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Quarterly Report

January - March 2009



Submitted to **USAID Philippines**

by

Education Development Center, Inc.

In accordance with
Cooperative Agreement No. 492-A-00-06-00024-00A





EQuALLS PHASE 2

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ABBREVIATION LIST

ALS A&E	Alternative Learning Systems Accreditation and Equivalency
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BBF	Brother’s Brother Foundation
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao
BLiS	Basic Literacy and Life Skills
BME	Bureau of Madrasah Education
CBLS	Community-Based Learning System
CESP	Community Education and Skills Plan
CIG	Community Incentive Grant
CLC	Community Learning Center
DAP	Development Asset Profile
DAP T1	Development Asset Profile Time One
DepED	Department of Education
EDC	Education Development Center
ELC	English Language Camp
ELSA	Education and Livelihood Skills Alliance
EQuALLS2	Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills Phase 2
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GEM	Growth with Equity in Mindanao
HQ	EDC Headquarters
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICT4E	Information and Communications Technology for Education
IM	Instructional Manager
INSET	In-Service Training
IR	Intermediate Result
IYF	International Youth Foundation
JSOTF	US Military Joint Special Operations Task Force

LGU	Local Government Unit
LIFE	Literacy For Empowerment
LIP	Lead Implementing Partner
LSB	Local School Board
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MESP	Municipal Education and Skills Plan
NDMU-CCC	Notre Dame of Marbel University - Champagnat Community College
NEPP	National English Proficiency Program
O&C	Outreach and Communications
ODPM	Organizational Development and Project Management
OSCY	Out-of-School Children and Youth
PEPT	Philippine Education Placement Test
PMT	Project Management Team
PTCA	Parent Teacher Community Association
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
RBEC	Revised Basic Education Curriculum
RPO	Regional Program Officer
SC	Save the Children
TA	Technical Assistance
TEI	Teacher Education Institute
TEPT	Test of English Proficiency of Teachers
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TOT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group
UP-NISMED	University of the Philippines - National Institute for Science and Math Education Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USPC	United States Peace Corps
VAT	Value-Added Tax

LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Communications Products (Weekly Highlights; Published Articles; Other)
- Annex 2: CLC Report
- Annex 3: Comparative International Education Symposium PowerPoint presentation
- Annex 4: Quarterly Report – International Youth Foundation (IYF/ELSA)
- Annex 5: Quarterly Report – Save the Children
- Annex 6: Quarterly Report – Synergeia Foundation
- Annex 7: Quarterly Report – Petron Foundation
- Annex 8: MIS Guidebook

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Development Center, Inc. is pleased to submit this 2nd Quarter Report for fiscal year 2009 to USAID for the ‘Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills 2’ (EQuALLS2) Project in the Philippines’ Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and Regions 9 and 12. The following information articulates the successes and challenges faced by the project during the reporting period January - March 2009.

Key EQuALLS2 achievements for this period:

- **9,684 out-of-school youth (OSY) enrolled in basic education and workforce development programs**
7,777 learners are enrolled in programs to improve basic literacy skills and prepare for reintegration into formal school. 1,907 OSYs are enrolled in workforce and skills development programs (food processing; baking; beauty care; gardening and horticulture; arc welding; engine repair and mechanics; etc) linked to local employment and livelihood opportunities.
- **272,000 books placed in schools using innovative methodology**
Further adapting the book shopping experience (created and used in Q1 FY09), the project transformed two large storage warehouses into USAID EQuALLS2 Project Book Centers.
- **100 Community Incentive Grants (CIG) awarded to Parent-Teacher-Community Associations (PTCA) with capacity to implement education projects**
CIGs, each worth \$1,000, were awarded to 100 PTCAs after receiving organizational and financial management training to effectively manage education improvement projects.
- **Microsoft GDA agreement signed to provide computer training and software to 1,000 teacher mentors**
A memorandum of understanding was signed with Microsoft on February 27, 2009 to provide free training and discounted software to elementary school teachers in conflict-affected Mindanao. The partnership leveraged \$150,000 from Microsoft to train 1,000 elementary school teachers in basic computer competency, complementing existing EQuALLS2 teacher trainings in English, science and math. The initiative supports the DepED ICT4E initiative and aims to install 180 computer suites in computer hubs and at the elementary school level, by 2011.



Istaniela Koh (right) and Raida Tating are out of school youth who graduated from an EQuALLS2 workforce skills program. They are now employed by the Ayala Seafoods Corporation in Zamboanga City.

- **Launched project-wide, internet-based Management Information System (MIS)**
As projected, the MIS was launched in February 2009, allowing all partners to update their achievements and information. The system allows off-line encoding of data for as long as needed, and the information can be ‘uploaded’ to the server the next time internet capabilities are available – a field reality. The system allows fast-access to more timely and accurate project monitoring and evaluation information.

Technical Leadership

Project achievements during the period demonstrate that implementation is on track and project goals are being met. Lead implementing partners pushed forward with capacity-building activities for PTCAs and continued to build linkages with Local Government Units (LGU), resulting in community projects awarded or ready for CIG assistance. Teacher training programs in English, math and science also advanced. Partners continued to roll-out core training programs and follow up refresher courses to mentors as well as supplemental training to teachers at the school level. Teaching materials and over a quarter million Brother’s Brother Foundation (BBF) books enhanced the application by the teachers of knowledge and skills from the various training, and also generated enthusiasm for reading and learning among children in schools that benefited from this assistance. During the quarter, lead partners sustained the interest of OSCY in basic education and workforce development programs. A total of 7,777 OSCY enrolled in basic education programs during the quarter and an additional 1,690 youth completed trade skills training, indicating a continuing high demand for this program option. Some OSY who completed technical skills training have started to generate income from employment or self-employment.

Highlight achievements during the quarter, by Intermediate Result, include the following:

IR1: Increasing learning opportunities for children and youth through community support for education and livelihood programming

- Save the Children and ELSA conducted intensive training for PTCAs in priority capacity building areas such as governance and management, education improvement planning, resource mobilization, networking and advocacy, and project management, proposal writing, and financial management. 100 PTCAs across Save the Children and ELSA that demonstrated improved organizational and financial management systems were awarded CIGs for physical facilities improvement, school equipment, and other projects that contribute to overall learning outcomes.
- Partners made substantive progress to further engage LGUs and LSBs to support project activities. Orientations and workshops were conducted to clarify the LSB mandate and their roles; to encourage their support for community education and skills plans; and to develop an appreciation for expanding the LSB to encourage the participation of children and youth. LGUs and LSBs have responded by mobilizing parents for municipal-wide activities; providing counterpart contributions for CIG-assisted projects; extending assistance in book distribution; committing to provide

materials for Brigada Eskwela; and ensuring the security of project staff during conduct of field activities.

- Petron Foundation, EQuALLS2' school construction and refurbishment partner, continued to work closely with lead implementing partners to assess and plan for elementary school classroom construction and refurbishment projects, while partners continued to work independently on the refurbishment of community learning centers for out of school youth.

IR 2: Strengthening capacity for teaching of English, science and math

Highlights

- EDC worked with implementing partners and UP NISMED and conducted TOTs on Science Course 2 and Math Course 3. The 43 teachers, professors and instructors from 8 Mindanao University Teacher Education Institutions and 55 DepED teachers and supervisors were provided with sets of high quality training materials to enable them to immediately roll out the mentors training in their respective sites.
- 501 mentors trained in the previous quarter were provided with refresher math training activities. Refresher training topics responded to the needs identified through partners' consultation with school heads, supervisors, and the teachers. In addition, 3,693 teachers participated in science, math and English in school-based training activities. These training activities were enhanced by supplementary BBF books that teachers accessed through book fairs.
- EDC maintained its strategic partnership with AusAID BEAM and jointly supported a training on classroom assessment which benefited 146 DepED ARMM trainers; training of 96 teachers, school heads and supervisors who will serve as DepED ARMM's trainers on multi-grade instruction. EDC also worked with US Peace Corps TUDLO to develop criteria for selecting 200 participants from EQuALLS2 schools for the annual English Language Camps.
- The project's materials and technology component made significant headway by formalizing linkages with Microsoft Philippines to provide free training to 1,000 elementary school teachers in basic computer competency, complementing existing teacher trainings in English, science and math. EQuALLS2 also firmed up the commitment of the provincial and municipal LGUs and local DepED of Malapatan, Sarangani and Midsayap, Cotabato to support ICT initiatives for teachers in their respective areas, by signing memorandums of understanding.

IR3: Improving relevance and training of OSCY

Highlights:

- Partners completed the implementation of the first round of basic education programs resulting in 4,569 completers of Literacy for Empowerment (LIFE); 1,926 BL and 807 PEPT-directed; and 1,836 BLiSs, or a total of 9,138 learners. A second round of BL, PEPT-directed, BLiSs and ALS A&E programs started this quarter with a partial enrollment of 7,777 learners.
- 1,907 learners were enrolled in livelihood programs such as welding, small engine repair, massage therapy and carpentry during the quarter. A cumulative 3,111 OSCY

have completed livelihood programs, evidenced by Certificate of Completion, or National Competency Levels I or II certification issued by TESDA. Some graduates of livelihood programs are now self-employed, or have found local jobs.

- Ninety-six (96) instructional managers were trained to deliver these programs. They continued to receive enhancement training to improve their performance in the delivery of ALS programs.

Strategic Partnerships

EDC focused on strengthening strategic partnerships with key stakeholders this quarter, including USAID, DepED, sub-grantees, existing and potential GDA partners, and other groups. Some of the details are as follows:

USAID

Assisted USAID, primarily the Office of Education (OEd), in monitoring and providing oversight and related assistance over the project, specifically on the following:

- Coordinating and providing linkage with key Department of Education (DepED) offices relative to the signing of a Commitment to Partnership relative to the Bilateral Assistance Agreement signed earlier between USAID and DepED. The signing ceremony between US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and DepED Secretary Jesli Lapus was held on January 14, with EDC providing both technical and logistical support.
- Preparing/ providing project information requested by other USAID units;
- Providing a number of events planning/implementation that included project site visits by the US Ambassador, DCM, USG guests, USAID officials and guests; and supporting OED regular monitoring visits.
- Arranging and facilitating meetings between USAID/OEd and DepED on matters of mutual interest such as ICT;
- Coordinating with USAID's Controller's Office for the conduct of a Control Environment and Risk Assessment - a process initiated in the previous quarter.

DepED

Strengthened strategic partnerships with DepED at various levels:

- Update and consultation meetings with the Undersecretary for Programs and Projects, and the various bureau and center directors and their staff on specific program concerns.
- Coordination and consultation meetings with the Regional Directors for Region 9 (Dir Walter Albos) and Region 12 (Dir. Luz Almeda), and the Education Secretary (Sec. Udtog Kawit) for the ARMM, and selected Division Superintendents and key supervisors in these three regions.
- Coordination, joint planning and conduct of major project activities with local DepED officials on teacher training and continuing capacity building on English, science and mathematics, and on beginning reading.
- Coordination with high level DepED officials for support in the release of computer equipment imported by EDC from the US for use in EQuALLS2's ICT program and for donation to DepED schools;
- Joint planning and conduct of very successful new activities such as mini book fairs for Maguindanao and other EQuALLS2 sites;

- Coordinating with the national DepED secretariat for ICT to align the project ICT strategy with the DepED national ICT strategy.

Lead Implementing Partners

Provided technical leadership, coordination and sub-grants management functions with sub recipients/partners:

- Monitoring and coordination of project implementation through leadership and technical meetings, field monitoring visits, review and discussion of partner quarter reports.
- Conduct of joint project-wide activities such as training, monitoring, tools and guidelines development, and coordination of field events, including VIP visits.
- Initiation of a project mid-term review process to be conducted in April 2009; prepared materials to support project-wide reflection and review.

External/Others

Reinforced partnerships with:

- USPC. Continued the joint planning and collaborative implementation process with US Peace Corps (*TUDLO Mindanao*) on the training of PTCAs through the Project Development and Management (PDM) workshops; and the joint planning of English Language Camps (ELCs), both of which will be focused on EQuALLS2 sites/beneficiaries.
- AusAID’s Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) project, on continuing implementation of agreed collaborative activities in teacher training, to be implemented in the school break (April/May).
- Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) of the US military on the delivery of books to a number of recipient municipalities/schools. Also assisted JSOTF in the planning and conduct of events in selected JSOTF assisted schools;
- Ayala Foundation, for the planning of Youth Camps to promote youth participation in civic affairs, and for helping build a culture of peace among the various social, cultural, ethnic and similar groupings in Mindanao
- GDA potential partners, including the signing of a MOU with Microsoft in February, and the planning of a partnership agreement in April with National Book Store Foundation, on the joint provision of dictionaries and thesauruses to EQuALLS2 schools. See the following table for a list of existing, new and prospective GDA partners.

GDA Partner	Contribution	Value in USD	Date of Agreement
Brother’s Brother Foundation	Donated Books	\$60,000,000	January 31, 2008
Petron Foundation	Classroom Construction	\$1,267,946	April 14, 2008
Microsoft Philippines	Teacher training; Microsoft software	\$150,000	March 27, 2009
National Book Store	Dictionaries / Educational Resources	\$300,000	Projected in Q3

II. TECHNICAL PROGRAMS UPDATE

Progress made in each of the IR technical areas, during the quarter, is summarized below, with additional detail available in the quarterly reports from EDC's sub grantees, attached as Annexes 2-5.

IR 1: Increasing learning opportunities for children and youth through community support for education and livelihood programming in targeted geographic areas.

Lead implementing partners continued to work with stakeholder groups to further strengthen community appreciation for and support to education. PTCAs were oriented on their roles and responsibilities and equipped with basic skills to analyze and prioritize needs, and plan and implement priority education support projects linked to community incentive grants. Additionally partners continued to focus on constructing and refurbishing classrooms and community learning centers. EDC focused on quality assurance activities including the conduct of focus group discussions with various stakeholder groups in 6 Synergeia sites in January; the assessment of 13 completed School Improvement Grant (SIG) projects of Save the Children in January; and, a one-on-one meeting to clarify Synergeia's community engagement and CIG approaches.

The project's greatest help, for us, is the unity it brought between our barangay [leaders], our community and our school"

*Beteliana Costañera, PTCA President,
Legarda Dos, Dinas,
Zamboanga Del Sur*

Positive outcomes from community engagement efforts this quarter were demonstrated by the sustained interest and participation of PTCAs in capacity-building trainings, and resources provided by LGUs in support of community education improvement initiatives. Highlights, challenges and next steps for main IR1 activities are provided below.

A. Capacity-Building for PTCAs and LSBs

A core EQuALLS2 strategy is to build linkages between barangay level and municipal level structures to enable PTCAs and Local School Boards to work more effectively together to support education improvement of in-school and out-of-school youth.

Highlights

- Save the Children conducted a series of organizational development and project management (ODPM) trainings for PTCAs in 6 municipalities, thus completing the previous quarter's target. During the period, 24 PTCAs and a community organization from a school-less barangay were trained on organizational management, leadership and role clarification. A second round of capacity building training, ODPM2 was also conducted during the period. 86 PTCAs and 3 organizations from school-less barangays were trained in project development and proposal design, and were oriented on grants management. A key output of the training was the formulation of 92 Community Incentive Grant proposals.

- ELSA provided intensive training to 62 PTCAs. Coaching and other non-training interventions were also provided in priority capacity building areas such as governance and management, reporting, education improvement and planning, resource mobilization, networking and advocacy, and project management. These interventions were further strengthened by personal effectiveness and teambuilding activities for the PTCAs.
- Synergeia conducted capacity assessments for 56 PTCAs in two municipalities in Sulu, but deferred the assessment of one municipality to April 2009 due to security concerns.
- Partners' made substantive progress to further engage LGUs and LSBs, as follows:
 - ✓ Save the Children conducted orientations and workshops to clarify the LSB mandate and their roles, to encourage their support for community education and skills plans, and to develop an appreciation for expanding the LSB to encourage the participation of children and youth to ensure that community education and skills plans are responsive to their needs.
 - ✓ Synergeia assessed the developing capacity of LGU Project Management Teams and provided them hands-on training on program planning and implementation by letting them take the lead in mobilizing parents for municipal-wide activities, generating the support of barangay officials in organizing ALS classes and refurbishment of CLCs; and in organizing barangay school boards.
 - ✓ ELSA provided project updates for all municipal and barangay LGUs and expressed appreciation for LGU assistance in book distribution, for their commitment to provide materials for Brigada Eskwela, and in ensuring the security of project staff during conduct of field activities.

“We are very glad that you are able to help us, not with funds, but with the capability to think for ourselves. We are very appreciative.”

*Pinnahari Kalim,
Councilor
Barangay Siburi
Sulu Province*



US Peace Corps volunteer, Manisha Shrestha (2nd from right), talks to PTCA members during a group activity of the Project Design and Management Workshop held from February 2-5, 2009 in

- US Peace Corps and EQuALLS2 collaborated to train 39 PTCA members from Buldon, Datu Paglas, Paglat, Kapatagan, Ganassi, North Upi, and Marawi City from February 2-5. The Project Design and Management (PDM) Workshop focused on building capacity to prioritize needs, write proposals, implement activities, and monitor education projects to meet their community's education issues. One output of the workshop was community project proposals for possible funding assistance under the Community Incentive Grants (CIG), funded by the EQuALLS2 Project.

Challenges

- Some project activities were canceled or delayed due to security issues surrounding the presence of kidnap-for-ransom and other armed groups, and from family and clan feuds that continued to pose a threat to field staff, particularly those based in Sulu, Basilan and Maguindanao.

- Some partners continue to encounter challenges in engaging with LGUs and PTCAs (particularly in ARMM), considering the low capacity and subsequent need for strengthening local structures.
- Lack of best-practice exchange. There is solid potential for partners to learn from each other's approaches in conducting organizational capacity assessments and applying results to design capacity-building training for LSBs and PTCAs.

Next Steps

- EDC will facilitate a review by lead implementing partners of PTCA capacity assessment activities and resulting capacity-building training, to determine areas for refinement for the second or mid-term administration of the tool.
- EDC will provide guidance and will work with partners to develop a common framework with tools for tracking LSB and PTCA capacity-building training along five capacity-building dimensions (Management and Governance; Education Improvement Planning and Project Management; Financial Management; Networking and Advocacy, and Tracking and Communicating Educational Performance).
- EDC will work with partners to map out practical steps to address security concerns.

B. Community Incentive Grants (CIG)

Community Incentive Grant guidelines were approved by USAID's Agreement Officer on March 19, 2009. Project staff and prospective beneficiary groups were oriented on the processes and requirements for preparing and administering CIGs and 100 grants were awarded by Save the Children and ELSA.

Highlights

- Save the Children CESP and MESP processes and capacity-building training resulted in the awarding of grants to 62 PTCAs, directed towards physical facilities improvement, school equipment, and some income-generating projects that will contribute to overall learning outcomes such as the establishment of reading centers.
- Both Save the Children and ELSA assisted PTCAs to open bank accounts and provided coaching, in addition to the capacity building trainings, to enable the PTCAs to effectively manage CIG funds.
- ELSA's strategic planning trainings led to the formulation of PTCA plans with priority projects identified for funding. This training on strategic planning was complemented by capacity-building in networking and advocacy, resource mobilization and financial management.
- 38 ELSA supported PTCAs were awarded CIGs to fund projects consistent with PTCA plans, while another 22 projects are ready for awarding next quarter.
- Synergeia mobilized PMT members to conduct orientations on CIG guidelines and processes. The orientations also served to build the capacity of PMTs and PTCAs in project planning, budgeting and management.

Challenges

- Some partners had to redirect some of their planned activities to enable PTCAs to revisit their priority projects to conform to requirements for CIG awarding.

- Some areas, notably Patikul and Siasi in Sulu (Synergeia sites) have no banks for PTCAs to access, necessitating the establishment of some kind of mechanism for fund transfer consistent with USAID procurement guidelines.
- A strategy for building the capacity of community structures in school-less barangays, to qualify them for CIGs needs to be developed.

Next Steps

An IR1 TWG will be convened to address the following CIG-related concerns:

- Specifying community projects not allowed to be funded through CIG (exclusion list) in order to avoid a duplication of resources already being provided for similar EQuALLS2 programming.
- Establishing mechanisms for fund transfers in areas without banks or where access to such banks is especially difficult.
- Identifying community structures in school-less barangays that might access CIG, and developing capacity-building for such structures.
- Developing granting and funding mechanisms for barangays with more than 1 school; current budget allows for 1 CIG-assisted project per barangay.
- Developing mechanisms for CIG to respond to the needs and concerns of out-of-school youth.

C. Construction and refurbishment of physical learning facilities

EDC's school construction and refurbishment partner, Petron Foundation, continued to work closely with lead implementing partners to assess and plan for elementary school classroom construction and refurbishment projects, while partners continued to work independently on the refurbishment on community learning centers for out of school youth programming.

Highlights

- Petron Foundation continued to engage LIPs in one-on-one consultative meetings to discuss implementation issues related to classroom construction and refurbishment. No construction or refurbishment happened during the quarter, and accomplishments have remained at 11 classrooms constructed and 2 repaired.
- Synergeia identified 2 schools for construction and 19 for repair; Save the Children identified 3 schools for repair.
- Partners refurbished 83 CLCs this quarter: Save the Children 46 and ELSA 37.
- In Synergeia sites, PMTs and barangay officials were oriented on the processes and requirements for CLC inventory/validation and refurbishment.
- Strong linkages established with barangay LGUs and DepED have resulted in strong support for OSCY activities and regular monitoring by District ALS Coordinators of ALS classes.
- In February, EDC conducted an assessment of 44 CLCs, across 17 mainland and island municipalities, with key findings as follows:
 - ✓ 73% of CLCs are refurbished portions of concrete structures, dedicated to ALS learning sessions and related activities, and equipped with basic furniture and learning

equipment; while the other 27% are temporary (make-shift) meeting places with tables and chairs and chalkboard, or open multi-purpose areas in the barangay.

- ✓ All CLCs are located to allow easy access and use by prospective learners: 41% are located in elementary schools, 34% are in barangay halls, and the rest in other existing structures such as in madrasahs.
- ✓ In most places, learners take turns in assisting to clean the CLC facility.
- ✓ Functionality and conduciveness to learning of CLCs continue to be an ongoing concern in some locations.

Details of findings are in Annex 2.

Challenges

- Security concerns, specifically safety in the transportation of construction goods and supplies, have delayed classroom construction and refurbishment.

Next Steps

- Further strengthen the engagement of the community in planning and implementation of infrastructures such as the construction of classrooms. This engagement can be in the form of assessing the available resources that can be utilized within the community, and ensuring the security of materials and field staff.
- Clarify funds transfer arrangements for CLC refurbishment to ensure compliance with USAID and project guidelines.
- Continue to work with partners on the engagement of OSY trained under IR 3 (on skills trainings like carpentry, welding, electrical and plumbing) to be part of the local workforce in classroom construction.
- Provide guidelines to partners in quantifying in-kind leverages.

Below are Lead Implementing Partners’ contributions to target accomplishments during the quarter:

IR 1 Indicators	Synergeia	ELSA	Save the Children	TOTAL
Number of community learning centers (CLCs) refurbished	0	37	46	83
Number of Parent-Teachers Associations or similar “school” governance structures supported	12	62	98	172
Number of education stakeholder groups increasing their governance, management and advocacy skills	0	0	116	116
Number of Community Incentive Grants awarded	0	38	62	100
Number of trainings/capacity-building activities conducted under IR1	4	35	42	81

IR 2: Strengthening capacity for teaching of English, science and math

A priority activity this quarter was the completion of a training of trainers (TOT), by EDC and partners, in preparation for the math and science mentors training to be conducted in the next quarter.

Partners used the last quarter of the school year to conduct district refresher training events and training++ activities. Additionally, partners spent time consulting with teachers and administrators to identify training priorities for next quarter.



Teachers from Zamboanga Peninsula and island provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi attend a Mentors' Assembly and Refresher Training on February 10-11, 2009 in Zamboanga City. EQuALLS2 provides a series of professional development activities for teachers such as mentor trainings on core knowledge and skills, refresher trainings, and school-based echo trainings and mentoring activities to improve their skills and strategies in teaching core subjects.

A. Core Training Programs

Highlights

- The EQuALLS2 team collaborated with the University of the Philippines to prepare for summer block math and science mentor training workshops. Science Course 2 TOT, focused on Grades 1-6 lessons covered in first and second grading periods, was conducted at UP NISMED, UP Campus, Quezon City on February 26-28, 2009. Math Course 3 TOT, which focused on open-ended approaches to learning math concepts, was conducted on March 12-14, 2009 in the same venue. The math and science TOT workshops were conducted for 98 educators composed of 43 teachers, professors and instructors from 8 Mindanao University Teacher Education Institutions and 55 DepED teachers and supervisors.
- Newly trained trainers left the TOT workshops with sets of activity sheets and session guides as well as high quality training materials to enable them to immediately roll out the mentors training according to their respective schedules. The materials, which are needed to conduct the session activities, were composed of locally procured supplies such as magnifying lenses, compasses, test tubes, etc., as well as models of the circulatory system, lungs and arms.
- EDC and DepED developed English and math mentor training modules teachers who have completed the English, science, and math core courses. They will be used in developing mentoring skills and in establishing the mentoring programs in their respective schools and districts. These will be delivered during the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.
- EDC was encouraged by the active participation of partner IR2 education specialists and training teams.

Challenge

Finding a common time to assemble the TOT training module writers has remained a challenge. The review process for the modules took a long time because of the limited availability of DepED National Team. The TOT initially scheduled for February has been postponed until May which means the roll-out of the mentors training will be in Q3.

Next Step

The TOT on Mentoring for English and Math mentors will be conducted in May.

B. Refresher Trainings

Partners engaged in focus group discussions and individual meetings with school heads, supervisors, and teachers to identify priority content and topics to be addressed during refresher training as a follow up to the large scale core training workshops.

Highlight:

501 mentors trained in the previous quarter were provided with refresher math and training activities.

Challenge

There is a need to share across partners emerging good practices in designing refresher training activities that are responsive to and focused on mentor needs.

Next Steps

- EDC will continue to work with partners to ensure that mentors receive the full package of content specific trainings in English, science and math.
- A midterm assessment of progress towards mentor content knowledge will be conducted during the fourth quarter, so that results may be used to inform EDC and partners when designing refresher training content.

C. Training ++ (or Supplemental Activities)

Partners continued to provide follow up training activities (training ++) for all English, science and math teachers in support of main English, science and math content and topics covered during the core training workshops. Many of these school-based training activities have been substantially supported lately through teacher access to a wider availability of supplementary BBF books.

Highlights

- 5,099 teachers participated in science, math and English on-site and echo training ++ trainings activities during the quarter.
- 791 teachers were trained on the use of the BBF materials, which was supported by access to participation in book fairs and book shopping.

Challenges

- There are concerns about the quality of training that is transferred from the core training workshops.
 - ✓ The trainers conducting cascade trainings are the mentors who have just been trained and the implementing partners are often not present to provide adequate on-site support for trainings.
 - ✓ Training materials and supplies are sometimes not complete, which will make it difficult for teachers who are trained to apply what they learned in their classrooms.

- Engaging the school community in a transparent process to prioritize educator (teachers, administrators, ALS facilitators or IMs) training needs, preferably through the SIP process, is an on-going challenge. Selecting the priority training need that will provide the greatest multiplier effect from a long list of expressed needs from teachers and school heads, is also a challenge.

Next Steps

- EDC will continue to work with partners to ensure that they are able to provide the necessary technical and material support for the teacher training workshops they are conducting.
- EDC will focus in particular with partners on the critical importance of distributing (and effectively using) a complete set of the agreed upon training materials needed to support training concepts provided at level 3 (classroom level).

IR 2 Training Indicators	Synergeia	ELSA	Save the Children	TOTAL
Number of Administrators and Officers from assisted schools/ALS Madaris trained	110	127	322	449
Number of Teachers/educators trained in English, Science and Mathematics	2,141	0	3,459	5,600

D. EQuALLS2-BEAM Programs

Summer INSET on Classroom Assessments

The BEAM-EQuALLS2 Summer INSET will focus on assessment tools that teachers and administrators can use to determine the progress of learning of students in diverse subject areas.

EDC program staff continued working with AusAID BEAM to prepare for the Summer classroom assessment INSET. The final editing of the Assessment Modules for 2009

Summer Training was conducted with BEAM on Jan 28-30, 2009 at RELC, DepED, Davao City. A subsequent training of resource persons for the TOT was conducted on Feb 10-12 at Waterfront Hotel also in Davao City.

The TOT on classroom assessments was conducted on March 2-6 simultaneously for the ARMM islands in Zamboanga City and ARMM mainland in Cotabato City involving 103 trainers and 43 monitors to be deployed to train teachers and schools heads in the ARMM during the summer training season.

Training on Multi-Grade Instruction

In support of the Bureau of Elementary Education's thrust to support teachers assigned to multi-grade classes, EDC supported the conduct of a Training of Trainers on multi-grade instruction from the ARMM islands. Ninety six (96) teachers, school heads and supervisors were trained to become the pool of trainers for the ARMM areas.

BEAM-EQuALLS2 Reading Program

BEAM and EQuALLS2 jointly piloted a reading program in 24 ARMM schools during the 2007-2008 school year, with both projects contributing technical resources to design the program. EQuALLS2 supplied NEPP materials and the systems developed to support it and provided carefully selected BBF materials, integrating them into the training.

EDC participated with BEAM's Specialists in design meetings to prepare for an evaluation of the jointly conducted BEAM-EQuALLS2 Reading Program. EDC will take the lead in the evaluation of the reading program in April through a workshop involving representatives from the 24 schools. An on-site (in a pilot school) TWG workshop will follow to discuss the results of the evaluation of the reading program.

E. Collaboration with US Peace Corps TUDLO

EQuALLS2 worked with the Peace Corps to develop criteria for selecting 200 teachers from EQuALLS2 schools for the annual English Language Camps. Focal persons from each of the implementing partners were assigned to coordinate with USPC selecting participant teachers for the Camps and USPC committed to hire its own field personnel to provide logistical support and direct coordination with the identified participants.

The English Language Camps will be conducted in two batches: May 3-13 and May 17-28. 200 teachers coming from EQuALLS2 areas will improve their confidence in the use of English language through language immersion activities, to be facilitated by Peace Corps volunteers.

F. Materials and Technology (Cross-Cutting Activities)

The EQuALLS2 materials and technology component was highlighted in the second quarter by EDC's signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft Philippines to provide training and discounted software to EQuALLS2 teachers; and signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with Malapatan stakeholders to implement the EQuALLS2

ICT initiative. Also during the quarter, nearly a quarter million books (230,865¹ books) were distributed to classroom teachers through multiple book shopping events held at EQuALLS2 book centers in Cotabato and Zamboanga.

ICT Initiative

Highlights

- On February 23, 2009, EQuALLS2 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft Philippines to provide training to EQuALLS2 teachers and discounted software to EQuALLS2 schools. This public-private partnership will leverage \$150,000 from Microsoft to train 1,000 elementary school teachers in basic computer competency, complementing existing teacher trainings in English, science and math.
- In February, EQuALLS2 signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Malapatan stakeholders (specifically the provincial governor's office, the mayor's office and the local Department of Education) to jointly implement the EQuALLS2 ICT initiative. Under the agreement, Malapatan stakeholders will provide ongoing maintenance and support (ex. providing for consumable materials like ink and paper) to schools that will receive computers. The local Department of Education will institute local level policy to require teachers to maximize the use of the computers by submitting standard required documents in electronic form.
- ICT planning discussions were facilitated by Save the Children with Midsayap stakeholders (Midsayap mayor, local school board and DepED district supervisors) in January to gauge interest and commitment to ICT training for teachers. The 4 DepED district supervisors demonstrated interest by providing detailed written plans in February on how they will maintain and provide ongoing support to teachers and also to schools that will act as hubs. The mayor's office and the local school board agreed to support the initiative by providing air-conditioning units to the rooms that will house the computers. Save the Children also made plans to incorporate the ICT initiative into the MESP of Midsayap.
- An initial set of 80 desktop computers was ordered from the United States through EDC, Newton office to get the ICT training up and running.
- EDC designed an ICT teacher mentor training to be applied following Microsoft's 5 days of in-depth hands-on training of basic computer skills. The 3-6 month ICT mentoring program is a self-paced program where teachers will work on practical computer activities, developing a portfolio of their output in both print and electronic form, followed by 6 months of mentoring activities where the trained teachers will coach their fellow school teachers.
- A concept paper was submitted to Adobe Foundation to explore the possibility of integrating the Adobe Youth Voices program into EQuALLS2's ICT programming for out-of-school youth. The Adobe Youth Voices program enables youth to explore and comment on their world through learning experiences using video, multimedia, digital art, web, animation, and audio tools.

¹ Total books reported in FACTS Indicator table in M&E section includes books distributed with NEPP, Math and Science kits (41,080).

Next Steps

- Plan and schedule computer training for 200 teachers (100 from Midsayap and 100 from Malapatan) in April and May.
- Work with lead implementing partners to develop criteria to select teachers for the ICT training program. Lead implementing partners will then work with local school administrators to identify potential teachers who are willing to be ICT mentors and be a part of the ICT training program.
- Work with Microsoft to finalize the 5-day in-depth hands-on training design.
- Develop self-paced activities for teachers to engage in during the 3-6 months self paced portion of the ICT teacher mentor training program.

Book Shopping for Teachers

Highlights

- Based on recommendations from the previous quarter, EQuALLS2 reorganized the book warehouses and converted them into functioning book centers for access by teachers to visit and shop for books on a regular basis. This approach also helped to minimize logistical demands placed on project staff while providing teachers more time to browse and shop for books at their convenience.
- Almost a quarter million books (230,865 books) were selected by teachers from Zamboanga Peninsula and the ARMM areas, during book shopping events held in both Zamboanga and Cotabato warehouses throughout the months of January and February.
- Lead implementing partners played an active role in organizing, planning and managing book shopping events at the book centers. Partners worked with local stakeholders to leverage resources to provide teachers with transport to and from the books centers and to transport books back to the schools. In the case of Save the Children, they also designed a training program to orient teachers on how to use the donated books in their classrooms.
- EDC received an additional shipment of 245,543 BBF books in February. These books will be inventoried, stamped and readied for teachers to shop in May before the opening of the new school year.



ARMM Teachers shop for free books during this Book Fair at USAID's EQuALLS2 Book Center in Cotabato City on February 4-5, 2009.

Next Steps

- Schedule a series of book shopping events at the book centers in May to provide schools with new books prior to the start of the new school year in June.

- Book shopping priority, from the newly arrived book shipment, will now be given to teachers from EQuALLS2 municipalities that have not yet had the opportunity to shop at the book centers.

Sharing Best Practices on Use of Donated Books

EDC was pleased to have the opportunity to share the EQuALLS2 book distribution experience through a presentation entitled “*Challenges and Opportunities of Integrating the Use of Donated Books into an Existing Educational Development Program in the Philippines*” shared at the 53rd Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society. The conference was held on March 22 – 26, 2009 in Charleston and was attended by practitioners and researchers from the field of international education development. See Annex 3 for PowerPoint Presentation.

IR 3: Improving Relevance and Training of Out-of-School Children and Youth

A total of 6,008 OSCY enrolled in basic education programs during the quarter and an additional 1,690 youth completed trade skills training, indicating a continuing high demand for this workforce skills development.

A. Basic Education Program

Partners continue to implement basic education programs to respond to the learning needs of OSCY in their respective areas. Basic education offerings include basic literacy (BL) for non- and post literates, which are complemented by life skills program, and ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E).

“I am privileged to have had the opportunity to avail of the A&E program under EQuALLS2. I am now enrolled as a first year student at Ramon Magsaysay Memorial College in Gen San taking up a course in education.”

*Rudilyn Pestenan – 20 year old
ALS A&E completer
Lun Padidu, Malapatan*

Highlights

- Partners completed the implementation of the first round of their basic education programs resulting in 4,569 completers of LIFE; 1,926 BL and 807 PEPT-directed; and 1,836 BLiS, or a total of 9,138 learners.
- Some 4,569 learners have improved basic education competencies as evidenced by the certificate of completion awarded them.
- A second round of basic education programs have also started. The programs offerings include BL, PEPT-directed, BLiS and ALS A&E, with enrollment of 7,777 learners for this quarter.
- 96 instructional managers were trained to deliver A&E programs.
- Modules on A&E were reproduced and delivered to learners at a 1:2 and 1:1 module-learner ratio in ELSA and Save the Children learning centers, respectively.

Challenges

- An increased demand of OSY livelihood programs resulting in a low recruitment of learners for long-term basic education programs continues to challenge partners. Some LIPs have begun accepting OSCY from outside the focused barangays as target beneficiaries of their ALS programs to meet targets.
- There is a need for some partners to clarify their program offerings to ensure better planning for the delivery system- including readiness of CLCs, reproduction and timely delivery of learning modules, and training of learning facilitators.
- Some OSCY have been left out of the school system due in part to partners not offering elementary level ALS A&E and other similar options that cater to younger/schooling age OSCY.

Next Step

Jointly review with partners their basic education program offerings and clarify plans for:

- Improving enrolment in basic education programs
- Ensuring readiness and functionality of CLCs and learning materials
- Training of IMs to effectively deliver the Basic Literacy or A&E Program

B. Workforce Development Programs

EQuALLS2 Workforce Development Programs for OSCY aim to contribute to the pool of skilled workers in a community, while providing experience and skills training for learners to be able to earn a living through self-employment or paid work outside of the immediate community.

Highlights

- 1,907 learners were enrolled in partner sponsored livelihood programs during the quarter. These livelihood programs include welding, small engine repair, massage therapy, carpentry, and beauty care.
- 3,111 OSCY completed livelihood programs, as evidence of their mastery of livelihood skills, completers received either a Certificate of Completion, or the National Competency Levels I or II from TESDA.
- Some graduates of livelihood programs are now self-employed, or have found local jobs, while others are applying for overseas employment.
- TESDA continued to play an important role in the conduct of livelihood programs and in the certification of program completers. TESDA-certified trainers are involved in conducting training programs and assessors certify competencies.

“The livelihood training of EQ2 provided opportunities for our OSY to develop their skills. Some of them are now working in the municipal service unit and some are on-call.”

*Mr. Arcadio “Archie” Duruin
PMT member, Datu Paglas
Maguindanao*

Challenges

- LIPs are currently unable to efficiently track completers/graduates of livelihood or workforces development programs due to the lack of an appropriate tool or mechanism.
- There is a dearth of local enterprise or businesses and other employment opportunities to absorb completers of livelihood programs.
- The project has made successful employment linkages for youth by incorporating local service providers for program enrollees to gain on-the-job experience or in-service training, but the lack of business enterprises is sometimes a challenge.
- There is decreasing enrolment in long term programs and the increasing OSCY preference for short term livelihood programs.
- There is a lack of post-training assistance to graduates of livelihood programs to build on the investment started with their training.

Next Steps

- LIPs will revisit their program mix and targets to address decreasing enrolment in long term programs and the increasing OSCY preference for short term livelihood programs.
- EDC will fast track the development of the Livelihood Activity Report (LAR) as a common tool for tracking economic activities and application of existing or new skills by program completers.
- EDC and LIPs will together explore more modalities and opportunities for post-training assistance, and on-the-job training and placement of workforce development program completers.

C. Capacity building of Instructional Managers

Highlights

- LIPs recruited and trained 82 Instructional Managers (IMs) and 14 Youth Learning Facilitators (YLFs – Save the Children identifies IMs as YLFs).
- IMs and YLFs continued to receive enhancement training to improve their performance in the delivery of ALS programs.
- District ALS Coordinators continued to monitor and provide guidance and assistance to IMs and YLFs in Save and ELSA project sites.

Challenges

- Need to continuously develop IM capacity to facilitate learning to take advantage of the flexibility of modular curriculum that is student-centered, self-paced and responsive to learner availability.
- Need for greater awareness among IMs regarding the importance of determining the competencies of entry level OSCY to better guide them to appropriate program options.

Next Steps

- LIPs need to ensure that IMs use and apply strategies and approaches appropriate for non-school based settings, such as, observation of IM sessions by specialists or District ALS Coordinators with feed backing of findings and coaching on strategies during IM monthly meetings and enrichment trainings.

- LIPs will ensure consistent administration of basic diagnostic tools to OSCY at entry, specifically the assessment of basic literacy (ABL) and basic literacy test (BLT).

D. Developmental Assets Profile

The Developmental Assets Profile Tool is used as an evaluation tool for tracking OSCYs participating in ALS and livelihood offerings. It is designed to track change over time across 8 asset categories: Support; Empowerment; Boundaries and Expectations; Constructive Use of Time; Commitment to Learning; Positive Values; Social Competencies; and, Positive Identity. During the period under review, the following activities undertaken relative to the DAP:

DAP Administrators Training for Synergeia

The DAP Administrators Training for Synergeia was held in Koronadal City in February 24-27. Participants included Site Coordinators and the 7 Instructional Managers who will handle the A&E classes in 6 of the 8 municipalities assisted by Synergeia sites in the mainland. The 2-day training included the overview of DAP, a walk-through of the DAP Administrator's Handbook, and a hands-on exercise on DAP tool administration by the participants. In addition to facilitating the training, EDC provided supplies and materials for the actual conduct of DAP Time 1 administration to a sample of learners during the first 2 weeks of March. The accomplished survey forms are being processed by Synergeia staff.

DAP Data Analysis and Application Workshop

In March 31-April 1 EDC facilitated the DAP Data Analysis and Application Workshop. Lead partner IR3 specialists, M&E/MIS officers, field project officers, and IMs participated in the activity. During the workshop, lead partners shared their experiences regarding T1 and T2 administration of the DAP tool. EDC in collaboration with the SEARCH Institute provided an initial analysis of findings from ELSA's 703 and Save the Children's 1,167 data sets, and imparted to participants some basic skills in data analysis and interpretation, application of DAP results, and reporting of results. Preliminary analysis showed faster development of assets among children and youth from the islands over those from the mainland. This led to a rich discussion, but further analysis is required to uncover explanations. Further analysis will be conducted next quarter, which will be documented and shared.

E. Out of School Youth Labor Market Assessment

During this quarter, EDC conducted a desk study of formal and informal labor markets and associated employment and self-employment livelihood opportunities for out-of-school youth in both the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the additional conflict affected areas of Muslim Mindanao served by the EQuALLS2 project in Regions IX and XII. This complements the youth livelihood preparation and youth workforce development activities conducted through the project by providing a better understanding of where participating youth may best be able to apply new or improved knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors; and where existing offerings might need to be expanded, curtailed or

significantly re-structured in the face of market-driven opportunities for individual and/or household-linked livelihood pursuits. The findings will be discussed widely with the project team and this information will be used as input to the annual planning process in quarters 3 and 4.

Below are Lead Implementing Partners' contributions to target accomplishments during the quarter:

IR 3 Indicators	Synergeia	ELSA	Save the Children	TOTAL
Number of OSCY learners enrolled in USG assisted basic education programs	1,945	2,556	3,276	7,777
Number of OSCY learners enrolled in USG assisted workforce development programs	159	310	1,438	1,907
Number of OSCY learners improving their basic education competencies	1,926	807	1,836	4,569
Number of OSCY learners mastering their livelihood skills	149	438	2,524	3,111
IMs Trained	7	38	51	96

III. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Overall project implementation is on track with increases in rates of accomplishment of Year 3 targets noted in almost all the FACTS indicators (Table 1). During the quarter, the annual target number of books and other learning materials provided, as well as the number of administrators trained were exceeded. Security concerns delayed construction and repair of classrooms, but Petron, through the Habitat for Humanity, focused on the assessment of safer sites where construction could push through in the remaining period.

Summary of Project Accomplishments vs. Targets

The table on the following page illustrates project accomplishments as of quarter 2 of FY09 (Y3) on FACTS indicators.

FACTS Indicator Table for Q2 FY09

FACTS Indicator	LOP Target	Y3 Targets	Accomplishments		
			Q1 FY09	Q2 FY09	Year to Date FY09
Number of Classrooms repaired with USG-assistance	480	140	11	0	11
Number of classrooms constructed with USG-assistance	120	40	2	0	2
Number of CLCs refurbished	400	179	2	83	85
Number of PTCAs or similar “school” governance structures supported by USG	700	560	338	172	510
Number of administrators and officials trained (e.g. in school finance, management or governance)	2,238	938	440	559	999
Number of teachers/educators trained with USG support	24,000	13,700	2,854	5,600	8,454
Number of textbooks and other learning materials provided with USG-assistance	1,800,000	350,000	296,000	271,945	567,945
Number of OSCY learners enrolled in basic education programs	80,000	16,678	6,707	7,777	14,484
Number of persons participating in USG-funded WFD programs	10,000	9,598	2,843	1,907	4,750
Number of IMs/YLFs trained	377	322	109	96	205

Management Information System (MIS)

The EDC-led M&E MIS was completed in late February and launched at a project-wide TWG on March 4. At the launching, EDC’s M&E team demonstrated the features and capabilities of the MIS, and guided the participants in a hands-on application of the system, from data capture to generation of summary progress reports. A User’s Manual (See Annex 8) was provided to serve as reference guide in working with the system. Lead partners were encouraged to use the MIS and report any bugs to the contracted developer within the 6-month warranty period.

IM Competency Assessment Tool

The IM Competency Assessment tool was developed in collaboration with Philip Purnell/SEAMEO INNOTECH. The tool is now being piloted by Save the Children and upgrades IM teaching performance and improves program implementation. Initial results of the pilot testing indicate the need for further refinement of the tool. Re-testing of the tool is planned for next quarter.

CIG Monitoring Tool

EDC has drafted a monitoring tool for tracking progress and documenting outcomes of CIG-assisted community projects. The tool aims to capture the responsiveness, impact and sustainability of the projects. The tool also aims to describe the successes, innovations and challenges of PTCAs and other recipient institutions in their advocacy and networking and resource management and mobilization effort, and in the maintenance of the projects. The tool will be used as a common guide for joint monitoring of CIGs with partners and observations are intended to inform partners on areas where recipient organizations may need more capacity enhancements. This tool will be shared at the IR1 TWG meeting in the next quarter.

CLC Monitoring Tool

EDC has also drafted and shared with partners a monitoring tool for the various Community Learning Centers (CLCs) established by partners either through refurbishment of an existing structure or construction of a new one. The tool assesses the physical structure, and more importantly, the functionality of the facility, including safety and security, provisions of furniture/fixtures, availability and accessibility of learning materials to learners; maintenance and cleanliness of the CLC; and management and sustainability measures undertaken by the community.

Classroom Construction and Refurbishment Monitoring Tool

The tool is in a draft form and will be shared with partners in the next quarter for validation and testing. The tool includes a simple checklist of the physical condition and features of the facility, as well as focus group discussion questions designed to elicit information on community participation/mobilization, how various stakeholder groups contributed to the project, as well as the challenges in the course of implementation, and outcomes of the project.

Next Quarter

Q3 is focused on data migration by lead partners. ELSA has requested for training on the MIS for its field users and this will be done in the first week of April. Save the Children has its own comprehensive database system developed using Microsoft Access and wanted a harmonization between the EDC and Save MIS. This will be done in May.

EDC's M&E team will also be meeting with the LIPs to discuss how the MIS could lead to more efficient and effective reporting. Concurrently, EDC will continue to coordinate with Diliman Network Solutions to troubleshoot user problems with the MIS.

An M&E TWG meeting is planned for next quarter to discuss the following:

- ✓ Ongoing qualitative and quantitative monitoring
- ✓ revisions of the QPR format
- ✓ update on the use of the MIS
- ✓ documentation processes of best practices
- ✓ sharing of M&E tools
- ✓ Moving forward the priorities in the Learning Agenda

IV. SUB GRANT MANAGEMENT

The Sub Grant Management team finalized and disseminated Community Incentive Grants Guidelines to partners upon receiving approval to do so from USAID. The grants team also engaged in joint program and financial management field assessments of partner work sites, in addition to conducting regular financial monitoring and compliance visits to the offices of each sub grant partner. Finally, the grants team conducted a careful review of partners' Monthly Fund Requests and Financial and Q1 FY09 Quarterly Progress Reports.

Community Incentive Grants

On March 19, 2009, EDC received final approval from USAID's Agreement Officer, Ray Edler, to disseminate the EQuALLS2 Community Incentive Grants guidelines to lead implementing partners. EDC facilitated a CIG guidelines orientation discussion with partners and OEd during the previous quarter, incorporating subsequent feedback suggestions into the final draft guidelines, now approved by USAID. Partners have begun issuing community grants in their respective sites.

Joint Program and Financial Management Field Assessments:

As part of the close-out procedure for Save the Children's transition year grant (November 1, 2006 to October 31, 2008), EDC's grants and technical teams conducted a joint assessment of previously issued School Improvement Grants, on January 14-20, 2009 in Talipao, Sulu in the islands, and Datu Piang, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, and Lutayan in the mainland. The objectives of the assessment were to i) solicit grant beneficiary feedback on the process undertaken by the community in their chosen project, and ii) determine how the grant activity has helped to address community education improvement.

EDC also conducted an assessment of Synergeia Foundation's implementation of IR1 and IR3 activities in Clusters 1 and 3. The aim of these field assessments was to determine progress of implementation, challenges encountered, and gaps in programming. The assessment was structured around focus group discussions with the community beneficiaries at the following places and times.

- Jolo, Patikul and Siasi: *Jan. 13-15, 2009*
- Ganassi, Marawi, Kapatagan, Buldon, Barira: *Jan. 19-21, 2009*
- Pagadian, Dinas: *Feb. 2-4, 2009*
- Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat: *Feb. 17-20, 2009*

In addition, the EDC teams jointly visited 44 Community Learning Centers (CLCs) – 20 ELSA sites, 19 Save the Children sites, and 5 Synergeia sites – located in Barangays across 17 municipalities in Mainland and Zamboanga Peninsula. These field visits took place between March 16-20, 2009 and aimed to i) determine the current status of CLC repair and refurbishment activity so far undertaken by partners, ii) determine completeness of ALS modules and other OSCY learning materials, iii) challenges encountered both by IMs and Learners, and iv) to identify remaining learners’ needs. The results of the joint assessments and CLC visits were shared with concerned partners after each visit.

Financial Monitoring and Compliance Visits

EDC conducted financial monitoring and compliance visits to Save the Children and Synergeia Foundation offices, respectively, to review their October to December 2008 financial transactions. In particular EDC sought to determine: i) the validity and accuracy of project fund expenditures; ii) adequacy of internal control systems and management of project funds, and; iii) compliance with the sub grant agreement terms and conditions, USAID rules and regulations, and local laws. A summary of key finding is located in the table below:

Sub-grantees	Dates of Reviews / Visits	Highlights
Save the Children	Davao and Manila offices: January 19-26, 29-30 & March 2, 2009	A small percentage of project disbursements were noted as questioned costs due to lack of adequate supporting documents. These documents were either in-transit from vendors or Save’s satellite offices. Resolutions of prior-period findings were also followed-up.
Synergeia Foundation	February 4-6, 9, 10, 12-14, 2009	Inadequate documentation and lack of approvals on some expenses were noted. EDC provided recommendations and technical guidance to clear said expenses and avoid disallowances. Resolutions of prior-quarter findings were also followed-up and noted some that are yet to be resolved by Synergeia. EDC reiterated the importance of acting immediately to resolve pending items.

Monitoring of Lower Tier Sub Grantees

EDC’s Grants Compliance Officer (Alvin Leal) joined IYF’s Grants Officer (Sara Spears) during her monitoring visits of 1st tier sub grants to observe how IYF conducts its monitoring function of its sub-tiers. The visits were held on these dates:

- PBSP: January 26, 2009
- Petron: January 28, 2009
- Ayala: January 29, 2009
- Consuelo: January 30, 2009

At the end of the visits, IYF shared its monitoring reports with EDC for information. The next IYF reviews will be conducted after three months.

- EDC has established rapport with the IYF monitoring team
- EDC shared monitoring tools with IYF
- IYF's financial reviews used limited samples only and not as deep as expected.

Next Steps

EDC needs to work with IYF on an agreed depth and quality of future financial reviews by establishing:

- Roles for each institution in the review
- Frequency of reviews
- Objectives
- Common approaches e.g. risk assessment, P&P reviews, and walkthroughs on processes, documentations, testing, and transaction audits.
- Standards for documentation and reporting.

Partners' Quarterly Progress Reports

The EDC team reviewed Partners' October to December 2008 quarterly progress reports and analyzed Partner spending against planned activities and budgets. The analysis was consolidated with technical assessments into a feedback document released to partners and discussed in a one-on-one Partners' meeting.

Next Steps

- Revisit 1:1 funding match requirement for CIGs.
- Establish standard valuation guide of in-kind leverage or community counterpart.
- Review fund transfer mechanisms of partners in areas without bank or where access to bank is difficult – in Sulu, banks are only located in the main town of Jolo, which requires significant, and dangerous, travel time for some communities we serve.
- Establish granting and funding mechanism for school-less barangays.
- Revisit QPR format to be more user-friendly.

Partners' Financial Reports

The grants team reviewed partner invoices and liquidation reports from December 2008 to February 2009 before recording. Partner requests for cash advances were also reviewed to ensure reasonableness before processing.

Other Activities:

In addition to the above, EDC Grants Officers participated in the following events to increase their skills and competencies:

- Seminar organized by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) entitled "*Writing better audit reports*" on *February 13-14, 2009*.
- Attendance Partners' Meeting on Community Engagement and CIG Guidelines, *February 26, 2009*.

V. PROJECT OPERATIONS

A. Outreach & Communications

EQuALLS2 continued to work closely with USAID, DepED, the project's lead implementing partners, and other partners to draw public attention to the assistance of the American people to the Philippines. As part of this effort, Karl Grobl, an internationally-recognized humanitarian photojournalist, visited the project to capture images of EQuALLS2's impact on Mindanao communities and beneficiaries.

During the quarter, the team organized the following events.

- The signing by Ambassador Kenney and DepED Secretary Jeslie Lapus on January 14, 2009 of the USAID-DepED commitment to promote access to quality education in Mindanao with the US Government's release of \$86M worth of funds for this purpose.
- The turnover of 230,865 English, science, and math books to more than 758 teachers in the provinces of Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Shariff Kabunsuan, North Cotabato, and Cotabato in Mindanao on February 27. These books will complement the teachers' instruction and help boost the reading comprehension skills of their students.
- US Ambassador Kenney's visit to Paglat, Maguindanao on March 3, 2009, where she led in the USAID-Petron turnover of a two-classroom building for Kakal Elementary School, to increase learning opportunities for schoolchildren in Mindanao's conflict-affected areas. On the same day, Ambassador Kenney, together with USAID/Philippines Mission Director, Jon Lindborg, handed over workforce tools and life skills materials to 25 out-of-school youth who completed EQuALLS2's workforce development program implemented by Synergeia Foundation.

In support of these and other project activities, the Outreach and Communications team produced weekly highlights, press releases, and other communications products that put USAID in the limelight. The details are as follows.

- Twelve (12) weekly highlights were submitted to USAID/Philippines' OEd for the Administrator's Weekly (USAID Washington).
- Fifteen (15) EQuALLS2 articles were published in national newspapers and Mindanao newspapers, and eleven (11) news stories and photo essays were published in the websites of various news agencies and organizations.
- Information materials and visual products such as banners and cintra board collaterals were produced for EQuALLS2 events and activities.
- A photo shoot by American photojournalist Karl Grobl of the project's field activities was facilitated to update and enhance the project's photo documentation of its activities for its various communication initiatives.

Please refer to Annex 1 for a full range of Weekly Highlights, published articles and other communication products.

B. Administration and Human Resources

Recruitment

EQuALLS2 advertised for vacant Outreach and Communications Director and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager positions during this quarter and progressed through a selection process, resulting in the hiring of personnel for each position.

The following chart illustrates new staff that were recruited in Q1, but hired in this reporting period:

Name	Title	Duty station	Hire date
Ali Monib	Driver	Cotabato	January 5 2009
Fe Teresa Corpuz	Technology Program Officer	Cotabato	March 2, 2009
Loreta Villones	Finance Manager	Manila	January 5, 2009
Roberto Sanchez	Driver	Manila	January 29, 2009

Procurement

EQuALLS2 procured 2 computers in the Philippines, followed by an order of 32 desktop computers for the ICT program in January 2009. The price in the U.S. (including shipping cost)—which was about the same as the total price of equivalent computers in the Philippines and would have posed difficulty in justifying a waiver of geographical code 000 in favor of a local purchase—necessitated the importation.

The 32 computers arrived in Manila on March 17, 2009. EQuALLS2 is working closely with Undersecretaries Jess Mateo and Ramon Bacani of DepED in securing exemption from payment of customs duties, which will be assumed under DepED’s national budget. As soon as the computers are released by the Bureau of Customs, they will be forwarded to EDC Cotabato, for turn over to 4 school based ICT hubs in Midsayap.

Motorcycles

On January 26, 2009, USAID approved the waiver to procure locally 33 units of motorcycles (14 for Save the Children, 8 for IYF, and 11 for Synergeia) to be used by the project partners in conducting field activities. The request for VAT exemption has been with the Bureau of Internal Revenue since February 2009 and by the of the end of this quarter, approval of the VAT exemption was still pending.

Technical, Operational and Management Support

The EDC Short-Term Technical Assistance and consultancy team provided the following assistance during the reporting period:

STTA/Consultant	Date		Purpose
	Arrival	Departure	
Brenda Bell	Feb. 18	March 5	Cross-IR Technical Support,
Bill Potter	Feb. 22	March 6	Cross-IR Technical Support, ICT and GDA signing

Karl Grobl	March 10	March 16	Photo shoot for EQuALLS2 materials
Gustavo Payan	March 9	May 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications guidance with EDC team on events, print and media • Assist in development and testing of OSCY tracking tool with local team and David James-Wilson • Assist in the utilization and management of DAP data • Increase the project's Operational Capacity
David James-Wilson	March 29	April 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct DAP workshop • Provide Technical Guidance on the LAR • IR3 Mid-term review and Livelihood Mapping
EcoVentures International	US-based, no PI travel February 16 – April 3 9 days total consultancy		Desk study of market opportunities and workforce needs for OSCY in Mindanao
Philip Purnell / SEAMEO INNOTECH	Ongoing / As needed		IR3-related work; field assessment of workforce development training; field assessment of basic literacy offerings (A&E; PEPT).

C. Security

Security has become an elevated concern since July 2008. During this quarter, the use of kidnap for ransom tactics and bombing in project areas has increased and/or become highly publicized. In response to maintaining a continuum of care to communities the project serves, EQuALLS2 has utilized a multi-faceted approach to managing security issues. These have included the provision of security training across partners and to EDC staff; working regularly with the Growth and Equity in Mindanao's and other agencies security focal persons to obtain regular reports, sending those across the project team; and keeping a close informal network of PNP, AFP and other sources to maintain current and relevant information on security in our working areas.

Project-wide security concerns and actions taken:

The kidnapping of three (3) ICRC staff that included two expatriates in Jolo on January 15; the kidnapping of three (3) public school teachers in Zamboanga City on January 23, and again the kidnapping of three (3) more teachers in Zamboanga Sibugay in February has created uncertainty and grave concern among EQuALLS2 partners since we operate in these same and similarly risky sites. EDC initiated assessment activities both among EQuALLS2 partners and USAID to help everyone be more aware as well as respond adequately to these concerns. These efforts included the initiation of a security briefing with USAID (that eventually led to a major briefing that included all USAID contractors). EDC also encouraged its partners to conduct security assessment and readiness checks, and facilitated sharing of expertise and training resources (Save the Children among all partners was the most equipped for this exercise).

EDC also undertook strengthening of its internal security with the following measures:

Training of staff in crisis management and emergency response

Pursuant to measures taken by the project to ensure security of its staff, EDC requested Save the Children to provide EQuALLS2 staff with training in crisis management and emergency response. A 3-day training was conducted by Ms. Matilde Nida Vilches, Save the Children Manager for Crisis and Emergency Response Program, from March 23 to 24, 2009, at the Grand Regal Hotel in Davao City. Thirty-one participants attended the training from the offices in Cotabato and Zamboanga.

The training covered staff responsibility for safety and security, current trends in security and security strategies, weapons, emergency procedures, communication protocols, and crisis management. The program was highlighted by mock crisis situations (e.g., a kidnap for ransom or KFR incident, an ambush of a convoy of project vehicles) which grouped the participants into different response teams (i.e., field staff, Manila staff, and EDC management) and stimulated potential questions and concerns from amongst the participants. One of the most major recommendations resulting from the training is the need to define a set of guidelines to clarify roles and delineate responsibilities among EDC staff for a crisis situation including, but not limited to, incident reporting (when to report to EDC, USAID, the police or government authorities, victims' families), communication protocols (who shall communicate with the staff, press, families, local and national government authorities; what shall be EDC's official statement), and negotiation during a KFR case.

WFP coordination

EDC Cotabato Office Manager Fatima Abas, who came from the UN World Food Programme in Cotabato, has taken initiative to explore possible collaboration with the UN WFP office on security matters. WFP conducts a weekly meeting, presided by its UN field security officer, and has agreed to accommodate our request to join its regular meetings so EQuALLS2 can benefit from reports and updates on current security situations covering the project's and WFP's common areas of operation. WFP has formal ties with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Coordination Council on Cessation of Hostilities (CCHP).

Starting April 2009, Fatima Abas will join the WFP weekly meetings. She is requested to share brief reports and updates from the meetings with the EQuALLS2 COP, DCOP, the directors of finance and administration and, as needed, with other concerned staff, particularly any precautionary information and advisories against travels.

AFP coordination

Still in accordance with measures to tighten up security and safety of EDC staff, meetings are being scheduled with the AFP commanders in Maguindanao and Zamboanga, to explore possible ways to strengthening EDC's security measures through more formal coordination with the AFP. This is becoming more important in view of the increasing frequency of visits to EQuALLS2 sites by USAID and U.S. Embassy officials and EDC's expatriate

staff/consultants, which attract more attention and higher exposure to safety and security risks.

At present, there is informal coordination with the local police stations in Cotabato and Zamboanga to request deployment of police officers to provide security services to EQuALLS2 travelers/visitors. This however is deemed insufficient, particularly when such police officers are constrained by jurisdiction issues.

VI. FY 2009 QUARTER 3 WORKPLAN SUMMARY

The following table indicates major activities for the third quarter of FY09.

Program Component	Activities	Implementing Partner/Org	Dates
Leadership and Management	Mid-Term Review Preparation, Support, Retreat and Follow-up	Project-wide	April, May, June
	Finalization of National Book Store Foundation GDA Agreement	EDC	May
	Submit Quarterly Progress Report; present to USAID	EDC; Project-wide	May; June
	Annual Planning	EDC	End of June
IR 1	Capacity assessment tool administration	Save, Synergeia	April
	CIG orientations	Synergeia	April
	Brigada Eskwela	Implementing partners	May 18-24
	Youth project management training	ELSA	April-May
	Strategic planning for PTCAs	ELSA	April-June
	Children and youth sectoral consultations	Save	May
	CESP planning workshops	Save	June
	IR1 TWG Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIG guidelines • Documentation of best practices in community engagement • Planning for next round of capacity assessments 	EDC and implementing partners	June W1

Program Component	Activities	Implementing Partner/Org	Dates
	Planning for cross-partner learning activity	EDC and implementing partners	June
IR 2	Cycle 7, Reading Program Pilot	EQuALLS2 and BEAM	First half of April
	BEAM-EQuALLS2 TOT on Multi-Grade for ARMM	EQuALLS2 and BEAM	April
	BEAM-EQuALLS2 Summer INSET on Classroom Assessments	EQuALLS2 and BEAM	April – May
	Training of Mentors: Math 3	Implementing Partners	April – May
	Training of Mentors: Science 2	Implementing Partners	April – May
	Training of Trainers on Mentoring	EDC and Partners	May
	Distribution of math and science kits	EDC and Partners	April – May
Materials and Technology	ICT training for 100 teachers from Midsayap and another 100 teachers from Malapatan	EDC and Partners	April – May
	Book shopping events at the book centers in preparation for class opening in June	EDC and Partners	May
	Turnover of computers in Midsayap and set up of hubs	EDC and Partner	May
	Turnover of computers in Malapatan and set up of hubs	EDC and Partner	June
	Identification of 2 more ICT sites and meeting with stakeholders	EDC and Partners	June
	Design and development of an ICT initiative for OSCYs	EDC and Partners	June
	Procurement and distribution of dictionaries through a GDA with National Bookstore Foundation, Inc.	EDC	June
IR 3	BLiS classes and A&E Sessions	Save the Children	April - June
	TBCST and STII sessions, Industry Immersion	Save the Children	April - June

Program Component	Activities	Implementing Partner/Org	Dates
	A&E Classes	ELSA	April – June
	WFD Courses in Tawi-Tawi and Basilan	ELSA – MIT, NFI	April – June
	WFD classes in Cotabato City	ELSA – NDU	April – June
	PEPT-directed classes in Lantawan and Maluso	ELSA – NFI	April –June
	WFD classes in Bongao and Pigkawayan	ELSA – MIT, NDMC	April -June
	Livelihood Skills Training in Jolo, Sulu	Synergeia	April - May
	Livelihood Skills Training in Siasi, Sulu	Synergeia	April - May
	DAP M&E Specialists Workshop	EDC with EQ2 Team	May W4
	Program Review	Save the Children and ELSA	May
	Summer Skills Training Camps	Synergeia	May - June
	Livelihood Skills Training in Patikul, Sulu	Synergeia	May - June
	IR3 TWG : Workshop on Quality Standards and Indicators	EDC with EQ2 Team	June W4
	Youth Camps (2)	Ayala Foundation	Late May and Early June
M&E	One-on-one consultation meetings with the partners regarding their use of EDC's MIS and harmonization of MIS between Save and EDC systems.	EDC	May W2-3

Program Component	Activities	Implementing Partner/Org	Dates
	Review with Diliman Network Solutions and partners the next steps in making the MIS fully functional.	EDC	May W4
	Meeting with TWG on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPR • MIS • Documentation of best practices • Pushing forward the priorities in the Learning Agenda 	EDC	June
Outreach and Comm.	O&C Team Working Group Meeting	O&C team of EQ2 and implementing partners	April 30
	Brigada Eskwela in Central Mindanao and Zamboanga City	O&C teams of EQ2 and implementing partners	May 18-22
	English Language Camp in Cebu	EQ2 O&C team and US Peace Corps	May 3-28
	ICT Training coverage	EQ2 O&C team and ELSA	May 4-15
	Training of Trainers NEPP coverage	EQ2 O&C team and RPOs	May 11-13
	Mindanao Information Network for Development and Peace (MINDPeace) Forum	EQ2 O&C team, Save the Children, MEDCo	May 15
	O&C Team Working Group Meeting	O&C teams of EQ2 and implementing partners	June
Grants Management	Quarterly financial monitoring of the four sub-grants for the period covered January to March 2009	All Partners	April
	Review Partners' January to March 2009 QPR	EDC	May
	Follow-up review of EDC's sub grant management system by EDC Internal	EDC	May

