



LAC Reads Capacity Program

Work Plan Year 3

October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017

USAID/LAC Reads Capacity Program
Cooperative Agreement No.: AID-OAA-A-14-00058

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Introduction

The 5-year regional USAID/LAC Reads Capacity Program (LRCP), Cooperative Agreement No.: AID-OAA-A-14-00058), implemented by AIR and Juárez and Associates and national-level implementing partners, with the Organization of American States (OAS), increases the impact, scale, and sustainability of early grade reading interventions in the LAC region. This is achieved through the development and dissemination of state-of-the-art knowledge resources and the provision of technical assistance to host country governments and other key stakeholders. The program, implemented from 2014-2019, enhances efforts to boost early grade reading outcomes.

LAC Reads Capacity Program goals are achieved through the implementation of the following four results:

1. Evidence on early grade reading collected, consolidated and systematized for practical use by LAC region stakeholders.
2. Up-to-date knowledge about early-grade reading actively disseminated to targeted audiences and stakeholders.
3. Institutional capacity to implement proven approaches for improving early-grade reading outcomes for poor and disadvantaged children is expanded.
4. Sustainable platforms are in place through which efforts to improve early grade reading in priority LAC countries will be continued and strengthened.

Additionally, in late August 2016, in response to a request from USAID, the team developed and submitted a proposal for expanded work in Haiti during the remaining three years of the LRCP. The expanded scope of work and the related funds (\$4.9m) were approved and incorporated into the LRCP cooperative agreement in late September 2016. As part of this work, the scale of LRCP actions in Haiti will be greatly expanded, and in particular support to the Haitian Ministry of Education (MENFP) under Result 3 will be intensified, with a focus on two goals:

1. Creation of a robust cadre of in-country curriculum and materials development specialists for EGR and embedding of experts in this area within the MENFP.
2. Improved quality of in-service and pre-service teacher training courses and training modules for curriculum and instructional material development related to EGR. In this area, direct target beneficiaries will include higher education and teacher training institutes, MENFP officials, and local instructional materials developers and publishers.

The following work plan and projected activities correspond to Year 3 of the LAC Reads Capacity Program. The work plan includes a brief narrative description of the major objectives to be reached under each program result as well as under cross-cutting areas, including program management, communications, monitoring and evaluation (m&e), and reporting. **More detail is provided in the attached workplan chart**, where the activities and steps to achieve these goals are detailed, as is information on anticipated time frames and principal actors in each activity. While the workplan

narrative focuses on the overall project, please note that a workplan chart is provided for the overall project, as well as one especially for work in Haiti¹.

Cross-cutting areas

Cross-cutting project areas include program and partner management and staffing, communications, m&e, and project reporting. Major objectives for Year 3 in this area include, in the area of m&e, the finalization of the LRCP project monitoring and evaluation plan (PMEP) and the collection and reporting of data for the approved indicators. The team will also use the data collected to inform and refine project activities.

In the area of national partner management, it is useful to distinguish between management actions with existing national partners, and the process of managing national partners in locations where the partner is coming on board. In Honduras, Nicaragua, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, management activities include working with the partners to finalize Year 3 work plans and budgets and the contractual steps necessary to incorporate these into the existing sub awards. This will be followed by implementation of the workplan with the technical supervision and support of the regional coordinators, technical support from the EGR specialist and other technical team members, and financial and contractual support from the AIR and Juárez and Associates home offices. In the case of the national partner in the Dominican Republic, the team will work closely with the partner team in order to provide technical and management support to ensure that project implementation and the technical quality of the services and work produced are high quality and that the technical weaknesses exhibited in the past year are fully resolved.

Early in Year 3, the partner selection process for the national partner in Haiti was finalized, and USAID approval for the partner, Quisqueya University (UniQ), was obtained. Next steps include having planning and coordination meetings with UniQ and USAID personnel and finalizing the contractual documentation as well as the UniQ annual workplan and budget. In the specific case of the UniQ, the LRCP team will also discuss with the UniQ team members the details of the expanded scope of work in Haiti that was recently approved and determine how the UniQ team can contribute to this scope of work. This is expected to lead to changes to their existing scope of work and updates to their annual work plan and budget for work in 2017 and going forward. The UniQ team will then implement the work plan for the remainder of the year, again with the technical supervision and support of the regional coordinators, technical support of the AIR staff in Haiti, as well as the EGR specialist and other project technical staff, and financial and contractual oversight and support from the AIR home and field offices.

The partner selection process for Guatemala was also completed in late Year 2, and the selected partner will be submitted for USAID approval early in Year 3. Once approval is received, the work plan and budget and contractual documents will be finalized. With this, the Guatemala partner will implement the work plan for the remainder of the year, again with technical assistance and supervision from the LRCP project team, as well as contractual, administrative and financial oversight.

¹ The workplan chart for Haiti is a draft and will need to be further refined in the first quarter of calendar year 2017 through discussions with USAID/Washington, USAID/Haiti, Quisqueya University, and the MENFP. It will be updated and finalized after those discussions.

While the LRCP does not have national partners in Peru or the Eastern Caribbean, it will continue its work in both locations. In Peru, the team will coordinate with the USAID Mission team to define specific activities for Year 3 and ways to involve counterparts in Peru. In the Eastern Caribbean, the team will continue to provide technical assistance to the USAID Early Learners Programme, implemented by the OECS, in the area of the EGR baseline, and will also seek to involve the ELP colleagues in other LRCP activities as appropriate.

The LRCP project team will continue having weekly virtual team meetings, as well as plan at least two in-person team meetings during Year 3. The project will also hold virtual meetings with project partner technical staff across partners, as well as meetings with each individual partner team, and will also hold at least one in-person meeting with project partners, planned for February 2017. While significant progress can be made through virtual and at-a-distance meetings and calls and emails, experience to date has reinforced the importance of periodic in-person discussions for effective implementation of LRCP work.

The project team will continue regular meetings and discussions with the AOR, as well as regular technical and financial reporting. The LRCP team will also continue to coordinate with other related USAID projects at the central/regional level, including the Global Reading Network and the LAC Reads Evaluation project, as well as with USAID Missions and projects at the country level (with EGR-focused bilateral projects such as Leer y Aprender in Guatemala, CARS in Nicaragua, Ann Ale implementers in Haiti, and LEER in the Dominican Republic). This coordination will focus on areas for collaboration around knowledge sharing, capacity building, and leveraging sustainability opportunities.

Finally, in the areas of staffing and communications, the regional communications specialist is leaving the project at the end of calendar year 2016, and the LRCP team is seeking a replacement. The project team expects to hire a replacement to work, most likely, in the AIR DC office, since the nature of the position and the work does not necessarily lend itself best to a remote setting. In the short term until someone is on board, the exiting RCS will continue to provide limited support, and staff from the AIR home office will provide support in specific areas as needed (i.e., maintaining social media sites and providing support to website management and publications services).

Additionally in the area of staffing, AIR is currently recruiting for new project staff positions in Haiti that were created due to the expansion of LRCP work. The team is currently recruiting for two technical specialist positions, as well as an administrative/finance position, and has completed the recruitment, interview, and negotiation process for the Technical Manager position, which is a key position. The Technical Manager candidate has accepted a contingent offer, pending USAID approval.

Deliverables due during the year under this result are:

1. PMEP: submitted December 9, 2016
2. Quarterly technical reports: 10/30/2016, 01/30/2017, 04/30/2017, and 07/30/2017
3. Year 4 workplan: September 30, 2017

Result 1: Evidence on early grade reading collected, consolidated and systematized for practical use by LAC region stakeholders

During Year 2, the draft systematic review report was completed and revised based on reviewer and client feedback, and development began on related sub products. The partner teams also carried out the resource collection process, with information on thousands of resources now in hand to become part of the resource database. Efforts in Year 3 will focus on finalizing and disseminating the systematic review report and several other related products, conducting an annual evidence search to update the database, collecting resources in Haiti and Guatemala, and launching the on-line database. Further details are found below.

Goal 1.1 Conduct and use systematic review of early grade literacy evidence

Early in Year 3, the LRCP R1 team will finalize the full systematic review report. The team will also develop an executive summary, a gaps paper, and a recommendations report. In addition to these papers, the team will design and develop a document focused on the state of early grade literacy in Central America. Late in the year the team will conduct a new search for EGL evidence, in order to capture evidence published or made available since the first search was done, and the report and related products will be updated based on this.

Goal 1.2: Conduct resource review

In collaboration with our regional coordinator and national partners, the LRCP Result 1 team will systematize lessons learned and best practices from the resource collection process and use these as inputs for the national partners in Guatemala and Haiti who will be starting this process in the first half of Year 3. The project team will provide training and technical assistance to the UniQ team, and the Guatemala partner team for resource collection and uploading process, which will then be carried out by the partner teams.

Given that Peru has a wealth of resource materials, we will also explore options for carrying out resource collection there. The team will also develop a plan for outreach to contacts in other locations in Central and South America and the Caribbean in order to capture, to the degree possible, resources from other countries in the region. Additionally, throughout the year the team will continue to provide technical assistance for resource collection, management, and use in the project priority countries and in the rest of Latin American and the Caribbean as feasible.

Goal 1.3 Develop evidence and resource database

During year 2, the LRCP team dedicated efforts to collecting and categorizing evidence and resources for the online database. In the 2016-2017 year, the team will continue to collaborate with the AIR client technology staff to finalize the online database. The team will launch and disseminate information on the database as well as offer technical assistance to country partners regarding the database and its use. Furthermore, the team will offer guidance to stakeholders and interested parties in the use of the online database. Additionally, the database will continue to be updated with additional early grade literacy materials and resources, in particular those collected in Haiti and Guatemala, as well as from other

locations in the region. The LRCP team will also collect feedback from database users and incorporate it into its work going forward.

Deliverables due during Year 3 under this result are:

1. Final systematic review report and executive summary, January 17, 2017
2. Gaps paper, January 17, 2017
3. Recommendations paper, June 15, 2017
4. EGL in Central America, TBD
5. Online evidence and resource database, January 31, 2017

Result 2: Up-to-date knowledge about early grade reading is actively disseminated to targeted audiences and stakeholders

During Year 2, the LRCP team worked with existing partners to carry out the stakeholder mapping and analysis process. In Year 3, the team will continue to build on this work, finalizing the related products and carrying out the process in Guatemala and in Haiti. Additionally, the project will launch the full version of the website, with stronger EGL content and with the online evidence and resource database, and will focus strongly on communication and dissemination activities to increase the visibility of the work of the project and of EGL related topics and issues.

Goal 2.1: Conduct and use results of stakeholder mapping process

Late in Year 2, the stakeholder mapping reports for Honduras, Nicaragua, and Jamaica were submitted to USAID. In Year 3, these draft reports and the related products, including a country profile and summary, will be finalized and submitted. The team will also finish and submit the full report for the Dominican Republic and the related products.

The stakeholder mapping process will also be carried out in Haiti and Guatemala, with planning and training beginning in the first half of the year and the process and reports and related products developed after that. After that process is complete, the regional analysis will also be updated to incorporate the results of the process in Haiti and Guatemala.

The team will hold an in-person meeting with partner teams in February. The presentation of the stakeholders mapping and analysis findings will be a key part of this meeting, with discussion among all partners in particular with regard to what the results mean for the work in each country going forward, as well as in the region. This meeting will also serve as an opportunity for the teams from Guatemala and Haiti, who will be beginning the stakeholder mapping process, to learn from the experiences of the other teams and to gain a better sense of the process and outcomes.

Goal 2.2: Disseminate resources of diverse types and through diverse media to targeted audiences

The LRCP team will have a strong focus on communication and dissemination work in Year 3. While the LRCP recruited and hired an excellent regional communications specialist in Year 2 and she made strong advances in this area during her tenure, the team will need to address two challenges in this area early in Year 3. One is the continued delay in the launch of the on-line database and website, which the team is working closely with AIR client technology services to resolve so that this will be launched in early 2017.

The second is the replacement of the regional communications specialist, who is leaving the project; the need to fill this position comes at an important time in project communications work. As described earlier, there are measures to address functions of this role in the short term, and the project will seek to bring someone on board for this position as soon as possible.

The project website, with expanded and updated content and the evidence and resources database, will be launched in early 2017, and will continue to be updated to serve as an information hub, as will the project social media sites. The LRCP newsletter will also be developed and sent out on a regular basis.

The communications and dissemination products currently identified for this project year are included in Annex 4. As the year goes on, additional products and content will be defined, and this list will therefore be updated to include other products to be developed by the project team and partner staff and/or external writers or consultants under the guidance of the project staff.

These products, as well as relevant products developed by other sources, will be shared through the project website and social media networks, and, in some cases in presentations and events. A list of communication and dissemination events is also included in Annex 4, but will also continue to be updated as the year goes on. Items included currently are presentation of the R1 systematic review process and findings at the CIES conference, presentation of the EGL stakeholder mapping process and results at CIES, presentations at the Congreso Latinoamericano de Lectura, and the presentation of the national report card in Honduras, among others.

The LRCP team will also coordinate with USAID and with other actors in the sector and region in the development of products and events. For example, LRCP personnel will coordinate with the Global Reading Network regarding a webinar or series of webinars focused on EGL in the LAC region, as well as other possible joint events. The team will also explore having an event together with Mathematica Policy Research (MPR), such as a discussion of the state of evidence and resources around EGL in the LAC region, and/or presentations of country-level results in locations where MPR has data from studies of EGL interventions under the USAID/LAC Reads Evidence Program.

Deliverables due during the second year under this result are:

1. Stakeholder mapping country profiles and summaries (Honduras, Nicaragua, Jamaica), submitted December 16, 2016
2. Final stakeholder mapping and analysis reports, country profiles and summaries (Jamaica, DR, Honduras, Guatemala), March 15, 2017
3. Haiti and Guatemala stakeholder mapping and analysis reports, country profiles, and summaries, August 15, 2017
4. Project website with expanded content, January 31, 2017

Result 3: Institutional capacity to implement proven approaches for improving early grade reading outcomes for poor and disadvantaged children is expanded

Capacity building work will be a major focus in Year 3 and will be informed primarily by two inputs, the project's Capacity Building Guidelines (Annex 3) and the results of the stakeholder mapping and analysis

processes. These, as well as on the ground national and regional contexts and specific requests, will serve as the basis for capacity building plans.

Goal 3.1: Develop and implement capacity-building plans

Early in Year 3, each national partner will work with the project team to develop national level capacity building plans for the year. These will be shared and discussed at the in-person partner meeting, and will be finalized after that, as will the regional capacity building plan, and implementation will continue throughout the rest of the year. Additionally, the LRCP will seek to provide capacity building and technical assistance based on special or complementary requests from USAID and/or MOEs.

The expanded scope of work in Haiti focuses almost entirely on capacity building; more details can be seen in the draft work plan in Attachment 2. This will be revised and finalized after further discussions with USAID and the MENFP and the UniQ early in 2017.

Deliverables due under Result 3 during the second year include:

1. National (DR, Honduras, Nicaragua, Jamaica) and Regional Capacity Building Plans, 03/31/2017
2. National Capacity Building Plans (Guatemala and Haiti), 06/30/2017
3. Specific technical capacity building products, content, and courses, TBD based on #1 and #2.

Result 4: Sustainable platforms are in place through which efforts to improve early grade reading in priority LAC countries will be continued and strengthened

Given the importance and urgency of defining the R4 strategy early on in Year 3, the LRCP team planned an in-person workshop focused specifically on this topic, with an external facilitator, to ensure definition of and consensus on a concrete proposal. Before the workshop, meetings with team members and the AOR regarding R4 were held, and these were used as inputs for the agenda and for the workshop content itself.

During this meeting the facilitator and team were able to arrive at a consensus that the regional R4 strategy would focus on Central America, and would involve the creation of an entity, envisioned as a small network of key organizations. This entity will be guided by a mission of improving early grade literacy in the Central American region and a vision of a region that produces and applies knowledge derived from research in early grade reading and writing to improve learning. The objectives of the entity are summarized below.

Objectives:

- Encourage synergies among key actors in Central America in the area of early grade literacy
 - Identify best practices and lessons learned in the sector.
 - Capitalize on the strengths of researchers and members of the network.
- Create a culture of research in the area of early grade literacy
 - Promote quality research in the area of early grade literacy.
 - Conduct quality research in the area of early grade literacy.
 - Disseminate research results for appropriation and use by regional and international actors

- Strengthen capacity in research and application of research in early grade reading and writing in Central America
 - Train early grade literacy stakeholders to carry out research in education.
 - Train early grade literacy stakeholders in the use of early grade literacy research results.
- Impact the development and implementation of policies and practices based on the results of early grade literacy research in Central America
 - Promote debate and dialogue among actors in the education sector.
 - Provide technical assistance for the design of educational policies and practices.

Also during the meeting, criteria for member organizations were discussed and identified. After careful review and consideration of criteria, several organizations were identified. One in particular was seen as key to approach first, with the plan that this organization would be central to the development of the entity and would help to define it with the LRCP team and then to identify and invite other members.

A full proposal for the R4 initiative was developed by the consultant team based on the results of the workshop and with further input from the LRCP team, and this was sent to USAID for review in December. After discussions, review, and approval, an operational plan will then be developed based on this. The operational plan will identify steps to carry out, actors to do them, and timeframes for each step. For the rest of the project year, work will proceed along these lines with regard to regional R4 actions.

Additionally, the team will, at the national level, work with implementing partners to create and support conditions for continued EGL improvement. This will be done in all project locations, but particularly in the locations that are not anticipated to be part of the Central American EGL initiative, or not part of the initial phase. For example, in Haiti, the project anticipates beginning to support, in year 3, the design and implementation of a Literacy Observatory, and in Peru the LRCP team may support efforts for regional governments to successfully apply for education funds from the central government and use them to support EGL initiatives.

Deliverables due for Result 4 during the third year include:

1. R4 proposal, submitted 12/15/2016
2. Additional deliverables will be defined and determined in consultation with the AOR in the first quarter of CY 2017, based on the final approved R4 proposal.

Annex 1: Workplan chart (attached)

Annex 2: Draft Haiti Workplan chart (attached)

Annex 3: Capacity Building Guidelines (attached)

Annex 4: Communications Products and Events (attached)