



**EducAcción Project**  
**Quarterly Progress Report**  
**July 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011**



*Submitted by:*  
American Institutes for Research

*With:*  
CARE Honduras  
Catholic Relief Services Honduras  
ChildFund Honduras  
Fundación Aned  
Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu (FEREMA)  
Save the Children Honduras

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Cooperative Agreement No. AID-522-A-11-00003

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

Title of Project: Teacher-Citizen Participation Program (Proyecto EducAcción)

Prime Contractor: American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Cooperative Agreement No.: AID-522-A-11-00003

Reporting Period: July 1, 2011-September 30, 2011

Budget: \$21,300,524

Start Date: July 7, 2011

End Date: July 6, 2016

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## **I. Project Summary**

In July 2011, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) was awarded a Cooperative Agreement from USAID/Honduras to implement the Teacher-Citizen Participation Project (*Proyecto EducAcción* in Spanish), a 5-year project with an estimated budget of \$21,300,524 in federal funds.

This project represents the second phase of USAID support to the “Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)” in Honduras, in cooperation with the Government of Honduras (GOH), civil society, private sector, and other donors working toward the EFA goals to be achieved by 2015.

The Project builds on the work of USAID’s MIDEH/EQUIP2 Project (2005-2011), a partnership with the Honduran Ministry of Education (SE) in support of the achievement of EFA-FTI and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) goals.

With the support of that project and the USAID EQUIP1/MIDEH and EQUIP3/METAS Projects and others, Honduras made important strides toward reaching EFA and PRS goals, but also experienced significant setbacks. The June 2009 coup d’état and the resulting political instability demonstrated the risks and limitations of depending only on the SE and other government structures. These institutions displayed profound institutional weaknesses and levels of politicization which had serious and negative effects on the educational system. A shortened 2009 school year, the institution of automatic promotion in 2009, a significant number of school days lost in 2009, 2010, and 2011 due to political unrest and teachers’ strikes, and the use of education sector jobs for partisan purposes have compromised educational opportunities for Honduran students.

EducAcción, therefore, emphasizes a new focus on enabling and empowering parents and community members to become agents of change who work together with teachers, principals, and local government authorities to identify, advocate for, and implement actions to advance educational quality. The EducAcción team is committed to working with and through the SE and building capacity and ownership, while also recognizing the need for efforts to ensure that parents, students, and community members are able to improve educational quality and to hold government accountable for fulfilling its commitments and obligations.

## **II. Objectives and Results**

EducAcción contributes to USAID/Honduras Assistance Objective 3 (Better Educated People), Intermediate Results 3.1 (Improved Quality of Educational Delivery Systems), and 3.2 (Increased Access to Educational Opportunities).

Project activities fall within the below Sub-intermediate Results:

- 3.1.1 Improved Efficiency of Educational Delivery Systems
- 3.1.2 More Effective Teaching
- 3.1.4 Increased Community Involvement

- 3.2.1 Pre-School Coverage Expanded

Project activities are developed under the two EducAcción program results: Result 1, Continued Support to Reach EFA Goals, and Result 2: Strengthened Community Participation in Education.

### **III. Project Structure**

The EducAcción Project is led by prime contractor AIR, in partnership with six implementing organizations: CARE Honduras, ChildFund Honduras, CRS Honduras, FEREMA, Fundación Aned, and Save the Children Honduras.

The project focuses on the municipality as the area of intervention. EducAcción will reach 120 municipalities, in 3 cohorts of approximately 40 each, during the 5 years of implementation (each cohort will receive 3 years of technical support). The Project team will work particularly closely with Municipal Councils for Educational Development (COMDEs).

Five of the implementation partners (Save the Children, CRS Honduras, CARE Honduras, ChildFund Honduras, and Fundación Aned) will be directly implementing activities in the municipal level, working in assigned municipalities.

FEREMA provides technical leadership in the area of strategic planning and pre-school education; CARE provides technical leadership in gender issues, ChildFund in teacher professional development, and CRS in conflict resolution and the culture of peace. Therefore, most project partners are municipal level implementers, providers of technical assistance to the project as a whole, and also are beneficiaries of technical assistance from partner organizations. AIR is responsible for the overall management of the project, the achievement of results, and the technical quality of implementation.

### **IV. Activities Implemented During the Quarter**

For this first project report, activities will be divided into two categories, organizational/start-up activities and implementation activities.

#### *A. Organization/start-up activities*

During this first period of the project, advances were made in several areas.

The AIR team signed letters of authorization (LOAs) with the six implementing partners, so that all partners could start work while the full sub-agreements between AIR and each partner are finalized. Technical and reporting procedures were also established with the six implementation partners.

The location for the project office was decided, and modifications were made to the existing space to accommodate the project team. The chief of party and finance manager were hired, and

the team advertised and conducted interviews for technical positions. Candidates for the 3 senior technical positions were selected, and they will start work in the coming weeks.

All members of the home office management team (project manager, contracts specialists, and finance specialists) were identified, and regular meetings with the in-country team were established.

The Project opened bank accounts, and reviewed and updated manuals for human resources, administration, and operational procedures. The project team also reviewed in depth the approved project budget and developed its operating and tracking budgets, as well as requested and received the first transfer of funds for the home office. The team also prepared and submitted the tax exoneration request and follow-up the relevant organizations.

The project is also following up on USAID's request that the vehicles from the previous EQUIP2/MIDEH project implemented by AED be transferred to the EducAcción team, so that the vehicles will be at the disposal of AIR and the implementing partners in the coming weeks.

The chief of party and finance manager, as well as the AIR home office project manager and contracts administrator, participated in a post-award orientation organized by USAID.

#### *B. Technical/ Implementation Activities*

The first key step taken after the awarding of the project was the process of selecting the first cohort of approximately 40 municipalities, working with the project partners and in collaboration with USAID. The first group of 41 municipalities is now selected, and the definition of which implementation partners will be working in which municipalities has been finalized.

Criteria for the selection of the first cohort of municipalities included: interest and disposition on the part of the municipal level authorities, previously established COMDEs, the majority of which have existing strategic plans, and low risk of partisan political issues influencing the work of the COMDEs. A complete list of the first cohort municipalities can be found in Annex 1.

The six implementation partners began technical activities authorized under the LOAs, including developing technical leadership activities, participation in project monitoring and evaluation activities, and preparation for municipal level activities. Implementation partners also began preparation of work plans and budgets through the end of calendar year 2012.

The project team also reviewed the project PMP proposed in the original proposal and discussed it with the USAID AOTR and monitoring and evaluation specialist; the decision was made to significantly revise the plan, reducing and better targeting the number of indicators. An m&e specialist from the AIR home office was identified, and began to work with the project team in this area, with plans to travel to Honduras early in the next quarter.

## **V. Number of Participants Trained**

None this quarter; this will be updated in the coming quarters.

## **VI. Activities Planned for Next Quarter**

During the next quarter, the main project activities will be focused on the following:

- 2 Workshops with NGO personnel, one focused on operationalizing activities in the field and one to share and discuss approaches for technical leadership;
- Contracting and training of NGO field personnel, in preparation to beginning work in the first cohort of 41 municipalities in January 2012;
- Meeting with the 41 mayors of the project municipalities to present the project and establish commitments;
- Presentation of the project to the Minister of Education and senior level SE staff, and to the UPN;
- Completion of hiring and orientation of EducAcción project staff;
- Finalization of partner workplans and budgets for the period through the end of 2012; and
- Finalization of the EducAcción project monitoring plan and branding and marking plan.

## **VII. Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

- The project technical team must tread carefully in their approach to COMDEs, maintaining the focus on the project's role as a provider of *technical support*, given the somewhat politicized nature of the role of the COMDEs in some instances.
- It will be necessary to provide guidance to implementation partners regarding exactly what the technical leadership role involves, since this was not spelled out in complete detail during the proposal process. This information will ensure that partners plan and budget appropriately, and that the technical role played by each organization is somewhat similar in scope while also responding to the different needs in each area.
- The project team will need to continue to work to align financial and administrative procedures of the 6 partners with those of AIR and USAID.

<b>ANNEX 1: EducAcción Cohort 1</b>		
<b>ChildFund</b>		<b>Save the Children</b>
Departamento <b>Francisco Morazán</b>		Departamento de <b>Valle</b>
1. Lepaterique		30. San Lorenzo
2. Sabanagrande		31. Goascorán
3. Valle de Angeles		32. San Francisco de Coray
4. Maraita		33. Amapala
5. Ojojona		34. Langué
6. Tatumbla		
7. Distrito 8 de Tegucigalpa		
8. San Juan de Flores		<b>Fundación ANED</b>
Departamento de <b>Comayagua</b>		Departamento de <b>Gracias a Dios</b>
9. Esquías		35. Puerto Lempira
10. San Jerónimo		36. Juan Francisco Bulnes
11. San Luis		37. Ahuas
12. Siguatepeque		Departamento de <b>Atlántida</b>
		38. El Porvenir
		39. San Francisco
		40. Jutiapa
<b>CRS</b>		41. La Masica
Departamento de <b>Olancho</b>		
13. San Francisco Becerra		
14. Campamento		
15. Catacamas		
16. Juticalpa		
Departamento de <b>Choluteca</b>		
17. San Marcos de Colón		
18. Namasigüe		
19. Apacilagua		
20. Marcovia		
21. Choluteca		
22. Orocuina		
23. El Corpus		