGRA related tasks in 2020.

CONTRACT MODIFICATION

The Education Data activity worked on a request for contract modification and sent it for TOCO's consideration on November 20, 2018. The modification request included changes related to sample size targets for baseline, timeline for deliverables, and budget realignment.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

The Program Manager/Team Lead (PM/TL) established regular communication with the Activity Task Order Contracting Officer Representative (TOCOR) through weekly meetings held either at USAID or the project office. The PM/TL also maintained constant communication with the Home Office (HO) along with weekly updates through Skype calls.

The Project Director and Project Manager at the DevTech Head Quarters held a quarterly call with the TOCOR and USAID Education Division head, Sarah Crites, on December 11, 2018 to discuss progress of the activity and planned tasks for 2019.

CHALLENGES

The Activity faced several challenges during the reporting period. Major challenges and how they were resolved are listed below.

1. **Engaging ECZ staff:** ECZ was very busy during the quarter to prepare for conducting the national examinations and in supervising the exams in November. Therefore, it was not possible to engage ECZ staff in training or in data collection tasks. Only two ECZ staff participated for a few days in QCO training in October and none were able to attend assessor training.
2. **Engaging MoGE staff from Headquarters:** It was challenging to engage Head Quarters MoGE staff in EGRA training and data collection due to their demand for higher level of daily subsistence allowances relative to prevailing standardized subsistence allowance for GRZ employees. Besides, there were some expectation of a salary top up as participation fee. The Education Data activity obtained the Joint Assistance Strategy for Zambia Cooperating Partners Framework on Allowances and Per diems agreed upon between the GRZ and several donors in 2010 and updated in August 2017 from the TOCO, and the Conditions for remuneration that are established in the 2016 Public Service Management Division circular (PSMD) #: B21 and used them to provide the GRZ employees with subsistence allowance and travel reimbursements. The Activity also used the documents to remunerate the officials and manage their expectations of any fee as a salary top-up for their participation. Those who refused to accept the established guidelines were excluded from the training and data collection.
3. **Achieving targeted sample size:** The Education Data activity assessed 816 schools in the five target provinces. But, some sampled schools were inaccessible due to bad terrain, closure of some community schools due to lack of teachers or payment of salaries, closure of some lower primary schools due to low enrollment or merging with other public schools or conversion to secondary schools. In such cases, the sampled schools were replaced, and there were 72 replacements made during the data collection period.

Several attempts were made to complete 20 learner assessments, one head teacher, one teacher and one school inventory list in each sampled school but it was challenging in some schools to

achieve the target. Some head teacher and teacher interviews could not be completed due to teacher transfers, unfilled postings, and teacher absenteeism. In addition, several teachers could not be contacted in person or by phone during the data collection period.

The target of 16,320 learners (20 learners in each school) could not be met. Learner absenteeism was high in most of the schools in November due to examinations. Some schools asked Grade 2 learners to stay home to make room for higher Grades to take exams. In some areas, some families took children away for farming activities and catching caterpillars. The teams called the head teachers ahead to schedule visits and to ensure the presence of Grade 2 learners to conduct the EGRA. Also, the Education Data activity requested the help of community leaders to make parents aware of the assessments and send their Grade 2 learners to schools during the assessment weeks.

However, there were some remote schools with less than 20 learners enrolled in Grade 2. It was also not possible to increase the number of sampled schools or number of learners beyond 20 in some sampled schools in order to meet 16,320 learners due to the exam period and time constraints to complete the EGRA by November 30 before schools closed for the academic year on December 7, 2018. Further, it was very challenging to find more schools to conduct assessments in some districts due to the remoteness and school closings.

Transportation during data collection: The Activity, based on ECZ's experience with previous EGRAs including the 2018 EGRA, fixed a daily transportation allowance for the QCOs and assessors to travel to schools to conduct the assessments. The allowance was indeed slightly higher than the rate offered by ECZ in 2018. However, some teams found the allowance to be inadequate to reach some sampled schools in remote areas and faced difficulty in finding public transportation to reach schools on time in some places. The Education Data activity, upon receiving feedback using the WhatsApp group chats between all the QCOs and assessors and the Education Data activity staff from the teams, provided additional allowance to the teams to pay for additional expenses and arranged for transportation to visit hard to reach schools.

4. **Internet connectivity:** Communication and uploading of data each day after completing data collection that day were a challenge in remote areas with no internet or poor cell phone connection. Poor cell phone connection also affected reaching head teachers in advance to schedule the visits and to quickly replace schools in case issues arose in some sampled schools when teams visited remote areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Strengthening collaboration with MoGE officials at national, provincial and district levels is essential for implementation and sustainability of activities. Support given by provincial and district teams led to successful EGRA baseline data collection.
- Prior to assessments or capacity building efforts, entering into a clear memorandum of understanding with MoGE and ECZ outlining their commitment to provide staff to engage in training and data collection, allowances and reimbursement guidelines, roles responsibilities during data collection and some cost sharing arrangements is crucial to ensure productive engagement. Also, it will help to build their capacity through focused training and field experience and facilitate successful transition such that they can independently conduct assessments in future.

- Holding training sessions for all QCOs and assessors at a single training center will help enhance training quality and better practice for the trainees. But, conducting dry runs in provincial centers in the languages of assessment considerably helps QCO and assessors to practice on tablets, sampling and on all the tools in real settings and improves confidence to conduct the assessments to produce data with excellent quality.
- Use of electronic tablets for data collection will allow the use of rigorous and objective sampling procedures, achieve excellent data quality, enhance real time monitoring through dashboard, and quick availability of data for analysis and reporting.
- Sample should always include a backup list with an additional two to three schools in each district in case replacements are needed for the sampled school.
- Assessments should avoid examination periods and also long holiday periods. If necessary, during data collection, teams should call the head teacher ahead to check on exam dates, enrollment, and request to mobilize at least 30 - 40 Grade 2 learners to ensure assessors can test 20 learners. This will help to efficiently schedule the visits and in achieving targets. Also, engaging communities/parents to send their Grade 2 learners to schools during the assessment weeks would improve learner attendance during EGRA assessments and achieve targets.
- Establishing a WhatsApp group between all the QCOs and assessors and the Education Data activity staff helps in obtaining real time feedback from teams, to closely monitor the teams and to trouble shoot any issues quickly.

NEXT STEPS

The Education Data activity will continue to work in close collaboration with MoGE, ECZ and USAID and ensure quality and timely implementation of all tasks. The following are the activities to be carried out in the next quarter:

Table 2 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER		
	Activities	Timeline
1.	Plan activities for January to March	January, 2019
2.	Analysis and report preparation	January and February, 2019
3.	Draft Report Submission to USAID	March 01, 2019
4.	Capacity building for ECZ	January to March, 2019
5.	Conduct data quality assurance	February – March, 2019
6.	Document experiences from EGRA baseline and write success stories	January 28 – February, 2019
7.	Finalize and seek approval for Language Mapping Exercise report; Transition Strategy; AMELP.	January 2019
8.	Discuss with USAID and plan for research task	February – March, 2019

ANNEX A: PROGRESS SUMMARY AS PER ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING PLAN³

Indicator	Description & Unit of Measurement	Reporting Frequency	Baseline Value	Year 1 Target	Actual Achieved (as of Dec. 2018)	Notes
IR Indicator 1: Number of EGRA available for use by USAID and Ministry of Education	Number of rounds of EGRA for which complete dataset, including: data in electronic format, documentation, and assessment report are available to USAID and MoGE.	Annually	0	1	n/a	Serves as baseline and Midline assessment for the Let's Read Project.
Indicator 1.1: Number of schools with language profile verified	Number of schools with language profile verified (disaggregated by district)	Annually	0	4,250	4,626	Also serves as sampling frame for baseline survey
Indicator 1.2: Score of EGRA instrument completion	Number from 0 to 100, indicating readiness of new EGRA instrument based on steps required to develop the instrument. Score 100 indicates that instrument is developed and ready to use for implementation of EGRA.	Annually	0	100%	100%	All assessment instruments to be complete for assessment use
Indicator 1.3: Number of EGRA assessors trained	Number of people who completed training and can act as assessors or supervisors for EGRA At least 75% of assessors and QCOs achieving gold standard (above 90%) during data collection training.	Annually	0	168	177 completed training; 84% achieved gold standard	Number of assessors capable of conducting EGRA

³ Indicators and targets for the AMELP are currently under USAID review and yet to be finalized

Indicator 1.4 Number of schools in which EGRA is completed	Number of schools for which EGRA is completed and data are available in database. (Disaggregated by district and by EGRA round of implementation) % of sampled schools reached during data collection; % of targeted teachers and head teachers surveyed during data collection; Level of IRR during data collection	Annually	0	816	818 schools; 815 head teachers; 802 teachers; IRR ranging from 92 to 98% with the majority above 95%.	Baseline and Midline sample size for Let's Read Project.
IR Indicator 2: % of stakeholders reporting having access to EGRA results	Percent of all stakeholders in five target provinces reporting access to the latest round of EGRA data	Annually	0	TBD	n/a	Targets to be set with MoGE and USAID
IR Indicator 2: % of stakeholders reporting having access to EGRA results	Percent of all stakeholders in five target provinces reporting access to the latest round of EGRA data	Annually	0	TBD	n/a	Targets to be set with MoGE and USAID
Indicator 2.1: Number of EGRA dissemination activities conducted	Number of EGRA results dissemination activities conducted. Disaggregated by province, district, and zone.	Annually	0	3	n/a	3 regional at baseline; 2 regional and 1 national at midline.
Indicator 2.2: Number of research studies completed	Number of research studies completed by the Activity staff (alone or in collaboration with other stakeholders)	Annually	0	0	n/a	On topics approved by USAID

IR Indicator 3: Institutional capacity index to implement EGRA	Number from 0 to 100 that indicates capacity of designated Zambia institutions to implement EGRA independently.	Annually	0	TBD	n/a	Targets will be set with MoGE and USAID
Indicator 3.1: Number of individuals trained in implementing EGRA at ECZ and MoGE	Number of individuals trained by the Activity in various aspect of EGRA implementation or use.	Quarterly and Annually	0	TBD	n/a	
Indicator 3.2: % of EGRA tasks implemented by ECZ staff	Percent of EGRA tasks implemented by ECZ staff in total of 11 essential EGRA tasks* Disaggregated by EGRA round	Annually	0	16%	9% (Tools finalization task)	Essential EGRA Tasks include: (i) Sampling Plan; (ii) logistics planning; (iii) Tools finalization; (iv) Programming on Tablets; (v) Training of assessors and QCOs; (vi) Dry runs; (vii) Data Collection; (viii) Monitoring for DQA during data collection; (ix) Data Cleaning & preparation for analysis; (x) Analysis and Reporting; (xi) Results dissemination.
USAID Sub-IR 3.1.2: Public and community school performance increased	<i>USAID Standard Indicator 1.1: Percent of learners who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of grade 2 with USG assistance</i>	2019 and 2021	0	n/a	n/a	Year 2 will be based on EGRA baseline. For 2021, targets set for Let's Read Project activity is used.

ANNEX B: NUMBER OF QCOS AND ASSESSORS TRAINED FOR BASELINE, BY PROVINCE POST FOR DATA COLLECTION AND SEX

Number of QCOS and Assessors Trained for Baseline, by Province Post for Data Collection and Sex			
Province Post	QCOS		
	Males	Females	Total
Eastern	7	3	10
Muchinga	4	3	7
North Western - Luvale	5	1	6
North Western – Lunda	3	4	7
North Western - Kiikaonde	3	3	6
Western	6	5	11
Southern	6	5	11
	34	24	58
	Assessors		
	Males	Females	Total
Eastern	12	9	21
Muchinga	6	7	13
North Western - Luvale	10	3	13
North Western – Lunda	8	5	13
North Western - Kiikaonde	4	9	13
Western	12	11	23
Southern	8	15	23
Totals:	60	59	119

ANNEX C: LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MOGE

All communications should be addressed to:
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education
Not to any individual by name

Telephone: 250855/251315/251283
251293/211318/251291
251003/251319



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

In reply please quote

No.....

MESVTEE 101/8/5

P. O. BOX 50093
LUSAKA

4th October, 2018

Mr. Francis K. Sampa, Ph. D
Project Manager/Team Leader
USAID Zambia Education Data Activity
fsampa@devtechsys.com
LUSAKA


RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT EGRA BASELINE DATA COLLECTION IN FIVE (5) PROVINCES

Refer to the above caption.

We acknowledge receipt of your minute **September 29th 2018** on the above captioned subject matter.

The Ministry of General Education has no objection to you conducting activities that will enable you to collect EGRA baseline data as scheduled, in your five target provinces: Eastern, Southern, North Western, Western and Muchinga provinces.

By copy of this minute, Provincial Education Officers for the intended provinces are informed accordingly.


Louis Mwansa
for/Permanent Secretary – Administration
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

- Cc. Provincial Education Officer – Eastern Province
- Provincial Education Officer – Southern Province
- Provincial Education Officer – North Western Province
- Provincial Education Officer – Western Province
- Provincial Education Officer – Muchinga Province

ANNEX D: SAMPLE LETTER FROM THE PEO TO DEB

All correspondence should be addressed to:
The Provincial Education Officer,
Telephone: 0976009947/0977628381
Email: peomuchinga@yahoo.com



In reply please quote:
File No

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
P.O. BOX 480210
CHINSALI

29th October, 2018

To: The District Education Board Secretaries
MUCHINGA


**RE: AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT EGRA BASELINE DATA COLLECTION
IN YOUR DISTRICTS.**

Refer to the subject.

The Ministry of General Education in collaboration with Education Data Activity (EDA) USAID is conducting a baseline survey in readiness for the Lets Read Zambia Project to start in 2019.

By copy of this minute District Education Board Secretaries for the intended districts are informed and expected to cooperate with the teams that will be collecting data.

Your usual cooperation will be highly appreciated


Ruth.M.Zulu
Provincial Education Officer
MUCHINGA PROVINCE
/db

