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**Strengthening Basic Education  
EQUIP2, El Salvador  
Quarterly Report No. 3  
July - September, 2006**



**1. Quarterly Report**

Prepared by:

Academy for Educational Development

With:

Research Triangle Institute  
Mariposa Consulting LLC

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**October, 2006**

## List de Acronyms

AED	Academy for Educational Development
CERCA	Civic Engagement for Educational Reform in Central America
COP	Chief of Party (Director del Proyecto)
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EQUIP2	Education Quality Improvement Program 2
FEPADE	Private Sector Foundation for Educational Development
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation (Monitoreo y Evaluación)
MINED	Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación)
CNE	National Education Account (Cuenta Nacional de Educación)
ONG	Nongovernmental Organization (Organización no gubernamental)
PEA	Proyecto Educativo Annual (Annual school plan)
PEI	Proyecto Educativo Institucional (school management plans)
PMC	Presidential Monitoring Committee (Comisión Presidencial de Monitoreo)
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan (Plan de Monitoreo)
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SRC	CERCA's School Report Card (Reporte Escolar de CERCA)
TBN	To Be Nominated (por definir)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development /El Salvador
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University)
UTEC	Universidad Tecnológica (Technological University)
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Social Sciences Latin American faculty)
DIGESTYC	Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (Office of Statistics and Censuses)
INSAFORP	Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional (Salvadoran Institute of Professional Development)
FUNDE	Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo (National Foundation for Development)
ANEP	Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada (National Association of Private Business)
FUNDES	Fundación Desarrollo de Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas (Development Foundation of Small and Medium Enterprises)

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## EQUIP2 STRENGTHEN BASIC EDUCATION USAID/EL SALVADOR

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/El Salvador's Strengthening of the Basic Education Program in El Salvador is an integrated set of activities that support the Ministry of Education's (MINED) efforts and priorities of the Education National Plan 2021. The program is funded by USAID through three implementers: EQUIP2, Save the Children and FEPADE. The EQUIP 2 project seeks to support the development of education policy to increase and better social investment and the transparency of the education sector, while increasing basic education opportunities. The project works at both the national level and the school level, reaching up to 500 schools in six departments, and impacting 500 directors, 3,000 teachers and 100,000 students over four years.

EQUIP2 contributes directly to the goals of the National Plan of Education 2021. In particular, it supports the Plan's Strategic Line #2 "Effectiveness of Basic Education", specifically regarding themes on competent and motivated educators, and a curriculum that lends itself to learning. EQUIP2 also supports the Plan's Strategic Line #4 "Good Management Practices", through institutional development methodologies and social participation at the school level, information systems, follow-up, and evaluation. EQUIP2 helps the MINED reach these goals by developing language materials, supporting teacher professional development and strengthening of the school management plans called PEI and PEA.

During this quarter, between July and September 2006, EQUIP2 made progress with several key technical deliverables. In particular, this quarter's work included a) MINED approval of the study programs and curricular map, and continued progress on the drafting of instructional language materials from first to third grade; b) Design of Modules I and II for teacher development, including language competencies and continuous assessment; c) Development of the strategy to strengthen the PEI and PEA in up to 250 schools and implementation of the first training session for local management teams entitled *equipos de gestión* at the school level. In addition, EQUIP2 drafted a self-guide manual to work with the *equipos de gestión* at the schools. The *Equipos de Seguimiento a la Calidad* from the MINED were trained providing technical assistance to the *equipos de gestión* while developing the PEI strategy; d) Collaboration with the Presidential Monitoring Commission to develop terms of reference for a study on effective schools; and d) Review of the database for the National Accounts in Education.

This report is a summary of the principal activities of the program components, its challenges, lessons learned and next steps.

## Summary of Principle Activities

### *Development of instructional language materials from first to third grade*

EQUIP2 developed the curricular map and study programs from first to third grade that were approved by MINED. Three teams of language experts -one per grade- were created. The teams were created to produce and submit the teachers' guides, textbooks and student notebooks to the MINED in a timely manner. This process was carried out in conjunction with the MINED technical staff. At the end of this quarter, the MINED extended its deadline until November.

EQUIP2 also developed the curricular map and the study programs from fourth to six grades. However, given the priority focused on the language materials for the first cycle, MINED decided to postpone the approval of these map and programs until next year.

*The PEI and PEA strategy was presented to 250 schools. Letter of commitment from participants' schools was gathered.*

In July, EQUIP2 -in collaboration with Save the Children and FEPADE- presented the PEI and PEA strategy to 250 schools in five departments. Meanwhile, the *equipos de gestión* – formed by the school principal, parents, teachers and students- from these schools were motivated to learn about the objectives and goals of the PEI and PEA strategy. In this meeting, 246 schools decided to participate by signing letters of voluntary commitment.

*Equipos de gestión from schools and Equipos de Seguimiento of MINED were trained in a first round to develop the methodology to strengthen the PEIs and PEAs.*

In July, EQUIP2 trained MINED's Equipos de Seguimiento a la Calidad in how to implement the PEI and PEA strategy. These teams are going to support 125 schools. Meanwhile in August, three members of the *equipos de gestión* were trained to learn how to implement the first two steps –motivation and self-assessment- of the strategy at the school level based on the indicators developed by MINED's Estrategia Unificada de Seguimiento.

### *National Education Account (NEA) Methodology Institutional ization*

One of the critical inputs to the NEA is, of course, data. In July and August, MINED distributed its letters of agreement requesting data to Banco Central de Reserva, Ministerio de Hacienda, DIGESTYC and INSAFORP. At the end of this quarter, the data had been received except INSAFORP. MINED and EQUIP2 staff continue to work with the household survey databases and have begun analysis of the Higher Education and MINED expenditures databases.

The following table presents detailed information about the state of each of the components:

**EQUIP2**  
**STRENGTHEN BASIC EDUCATION USAID/EL SALVADOR**  
**Quarterly Report July-September, 2006**

**Activities by Component**

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
<b>Component I. To increase social sector investment and transparency</b>		
A.1. Cost effective studies of selected programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 met with staff from MINED to provide input on the October and November <i>prueba de seguimiento</i>. This test could be used as background for the COMPRENDO study</li> <li>- MINED has rescheduled the dates for the COMPRENDO study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review expectations about the COMPRENDO study with MINED</li> <li>- Review additional documents for the COMPRENDO study</li> </ul>
A.2. Methodology and institutionalization of the NEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific data was obtained from 3 of the 4 major institutions</li> <li>- Review of the databases from the household surveys, higher education data, census, and MINED financial information</li> <li>- Drafted form of the first NEA report</li> <li>- The workshop on NEA “Educational Boundaries” has been postponed according to MINED’s request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 team will continue exploring the data bases and producing initial NEA reports</li> <li>- EQUIP2 will finish the planning phase for the NEA workshop, and will seek MINED’s approval to hold the workshop in December or January 2007</li> <li>- EQUIP2 will begin to develop the methodology for the new questionnaires</li> </ul>
A.3. Integration of the MINED information system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main databases have been identified</li> <li>- Key personnel from MINED have been interviewed</li> <li>- A draft version of the final report has been produced and sent to MINED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 will develop the terms of reference including recommendations from MINED</li> </ul>
A.4. To support the Presidential Monitoring Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 is reviewing the terms of reference for the CPM study with CPM members.</li> <li>- Technical meetings were held</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CPM members and EQUIP2 will finalize the terms of reference, including recommendations from the</li> </ul>

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
	with CPM members, local education experts and MINED personnel - Field work for the CPM study will take place in March 2007 following the school year	participants in the technical meetings
<b>B. Component 2. To improve the opportunities in Basic Education</b>		
B.1.National strategy of language based in competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MINED approved the curriculum map and the study programs from first to third grade.</li> <li>- Textbooks, student workbooks and teacher guides continue to be produced in close collaboration with MINED</li> <li>- The continuous assessment specialist from EQUIP2 and local team are incorporating continuous assessment and academic reinforcement in the teacher guides and the student workbooks</li> <li>- An active school specialist from Nicaragua visited El Salvador to exchange experiences on materials development using active learning methodologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 will continue developing the first and second grade language materials</li> <li>- In November, the third grade materials will be ready for print</li> <li>- Deadline to submit language materials within the work plan for 2007 will be defined</li> </ul>
B.2, 3 y 4. Training of teacher trainers; development of modules for teacher training; and the plan for applied research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The continuous assessment specialist from EQUIP2 has provided technical assistance to MINED staff in creating the achievement tests and monitoring progress. On August 9-11 a workshop was held with MINED about this topic</li> <li>- The design of the two teacher training modules for teacher trainers, – on competencies and continuous assessment-, have begun in close coloboration with MINED and FEPADE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The training workshop for teacher trainers on Module I: will be held on November 14 and 15, The training session for the second module will be held on November 16 and 17.</li> </ul>

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
<b>C. Objective C: Strengthening community participation to improve the quality of education in at least 500 schools</b>		
C.1. To design the strategy to strengthen the PEI as a planning instrument to be a more simple, operational and participatory tool for management, and to focus on quality in up to 500 schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EQUIP2 and MINED have drafted the PEI and PEA design strategy</li> <li>- Technical meetings are being held with MINED Institutional Quality and Management office to jointly define the PEI and PEA strategy</li> <li>- A self-assessment manual that contains the PEI and PEA methodology has been developed and is in a draft form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical meetings with MINED will continue to reach final agreement on the strategy</li> <li>- The self-assessment manual will be delivered to the participant schools</li> </ul>
C.2. To make other actors aware of the PEI strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A El Salvador´s Program description brochure was developed to share with the schools</li> <li>- The program was presented to the 250 preselected schools in 6 departmental meetings with the participation of 497 members of the school community (Principals, parents and teachers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical assistance “in situ” will be provided to 250 schools. 125 schools through out the Equipos de Seguimiento from MINED, and the remaning 125 schools through out EQUIP2 facilitators</li> </ul>
C.3. To train facilitators that work in the development of the PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An additional facilitator has been hired to complete the team of 8 EQUIP2 facilitators</li> <li>- A facilitator training workshop was conducted on July 3-5</li> <li>- A training workshop for Equipos de Seguimiento -49 participants- from MINED was held on July 6 and 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training of the EQUIP2 facilitators will continue during regular bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>- In November a 5-day training session for facilitators will be held</li> </ul>
C.4. To build local capacity in the <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> from MINED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A training workshop for <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> from MINED was held on July 6 and 7 with 49 participants</li> <li>-EQUIP2 facilitators and <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> from MINED are meeting frequently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Departmental meetings will be scheduled according to the steps of the PEI strategy</li> <li>- The EQUIP2 facilitators will continue participating in the monthly meetings of the MINED <i>Equipos de</i></li> </ul>

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
	at the department level to share experiences and monitor progress - The EQUIP2 facilitators are participating in monthly meetings with Equipos de Seguimiento	<i>Seguimiento</i>
C.5. To build local capacity among the school community members to strengthen the PEI	- On August 18-19, 25-26, three school members from each school (parents, principals and teachers) were trained (671 persons) - 247 local management teams ( <i>equipos de gestion</i> ) are working with community members to develop the PEI strategy - Beginning mid-July technical assistance has been provided to the schools to support the process	- Technical assistance to the schools will be provided until the third week of November
C.6. To strengthen the schools management tools	- A draft version of the PEI self-assessment manual was developed	- EQUIP2 will finalize the self-assessment manual with a four-step process
<b>D. Objective D: To improve the civil competencies in at least 500 schools</b>		
D.1. To hold meetings with MINED	- This topic was included in meetings with the MINED	- A new strategy will be developed following MINED recommendations
D.2. To facilitate meetings with NGOs and other actors in order to review best practices	- EQUIP2 is working on the definition of the new strategy	- A draft of the strategy will be ready for discussion at the end of the year
D.3. To identify alliances	- Potential partners are being identified and preliminary meetings are planned	
<b>E. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>		
E.1 y 2. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan and accompanying the implementation plan	- EQUIP2 has given technical assistance to the partners and USAID in the development of the integrated PMP program	- Provide follow-up to the integrated PMP - Review the EQUIP2 PMP
E.3 To develop workshops with	EQUIP2 has given technical	

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
the MINED follow-up team	assistance to the <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> in the development of strong indicators	
E.4. To collect information	A baseline for the language competencies component has been developed	- EQUIP2 will produce a document on monitoring project indicators
<b>F. Administrative Management</b>		
F.1 To establish the office and the procedures	- EQUIP2 continues with daily management activities	
F.2 To contract local personnel	- A new facilitator was hired	

## LESSONS LEARNED

*Close collaboration with MINED and partners .*

The achievement of the project's goals and the sustainability of the activities require close collaboration with MINED and the partners. Hence, EQUIP2 continues to learn how to develop effective working relationships, how to create ownership and sustainability, and how to be responsive to MINED's needs.

*Communities are participating in the PEI strategy using simple tools.*

Preliminary findings show that the PEI strategy is has been effective in motivating communities to work with MINED to improve the management and the quality of education .

## CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

*Fixed deadlines to submit language materials for first to third grades*

EQUIP2 is working under short-term deadlines that might affect the quality of the materials at the school level. This has been a concern from the beginning, and influenced EQUIP2 to invest heavily creating several teams of language experts in order to meet the deadline and to finish the language materials, including continuous assessment and civic competencies concepts. Moreover, EQUIP2 is using *Cipotes* materials to assure correspondence with the current national materials. At the end of this quarter, MINED rescheduled the deadline to November.

*Concepts of civic competencies to be included in language materials, and in partnerships with other sectors*

The program has failed to address with MINED the issues of developing activities to strengthen civic competencies and forming alliances with the private sector to develop activities related

with this topic. EQUIP2 is proposing a new strategy that includes incorporating the main concepts of civic competencies as crosscutting topic in the language materials. This new strategy seeks to respond to MINED's needs to reduce the scope of this activity since it has been covered in other areas of the curriculum. In addition, EQUIP2 has proposed a new strategy for 2007, where some schools can decide voluntarily if they want to benefit from activities to strengthen civic competencies through the PEI and PEA activity. This activity will need further discussion with MINED.

#### *Strengthening the PEI and PEA in schools*

When the number of schools increased from 80 to 250 schools, it was agreed with MINED that this year's work with the management teams would include up to the diagnosis phase. Following this agreement, a manual was created and is in a draft form. Nevertheless, the MINED requested that this manual should not be given to the schools until the four phases were developed. EQUIP2's technical team continues to meet with counterparts from the Office of Institutional Management in an attempt to finalize the document this year. The MINED authorized to work in the schools using draft versions and not final copies of the manual.

#### *Two major activities have been rescheduled*

Ongoing communication between EQUIP2 and the MINED is beneficial because previously initiated activities may be reprogrammed and readjusted as necessary. Some of those activities include:

##### *COMPRENDO's cost-effectiveness study*

At the MINED's request, the implementation of COMPRENDO cost-benefit study has been rescheduled for 2007. The MINED believes that this study can be better defined as an impact study rather than a cost-benefit study.

##### *CNE Workshop: Educational Frontiers and Limits*

Jointly with its counterparts, the MINED organized the workshop entitled "Educational Frontiers and Limits". This workshop was reprogrammed at the request of the MINED due to possible political implications. In order to participate in dialogue and define strategies for the activities that may have impact outside of the system, EQUIP2 proposed to present the Minister a timeline of activities to discuss the strategy and assure that dates are set.

## **SUCCESS STORIES**

At the school level, most of the planning for the PEI and PEA has been done by the principal and teachers without the participation of the community. Here are a few testimonies that reflect how the methodology proposed by EQUIP2 is making changes.

### a) What happens after a thoughtful meeting with the instructional team

"We met with all of the members of the instructional team one Saturday morning to work on the PEI methodology, Topic 1: Our Dream, and Topic 2: The commitment of the School. To the extent that the themes were developed, the teachers, parents and community leaders took their

participation very seriously, providing valuable inputs, emphasizing that one of their dreams is that all of the boys and girls in the area would attend school. But the parents were worried about sending their children to school full-time since the schools had experienced a high drop-out rate, especially in kindergarten. One Monday, the big surprise was that all of the children, who had enrolled at the beginning of the school year but had dropped out, returned to the school accompanied by their parents. The parents said the children had returned, and would not drop out again, because there had been a town parents and leaders meeting, organized by the school instructional committee. At the meeting, the instructional committee helped the parents understand the importance of the children attending school all year. This is an event that never happened in El Salvador before, with all of the former students returning to rejoin their schoolmates in regular attendance.

*Principal*

*School from the village of Salitre, Town of Huertas Viejas  
Anamoros, Department of La Union*

b) Jointly analyzing the school's problems

“With the school management committee we decided to work on the first indicator from the methodology for review of the PEI, which is “student performance”. We noticed that in math for students in grades 7, 8 and 9 there was a lower performance level. After thinking about the situation, the students on the team stated that it was necessary to do something, and it was collectively decided to form “study circles” in the three grades. The activity would be coordinated by the students and teachers in preparation for final exams. As a result of this action, the majority of students improved their grades in math. It was the first time the students had taken the initiative to organize an activity to improve the learning of other students”.

*Principal*

*School from the village Los Benitez, Anton Agua Blanca  
Anamoros, Department of La Union*

c) Parent participation

“My experience in developing the methodology of revising the PEI was unique in the history of the school because it was the first time we met as an educational community to reflect on the problems that directly impact student learning. It is impressive to see how the mothers who belong to the management team interview the teachers, observe classes, and offer points of view without fear of reprisal. At first they were timid, but as we moved along they did it with more confidence and ownership of ideas.

*Principal Verónica Estela Hernández*

*School of the CANTON LLANOS DE ACHICHILCO  
Tocoluca, San Vicente*

d) Teacher experiences

“The moment arrived to discuss with theme 3, which is entitled “What happens in our classes”. The methodology proposes a series of questions that touch directly on the work we do in the classrooms. We noticed that one teacher takes a closed attitude, creating a tense ambiance. Nevertheless, we developed the theme, touching on very delicate points such as the motivation

that we use in the classroom, how we teach, etc. And we heard what the students think about the classes, which helped us to break down the barriers and self-evaluate our work in the classroom and to think about how we might improve. The methodology helped us improve using constructive criticism within a tranquil and objective climate”.

*Prof. Soraya del Carmen Pérez*

*Teacher from school CANTON LLANOS DE ACHICHILCO*

*Tecoluca, San Vicente*

## **FOLLOW-UP VISITS AND THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM**

For this third quarterly report no reports of interventions in this area were received.

## **INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

### *CURRENT TERM*

<b>Area of Technical Assistance</b>	<b>Specialist</b>	<b>Dates</b>
CNE and Cost Benefit Studies	Amber Gove	August
Information Systems	Pablo Destefanis	August
Language Competencies	Eliana Ramirez	July
Active Methodologies	Miriam Hernández	July
M&E	Ray Chesterfield	September
Continuous assessment	Abigail Harris	August

### *PROPOSAL FOR NEXT TERM*

<b>Area of technical assistance</b>	<b>Specialist</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Continuous assessment	Abigail Harris	November
Nacional Education Accounts	Amber Gove	October and December
Project Planning and impact on education policy	Ana Florez	October
Project Planning and impact on education policy	Jonh Gillies	October
M&E	Ray Chesterfield	October
Competencies	Eliana Ramírez	October- November