PN-ABF-618
67193

THE PRESENT, PAST, AND FUTURE OF TRAINING TEACHERS IN EL SALVADOR

Prepared for

Education and Training Office
USAID/El Salvador
Project #519-0168-3-90031

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October 28, 1989

This report was prepared under Contract No. AID/LAC-0000-C-00-6074-00 between USAID/El Salvador and the Academy for Educational Development and subcontractor Juárez and Associates.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study presents background material on the pre-service and in-service training of early childhood and primary school teachers in El Salvador at the end of the 1980s. This is placed within the historical perspective of a country with over a decade of internal strife and war. Training is viewed as a single process beginning from the time the teacher enters pre-service programs until he or she retires. At the same time it is seen in consonance with curriculum and materials development, all part of what must be a unified effort to improve the quality of education.

The study was conducted at a time when the Government of El Salvador (GOES) had just increased initial teacher preparation from two postsecondary years to three. In addition, new primary school curriculum programs had been implemented in 1988. Despite this, both teacher education and curriculum development were in a state of turmoil and uncertainty.

For the moment there is no problem with the supply of primary school teachers, exactly the opposite of what was true a decade ago. By placing teacher training in eight public and five private Technological Institutes in 1982, the GOES has managed to achieve several outcomes:

a. Change from a country with a deficit in trained primary school teachers to a country with a surplus, currently estimated between 5,000-8,000.

b. Increase the number of years of study for the primary school teacher from 12 in 1980 to the current 15 years.

c. Stimulate the interest of young people in teaching to such an extent that at present only about one of every five who want to enter this career are accepted at the training centers.

Despite this, strong voices clamor for a return to the days when teacher training was in a single, centralized unit at the Ciudad Normal. There may be some certainty to these affirmations inasmuch as:

a. The new teachers who entered the profession in the 1980s have come largely from lower income groups, thus shifting the traditional middle class base of the profession.

b. Most of the Technological Institutes are poorly equipped, understaffed, small, and unable to offer quality training.

c. Mixing teacher training with technical careers is

demeaning to the profession.

There is currently a GOES decision to improve the quality of the training programs, translating into proposals to:

- Increase the number of years of pre-service training from three to four or five.
- Center the training in fewer institutions, probably one in the central area outside of San Salvador, one in the east and one in the west.
- Freeze enrollments for one or two years while these changes are being finalized.

To carry forth these proposals, the GOES will need support in:

1. The medium-term training of the trainers of teachers (less than 100 in the entire country) on a massive scale in 1990-91. Most are products of the same system described above and, despite heroic efforts on their part, have received very little updating in recent years.
2. Providing the newly selected centers with modern bibliographies, materials, and equipment to raise the quality level of the training.
3. Reorientation of the curricular programs of the pre-service training centers centering around active methodologies, a more scientific base, and work with the communities.

Those teachers already in service face a different dilemma. At present, the updating or training they receive is minimal and parcelled out by at least a dozen different units. There is no official coordination and no assurance that the same teachers are not receiving the majority of the training. Even worse, inasmuch as the Ministry of Education (MOE) has almost no budget for training, activities depend upon the support of externally funded projects, each with their own special objectives.

One unit exists which, in theory, has responsibility for the in-service training (PPMS). However, PPMS has limited resources and has targeted its actions at specific groups: school directors, teachers without certification, first grade teachers, etc. Its method of coordination with the other units which carry out in-service training has been through special agreements and technical assistance.

The needs for in-service training are huge because:

a. Teachers in the system are products of greatly

diversified pre-service training programs, varying from the secondary-level preparation at the Normal School to the two-year postsecondary training at the Technological Institutes.

b. A policy for placing teachers based on seniority in terms of their training is followed. This means that virtually all teachers in the system have been trained prior to 1984, leaving at least a five-year gap in their preparation.

c. Alarming statistics on repetition and desertion within the first three grades of primary school indicate that current methodologies of teachers need to be re-examined and re-oriented so that individual children can be more adequately helped.

d. At a time when the country is in need of reconstruction at the community level, most teachers do not have the necessary skills to reach out into the towns and rural areas where they teach to promote projects and development.

As a result it seems imperative that the following actions be initiated:

1. Naming a central unit responsible for the coordination of teacher training and providing that unit with the means to carry out its task.

2. Launching a massive program of in-service training in 1990-91, using whatever media available (distance, presence, combinations) for all primary school teachers, with special emphasis on those in the first three grades.

3. Providing the classroom teacher with materials of a practical nature, ones which consider his specific needs and the cultural community in which he works.

This report also looks at the primary school curriculum. Despite recent efforts to change, as evidenced by the 1988 curricular programs, the current curriculum is still very much urban biased, oriented toward the middle class, traditional in its orientation and parcelled out in increasingly shorter half-day shifts. Because of the obvious and urgent need to change the primary school curriculum, the entire teacher training process described above is in jeopardy. One cannot prepare the "new" teacher for the "old" curriculum. The two must advance in harmony.

This concept translates into the following necessities:

a. Evaluation of the real needs of the student and of

his/her strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the first three grades, so that the necessary corrections can be made.

b. Analysis of existing materials used at the primary school level to determine their future orientation. There is a need to avoid contradictions and overlapping in the printed materials.

c. Orienting the curriculum to a more diversified, integrated, locally oriented base so that it can serve both the student and the community needs.

d. A new student evaluation system which assesses strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of assisting individuals in their development. This may mean taking a longer range view of the child and his development process, perhaps delaying a final assessment until the end of each cycle (three years).

e. Consideration of the development of the child from an earlier moment, perhaps orienting some governmental educational support to children in the 5-6-year age range. This could mean the expansion of the current "grade 0" project, the incorporation of preschool sections into the primary schools, or some other mechanism of this nature.

Development projects which will support the MOE in their struggles with the aforementioned tasks confront some of the following decisions:

1. How to orient a large part of the budget and the actions so that the people at base level, the classroom teacher in this case, receive 80-90% of the benefits of the project.

2. How to insure that those who benefit most from the projects are those who live in urban marginal or rural areas.

3. The way in which one can insert new and innovative ideas into the educational system without conflicting with experiences already gained or other cultural diversifications.

4. Whether training can best be accomplished with in-country or third country programs, and just when training in the developed countries is most helpful. Both cost and relevancy should be considered.

5. The level of technologies which can be most useful at

particular times. Extremely sophisticated technologies need to be analyzed in terms of the capacity of the country to absorb these technologies and their ability to carry them forth at project end.

I. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

A. Background

This report will focus upon the training of teachers and related areas within the overall plan of the Ministry of Education of El Salvador to improve the quality of education. The training program will be considered basically as a single effort, starting from the time the young person first makes a commitment to becoming a teacher to the moment in which he or she ceases to be active within the educational process, often far beyond official retirement. As such the report will touch upon, without repeating elements in other segments of the base studies, themes such as teacher recruitment, stimuli needed to promote teacher actions, strategies for the improvement of educational quality through teacher preparation, the real-life situation of the teacher, as well as the implications of some structural changes upon the teacher.

While they will be discussed separately, no attempt will be made to separate the processes of preparing the teacher, the development of the curriculum, and the preparation of materials for use at the primary school level. They are considered part and parcel of the same global effort to improve what is happening at the classroom level. The teacher needs to participate in that process, assisting in the formulation of the curriculum itself and in the preparation of the materials needed for its development. In this report these are considered all part of the same general picture.

Focus is essentially upon early childhood and basic education, especially the K-6 levels. Enough documentation already exists to indicate clearly that the largest quantitative manifestations of the problems of repetition, dropout, and abandonment are at these levels. But within that broad framework, special attention is given to providing alternatives for the urban marginal and rural areas, identified as top priorities by the GOES. Thus some suggestions sway from the formal educational system to include more community and private support for the educational process. Indeed, education is seen as a process with many possible inputs, many possible frameworks, and a variety of venue.

The scope of the report is limited to the timeframe available, the relatively precise areas of its focus, and the limitations of the author. Thus, outside of a few small sample inquiries, no new studies were made but rather existing information and opinions were gathered on the related themes. The interpretation and analysis of that information, while based as much as possible on the data available, is the responsibility of the author.

B. Methodology

The methodology was simple. Earlier contacts made it possible to talk to a variety of people at the central Ministry of Education level and at the institutes where teachers were trained. The plan was to secure as wide a variety of views on the different aspects of the focus themes and to contrast this with existing documentation and earlier experiences of the author in the country. Thus, visits were made to random programs in the pre- and in-service training of teachers to seek new facets being lived by the educators. This personalized approach was balanced with the more formal statistics and documents.

Several simple oral questions were used for the interviews, especially in the pedagogical training institutes and the schools visited. To secure a feeling for the situation which the teacher faced daily and the solutions he was giving to his own problems, an open-ended single question was used with selected educators at both the training centers and in the schools. This provided valuable insights into the problem from the point of view of the person who actually teaches the students and sometimes contrasted with that found in other interviews of personnel at central level or in official documents.

Documentation was not scarce; however, it frequently contained large amounts of data but little real information. There were, for example, few recent research studies or even peripheral evaluations of student performance in relation to established goals at the primary school level. In addition, while the GOES statistics seem adequate in the educational area, they do not provide information on the quality of education. A list of the documents used is presented in Appendix C.

Necessarily, this information gap led to an analysis of the existing data based on several assumptions:

a. To verify information it is necessary to contrast data from several sources.

b. When information is not available, the "qualified expert" methodology is the second best approach.

c. A study of the information must produce operationally verifiable conclusions which will be of use to both the GOES and USAID in their joint planning efforts to improve the quality of education.

Several important constraints have, perhaps, limited the scope of the study. First, the MOE, under the new government, was undergoing a major structural change. At the time of this study, rumors as to personal and professional implications of those changes made it difficult for many to speak with authority. Thus,

it was easier for most, especially at the central level, to talk of the past than of the future. The possibility that existing departments and functions would be changed shortly had inhibited new initiatives. In short, the MOE was at a near standstill.

A second constraint was the time factor. Inasmuch as teacher education and curriculum development are situated in the quality of education area, an analysis of their progress requires rather complete evaluation studies. These were not found and time did not permit the team to make those studies. Clearly, they must be included in the first steps of any new education project in El Salvador, taking advantage of what has been done under the previous USAID project as well as those projects sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS), UNESCO, UNICEF, and other international or governmental support agencies.

II. THE PRE-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

A. The Training of Primary School Teachers

Since 1988, teachers have been trained in a three-year, postsecondary program at one of the eight governmental or five private Technological Institutes throughout the country. The new programs will provide their first graduates in 1990. Between 1982 and 1988 the programs were two years in length at the same Technological Institutes. Prior to that, in the 1970s when all the training was concentrated in the Ciudad Normal, the programs were three-year secondary-level programs, combining teacher training with the last three years of secondary school. There were also special efforts in 1977 under Plan II and in 1979 under Plan III to provide a one-year postsecondary course for practicing teachers, spread over a span of three years during vacation periods. Graphically this might be depicted as in Chart No. 1.

Chart No. 1 -- Training of Teachers in El Salvador, 1964-89

Years	Responsible Institutions	No.Prior Yrs Schooling Required	No Years Training	Prepare For	Plan
1964-1981	"Ciudad Normal"	9	3	1 & 2 Cycles	Normal Schools
1977-1979	"Ciudad Normal"	12	1 (Three Summers)	1 & 2 Cycles	Plan II
1979-1981	"Ciudad Normal"	12	1 (Three Summers)	1 & 2 Cycles	Plan III
1982-1988	Technol. Institutes	12	2	1 & 2 Cycles	Unified Plan
1988-1990	Technol. Institutes	12	3	1,2,3 Cycles	New Plan

Training teachers together with the training of technicians in the Technological Institutes has come under a good deal of criticism, but it is clear that several positive results have transpired:

- Three additional years have been added to the training of future teachers. In the Normal School, the program ended with the completion of secondary school -- now it begins after the secondary school certificate is

achieved.

- In the 1970s there was a shortage of highly trained teachers, as evidenced by the need to institute Plan II and Plan III. These were postsecondary programs of a one-year duration, carried out over three summers, with a strong emphasis (between 65% and 90%) on technical-pedagogical subjects. Today, there is a surplus of primary school teachers who have gone through at least a two-year postsecondary program.

- In the earlier teacher-training programs, future teachers were trained for the first and second cycles, grades 1-6 of the primary school. In the new three-year program they are being trained for grades 1-9.

- The new program has provided opportunities for young people from all parts of the country to enter the teaching profession. It has opened the dream of many to become teachers and to serve their country.

As a career selection, teacher training continues to dominate the Technological Institutes. In 1986, for example, in the public sector the 1,586 graduates of the teacher training sections represented 57% of the total in the Technological Institutes. Interestingly, even in the private Technological Institutes where specialization in computation, administration and health is common, the teaching profession still claimed over 31% of the initial enrollment in 1987. Nevertheless, in mid-1986 (the latest year in which complete statistics were available) some 221 of the 605 graduates (about 36%) of the private training institutes were in the teaching profession.

And this situation has not changed. Initial figures for 1988 indicate that 1,488 young people were enrolled in the teacher training sections of the various institutes -- 1,023 of them (68%) women.

If the above describes the offer of trained graduates, the demand has been entirely different. The Ministry of Education has, on the whole, followed a type of seniority policy, placing first the graduates from the earlier graduating classes. At present, graduates from 1983 and some from 1984 have just been placed. This means that the majority of those who graduated in 1984, and almost all of the 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988 classes, are not currently teaching. There will be no 1989 graduates. A word of caution should be added. These are official pronouncements. In El Salvador many of the graduates have special "sponsors" who find them positions in the school system.

There are some discrepancies, but indications show that there

might be as many as 8,000 unemployed teachers who have been trained under the earlier two-year plan. This last estimate needs to be analyzed more carefully. First of all, the graduates under the old two-year program were trained for only the first and second cycles. There is no real estimate of how many are needed in the respective cycles. Secondly, there is no assurance that the teachers who have been trained are still available. Inasmuch as most graduated between 1984 and 1988, it could be assumed that they have taken some other type of employment by now. Just where they are and what they are doing is not generally known. One estimate is that some have taken on secretarial jobs in the MOE structure. Others certainly have found better paying jobs, have married, or are no longer in the job market.

Another interesting element has intervened in the pre-service training process in the last few years. With the quantitative coverage accomplished, the time is right for increasing the quality of the training programs. The 1988 movement from two to three years of preparation already has been mentioned. In addition, the MOE initiated a selection process for those wishing to enter the teaching profession in 1988. While this selection process may vary slightly from institute to institute, it generally includes three components:

- A psychological test to determine a student's stability to act as a teacher.
- A knowledge test to view his or her capacity to handle the subject matter in the primary school curriculum.
- A personal interview with one of the education faculty members of the Institute.

How many young people are eliminated by this selection process? To site a few 1989 examples, at the Central American Technological Institute (ITCA) some 137 young people sought entrance into the teaching profession. Of these, 62 were pre-selected for interviews and 40 classified for entrance. This indicates that under 30% of those who wanted to enter the teaching profession at that Institute were actually selected. In the San Vicente Technological Institute, about 250 tried to enroll in the 62 available spots for the teaching profession. In Sonsonate, of the 179 who came to register for pedagogical training, only 55 were selected. In Santa Ana, 48 were chosen from the original 300 who sought entrance. These figures probably will vary only slightly in the other institutes.

It is difficult to explain precisely why this seemingly incongruent situation exists. Logic would dictate that if the primary school is currently saturated with trained teachers (at least in theory) young people would seek other professions where they might have a better chance of securing a job. This is doubly

true if one considers that the real monthly cost to each student attending the Technological Institutes is around c.200 (about US$30) for transportation, lunch, books, etc. This is no small amount for a youngster from a poor family. Faculty members at the Institutes interviewed indicated the following reasons:

- Despite the statistical improbability, most of the aspirants actually think they can secure a job. This is in part because of the "sponsor" system which informally operates in the job placement market. Thus, while theoretically the teachers are being placed according to seniority, as explained earlier, in reality many find positions because they know someone in a decision-making role.

- Many just want to be a teacher; they feel strongly motivated to enter the profession. (See "Quotable Quotes" section). This might be due to influences from their own family, influences of their teachers, or of friends. These are the young people who have chosen teaching as a lifetime career.

- Inasmuch as most schools now have the shift system, many aspirants enter the teacher training program because they feel they can make a living by teaching in one of the shifts and still have time to study in a university course. Their final goal is not that of teaching, but rather it is seen as a stepping stone.

- Teaching also is viewed as a lifetime profession, a career which will always be needed throughout the span of one's 30-40 working years. Thus, many aspirants see it as more permanent and thus more secure than some of the technical fields where swift changes and frequent training is needed.

- The explosion in the number of private schools in El Salvador, particularly in the capital, during the past decade has created a new market for teachers. Those who postulate for the profession are aware of this and many feel that, even though their opportunities are limited at the moment, they will soon find a position in the private sector.

There is another interesting phenomena which should be considered. Taking the ITCA 1989 group mentioned above as an example, of the original 137 who signed up as aspirants for the teaching profession, 71 (52%) were 20 years or older, with 31 (22%) of them 22 years or older. A more precise analysis is needed, but one might conjecture that many of the young people seeking to enter the teaching profession have tried other jobs or have been out of secondary school for several years. Indeed, some have tried to

enter the pedagogical programs at the Institutes in other years and have returned to try again.

Within the context of the new three-year programs for the training of primary school teachers at the Technological Institutes, a teacher profile has been developed in a participative project involving all the teacher trainers. Three areas are defined: 1) the teaching role, 2) school administration, and 3) pedagogical research. These are elaborated further by indicating specific roles which the new primary teacher should fulfill (some 38 in all). In addition, 14 knowledge areas, 22 different abilities, 17 attitudes, and 7 habits are defined.

The program itself is divided into six cycles (semesters) with a multitude of subjects to be studied. (See Annex A). In the first three semesters, 13 general subjects are given (society and work, psychology of work, philosophy of education,etc.) and the student begins study of the curricular aspects of the four main subjects (language and literature, mathematics, natural science, and social studies). In the final three semesters, these subjects are further developed along with English and esthetic education. Two new general subjects (guidance and school administration) are added and practice teaching is initiated in the fourth and fifth semesters, with three and four weekly hours respectively, and terminated in the sixth and final semester when the student devotes half of his 30-hour week to that activity.

Purely on a quantitative basis, some observations can be made. The student dedicates an average of just over 30 hours per week to classes, although the hours are really less than 60 minutes in length. If one followed the formula of two hours of study outside of class for each hour inside, it would be an impossible load for youngsters between 18 and 21 or 22 years of age.

A total of 35 different subjects are given during the six semesters, although 16 are devoted specifically to the fundamental curricular subjects. Even so, there seems to be a little of everything, from basic reflections in philosophy and psychology to the promotion of an understanding of the community. To indicate what this means from the standpoint of the student, we could look more closely at the subjects given during the first three semesters, all basic or introductory. A total of 1,655 class hours, about 550 for each 18-week semester, are given. Roughly 60% (1,000 hours) are devoted to theoretical and 40% to practical work. In all of the basic subjects together, for example, 630 hours are allocated for theoretical and 396 hours for practical work.

Two studies analyze the balance and the effectiveness of these teacher training programs. A San Vicente study concluded the following:

- The curricular plans used to train the current teachers

have placed more emphasis on theoretical, didactic, and pedagogical training than to practical production and the social function of the community.

- The curriculum has been designed by technicians and specialists without necessarily considering the needs, interests, problems, and perspectives of the community and without its participation.

- The curriculum focuses on giving students a greater quantity of professional information and offers little towards developing critical attitudes concerning the reality of the community.

- The curriculum complies with 95% of its function to train the future teacher in technical-pedagogical functions, but does little to improve his professional quality or to make more efficient the administration of education.

In a second study, conducted at the Sonsonate Technological Institute, graduates of the 1983-86 classes were asked to indicate the general areas of their studies which had been most important to their development. The personal and technical-pedagogical areas presented little difficulty, indicating that the students were apparently satisfied with the training received at the Institute. However, 43% indicated that they had not received sufficient training in the social area; that is, in relation to their work with the community. The recommendations were to include activities which generate positive attitudes toward social change, promote leadership qualities, promote school-community integration, and create the awareness that community development is critical.

Individual Institutes have the latitude to vary their emphasis on practical work. For example, at one of the Institutes visited, the students in their second year of training were spending 50% of their time in the field, following a schedule of two weeks in class and two weeks in practice training. In this case they already were taking over classrooms in the selected primary schools.

Within that overall framework some interesting experimental programs are underway. At ITCA and in the San Miguel area, efforts have been made to adapt this general program to a needs-oriented approach; that is, to assess the needs of the students and to organize the curriculum around core themes. At the same time, more active methodologies are being initiated. In one visit to a primary school, for example, student teachers were observed organizing a unit on transportation in a third grade class in which students were constructing cars and trucks using wood scraps, bottle caps, nails, and hammers which they had brought from home. Students were actively learning about mathematics, science, literature, and even history in the transportation field. This is an example of a group of teacher-trainers dedicated to a change

process. They have followed a planning scheme for an integrated curriculum which includes the following:

- Collection, processing, analysis, and conclusions concerning the needs, interests, and problems (NIPs) of the students.

- Selection of areas of broad interest. These are subject areas of the general program which have as a central objective the study of man as a biological-psychological-social being.

- Selection of the specific interest areas. These provide the contents to the curriculum, include the area of general interest, and facilitate the solution of the defined problems (NIPs).

- Selection of the specific problem and subproblems. These are situations based on the NIPs of the teacher and students which need to be resolved.

- Participative selection (students and teachers) of the general objectives, the specific objectives, and the subjects and content included in the problem. Here the specific parts of the subjects, which are needed to resolve the defined problem, are inserted.

- Finally, a specific unit, called an integrated learning unit, is developed and probable time is allocated.

While this process has been applied for only two years, both students and teachers feel satisfied with the results. It is still difficult to convince more subject-oriented colleagues at the same Institute of the value of the new process, not to mention those in the 12 other Institutes which currently train teachers through the country. Clearly, evaluation is needed as well as some policy decision regarding the organization and methodology to be used in the teacher training process in the future.

No studies are available on the quality of the instruction in the teacher training programs. From this quantitative analysis, however, two broad conclusions could be made.

1. Concentration or integration of subjects in the three-year teacher training program is needed so that the students can receive a more global view of the areas needed for their work.

2. The program needs to be extended by one or more years so that future teachers can be better prepared in a wide variety of subjects and their application in the community.

D. Early Childhood Education

As in most countries in the region, the training of teachers for early childhood education (preschool) is conducted in the universities. It is coordinated by the Department of Higher Education, the same Ministry of Education unit which coordinates the primary school training programs. The program also is designed for six semesters of work, three full years, as is that for the primary school teacher. In the latest 1987 statistics, this career training was offered at just one university (Francisco Gavidia) and at that time had an enrollment of 127 students, 121 of whom were women. Since then, one other university has added the program.

The study plan is designed to prepare the trainee for teaching at the classroom level. There are four main areas of study: personal-social training, a basic area, a specialized area, and practice teaching. In all, 33 different subjects are given to the future teacher during the short three-year training span.

While the study plan does have a number of subjects which are aimed at preparing the student to work in the community, the program is not specifically so directed. In a country where the coverage is estimated at a maximum of 15% of the 0-6 population, the great majority in the middle and upper class areas, it would seem logical that the next step should be to incorporate some of the following ideas into the teacher training process:

- Prepare the future teachers to move into a community and establish early childhood programs with leaders or mothers (as in the case of Colombia). This means that the teachers must not only be able to promote the administrative organization and community participation, but they must train the mothers who would run the program, help to prepare the materials, and set up the program.

- Prepare the future teachers to work in the marginal and rural areas where the need is greatest. This would require a considerable amount of time living, working, and coming to know these areas of desperate need during the period of preparation.

- Learn what other professionals working at the community level actually do and how the educational task can be interwoven with their labor. This is especially important for the health, agriculture, and community development areas.

C. Conclusions and Observations on Pre-service Training

From the above analysis of the pre-service training program, several major conclusions can be drawn:

1. There is no shortage of trained primary school teachers in El Salvador at this time nor for the immediate future.

In spite of the calculated surplus of over 5,000 teachers, young people continue to select teaching as a career. About five or six youngsters apply for every position that is open at the training centers. With the decline in teacher salaries, it would be hard to argue that this selection is made for financial reasons. Our interviews with teacher trainees indicate that a large number of young people carry a feeling of dedication and service and even hope for the future. While further studies are needed of those entering the profession to determine why they have chosen teaching as a career, this surplus makes it possible to plan broad programs for lowering repetition and desertion and for improving the quality of education.

2. A careful evaluation of the existing three-year (half-day) pre-service training program is needed before profound changes are made.

The ideas for lengthening the program or the innovations currently underway within the program need to be analyzed with solid studies of what is currently taking place. Many issues need to be considered: the training of the teacher trainers, the origin of the students, costs, the relevancy of the current program to the needs of the country and, above all, the needs of the primary school student.

3. Reorganize the teacher training program to prepare students to be primary school and adult educators.

There is no real program in El Salvador or in most Latin American countries for training adult educators. In the end, primary or secondary school teachers conduct the adult literacy and education courses, often because of financial need. But they have no particular training for that level. Adding this to the curriculum would not be difficult and would be in keeping with the practice of working in the communities.

4. There is an urgent need to create real centers for the training of primary school teachers.

The existing pedagogical departments located in the Technological Institutes are lacking in almost everything, from materials and library to adequate space for practical activities. Of the eight governmental Institutes which offer teacher training,

only three have their own facilities. The others are housed in National Institutes or former primary school buildings. And most of the Institutes have only three or four full-time teachers devoted to training teachers. A viable teacher training center needs adequate facilities, a dedicated full-time staff, a working relationship with the community, and materials of varying types.

This suggestion is not unrealistic. By starting first with the training of staff and the acquisition of materials, the Institutes, or whatever institution eventually fills that role, can create that spirit so necessary for this type of program. Given limited resources, it might be practical to select just three such institutions at the outset -- one in the east, one in the west, and one in the central part of the country. Sub-centers could be considered for recruiting candidates from the more remote areas.

5. The teacher training program needs to become more practically oriented.

In all of our meetings with teachers on any level, there was a cry for more practical training. Teachers at the classroom level felt the need for more training in community work and in active methodologies with students. Teacher trainers were insistent upon changing an academically oriented program to one that is more captivating. Student teachers revealed how they became convinced of the profession as a result of the practical work.

Perhaps most important of all, there is a dire need to promote community participation and community support for education. This practical orientation is one of the sure ways of generating that collaboration.

Additional conclusions in relation to the pre-service training of teachers can be found in Section VI of this report.

Some Immediate Actions

1. Evaluate the first two years of the current three-year teacher training program.

2. Create a commission or committee to set up the bibliographical and documentary listing needed in the teacher training centers.

3. Establish a program of scholarships for teacher trainers to start in 1990.

III. THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Even though each of the organizational units (primary, secondary, superior, and adults) have conducted some in-service training, most of the activities have centered in the Educational Technology Division of the Ministry of Education, particularly in the In-service Teacher Training Program (PPMS). In addition, notable in-service training programs have developed in the Education Population Unit and in the textbook program called Planalibre. Other units which have ongoing training programs which affect the primary school teacher or the trainer of teachers include the Primary Education Department, the Higher Education Department, the universities, several regional centers, and the teacher unions. In this section we will detail some of the current actions and then make an analysis as to what that means for the future.

A. The In-service Teacher Training Program (PPMS)

The force in training classroom teachers within the Ministry of Education structure during most of the present decade has been PPMS. What it has not done alone it has done in cooperation with other units, including the Primary Department, the Higher Education Department, some of the Technological Institutes, and many of the regional offices. What PPMS has done directly might be summarized as follows:

1. The yearly publication of 25 teacher's guides and materials on subjects which vary from administration to specific classroom management. In all, over 71,000 copies have been distributed to educators at all levels and in all parts of the country.

2. Short courses for teachers around specific topics or introducing some of the above-mentioned materials. Customarily these have been one to five days in length for certain target groups, such as classroom teachers, school directors, administrators, etc. It is estimated that some 8,000 educators have been included in these short courses.

3. Long courses of up to three years for needy groups. Three such courses have been completed or are in progress and several others are in the planning stage. They include:

   a. Two three-year training courses for a total of 1,803 teachers who did not have minimal certification. Despite the "surplus" of teachers today, many of those in the system during this decade did not reach the minimum

requirements for Docencia I -- that is, to be a teacher in the first six grades of school. PPMS conducted two long courses, one from 1981-84 and the second from 1985-87 to train and certify these teachers. Both courses used materials mentioned above as well as other basic guides. Both were conducted voluntarily, mostly on Saturdays. In the first group, 936 teachers from 11 different districts were trained. In the second, 867 teachers from six different areas were included. The second group paid for much of the cost of their course. All of these teachers have returned to their own schools, many in marginal areas, with new skills and with certification given through the Institute Tecnologico Centro-Americano (ITCA).

b. Two courses in education administration are underway in 45 CATs (Centros de Ayuda Tecnico) in all corners of the country, with 1,203 participating. This in-service program is directed at school principals, assistant principals, and key teachers, but with a slightly different slant. As a stimulus, participants are given one morning a week free from their regular duties to complete the course. The 57 operating CATs have 481 school directors, 87 subdirectors, and 635 key teachers in groups of between 20 and 40. The monitors of these courses, usually directors of nucleos, meet with PPMS personnel weekly in planning sessions in the regions and about twice a month in San Salvador. The course content is divided into three sections: 1) community awareness activities, using materials published by PPMS; 2) adapting curriculum to local needs, with materials produced by UNESCO; and 3) the administration and planning of education using nine booklets developed or adapted by PPMS personnel. (See Annex B)

This course was also initiated at two different times. At present, some of the CATs are ending while others are approximately midway through the course. It should be noted that this effort, as others by PPMS, has been more voluntary than official. On the one hand, this has increased motivation, but it also has made it difficult to insure regular participation. Here, too, the participants have had to fund part of the cost of the course. Despite these difficulties, over 1,200 professional educators are in the process of completing the three-year program.

c. An experimental training course on reading-writing skills for some 430 teachers, mostly from first grade, in 111 different sections of the country is just starting. This course will be of the utmost importance in improving the quality of education. Classified under the Distance Curricular Innovations Service (SICaDIS) of PPMS, this course uses six modules which have been

adapted from base material originally developed in Argentina.

Most of the classroom teachers taking this course have classes of over 40 students and expressed the need not only for a methodology which will work in teaching reading and writing but one that will work with large classes. Many expressed their need for materials, especially in the reading-writing area, in mathematics, and in working with the community. Although they recognized the importance of the new textbooks, most felt that these did not help them to teach reading and writing as much as the materials in the course.

Depending upon the outcome of the pilot project, plans are to expand this to all teachers in the country, as resources permit, and to initiate a similar course in mathematics. In addition, a course in early childhood education is being organized.

B. Population Education Training

For some years, a Population Education Unit, with support from the United Nations Population Fund and UNESCO, has made its presence felt in the Ministry of Education. Originally the group set out to train key specialists in a long course. Over a span of four years, some 80 specialists were trained. Working at both the adult education and the primary education levels, the group then began to test and produce materials which would introduce population education themes into the respective levels. For example, they have published Didactic Guides for teachers in each of the nine basic education grades.

Since August of 1989, the specialists working in primary education have embarked upon a project to train all of the 23,000 primary school teachers in the use and application of the guides. During a two-day seminar, active methodologies are interwoven with population education content. Thus far, about 10,000 primary school teachers have received the course, with plans to complete the circuit by early 1990.

The Population Education Unit has taken advantage of the trainers trained under the APRE project to conduct the courses within the regions. However, under the new proposals of the MOE in which those in positions classified as administrative will be returned to their teaching positions, these 46 specialists are slowly diminishing in number and availability. In this training exercise, for example, just 28 were able to work in the training courses. In the short run, it creates problems for in-service training in the country, and in the long run it will mean that the MOE will have to depend upon a different cadre of trainers.

C. Training for Textbook Usage

During the 1984-87 period, the MOE, with support from BIRF, formed a team of specialists to write textbooks for the primary schools. These books, which include texts in the four basic subject areas for grades 1-6, were published in 1987. Before putting them into practice, however, it was necessary to launch a massive training program for the primary school teachers. This was done in 1988 through the cooperative efforts of the textbook writers, APRE, PPMS, and other Ministry units.

Because of time pressures, it became necessary to condense the training into a single day. Teachers were divided by grade levels and given support in the use of all of the textbooks at the level in which they were teaching. Those responsible for more than one grade were trained for their special situations. Time limits, however, seem to have left many questions in the minds of the teacher as to the best ways of using textbooks.

D. Primary Education Department

The Department of Primary Education (DIGEBA), with a notable lack of resources, has nevertheless generated some interesting projects or activities with a training component at the subregional and local levels. It has been able to secure some support from the communities, especially in the rural areas, to carry out the educational program. In 1987 Primary Education received a total of c.11,700,000 (over US$2 million at that time) in voluntary contributions from the local communities to cover the costs of chalk, school supplies, and even teacher salaries. The 1988 figure will be close to US$13 million.

Among the 32 activities undertaken by the DIGEBA in 1988, the following are a few which provided direct training for the primary school teacher:

- Training of teachers who recently entered the profession.
- A workshop on psychological and pedagogical guidance or orientation.
- Qualitative and quantitative training of early childhood teachers.
- Seminars for the training of school directors, educational advisors, and teachers (in cooperation with PPMS).
- Training of teachers in the special education area.
- Educational administration course, with PPMS.

These activities were performed directly by DIGEBA. In addition, DIGEBA has given its approval to other activities and training carried out by other parts of the MOE or by private organizations. In 1988, these actions totaled 30, including training for the detection of needs, interests, and problems (NIPs); education for work; guidance for parents; learning resource centers; and others.

A number of national experimental projects also are underway with the support or approval of DIGEBA. These include:

- A year-long experimentation with an open school.
- Grade "0" project to prepare needy children for primary school.
- School for the parents of four-year old children.
- The active school.
- Escuela Nueva or New School for one-room rural schools.
- Music education.
- The school feeding program.
- The creation of learning resource centers.
- Support to the Third Festival of the Song within the MOE.

E. Additional Forces for Training

A whole series of training efforts take place outside the MOE structure and often without its knowledge or coordination. Inasmuch as this training is usually sporadic or to fulfill a specific goal at a specific moment, it is an impossible task to create an exhaustive listing, at least in terms of the time constraints of this report. Mention is made, however, of a few of the units which carry out in-service training for primary teachers:

1. The Department of Higher Education. Working without funds and on a voluntary basis, this department schedules regular refresher courses for teacher trainers in the Technological Institutes. For example, in the current trimester, workshops have been conducted in natural science, mathematics, reading-writing, educational administration, and educational evaluation. This is in addition to the Department's monthly sessions for analyzing the curriculum in the training institutes.

2. The Universities. Several of the universities have seen

the need for in-service training and have opened courses of this nature. One example is the course in mathematics for primary teachers opened this year at the University of El Salvador in the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Mathematics Department. In general, courses of this nature have been limited to those in the San Salvador area and to those who can afford them.

3. The teacher Unions have been active, but their lack of resources makes it difficult for them to carry on concentrated efforts. What is more, inasmuch as their major thrust has been to improve the condition and the salaries of the teachers, training has not had the priority which it might otherwise have merited.

4. At the regional centers and in the subregional offices the return of qualified technicians from the University of New Mexico training courses has resulted in the propagation of special seminars or workshops on specific topics, such as mathematics, the teaching of English, active methodologies, and others. In addition, in several of the administrative regions or subregions, directors have taken it upon themselves to promote meetings and seminars which respond to teacher needs. This has been limited by the lack of available trained personnel and the lack of funds.

5. Private schools, particularly those sponsored by foreign governments, often bring in specialists to update their teachers. Unfortunately, this valuable resource is not frequently shared with other schools.

6. Primary school teachers also receive some training from other governmental units or private organizations on special-interest themes. Examples include vaccination campaigns, promotion of community development programs, information on health or agriculture, and so forth. Once again, this training is sporadic, uncoordinated, and pointed at specific targets.

F. Conclusions and Observations

It appears from this seemingly long list of units or projects that an extensive training program is underway. This is not true. The very occasional efforts being carried out in all of the above cases do not begin to cover the training needs of the 23,000 primary school teachers in El Salvador. Nevertheless, from this general analysis of the current situation, some conclusions and observations can be drawn:

1. There is a need for a single unit to coordinate, but not

control, all pre-service and in-service training efforts.

Even during the short span of this mission, several instances were encountered in which teachers or administrators in a specific geographic zone were forced to choose between two seminars being offered on the same day. At present, there is no way in which a specific unit of the Ministry, much less that of a private organization, university, or project, can know what training is being offered to the primary school teacher. The PPMS is the obvious choice at the moment, but it will need support to carry on this task.

2. A computerized listing of all teachers in the country and their training needs is urgent.

This should include their recent seminars and courses as well as personal data on their age, years of experience, places of experience, etc. This is all possible using the lists accumulated by Population Education, PPMS, and other units, and the computers in the Educational Technology Division. Once such a file is available, it will be possible to plan a long-range training program.

3. A program for the continuous and permanent training of teachers is needed.

This stems from the first two conclusions or observations. All the other conditions are present to set up a program which takes care of the training needs of a teacher from the moment he or she decides to enter the profession until retirement. In part, this has been started with the El Salvador participation in the teacher training network, PICPEMCE, of the Major Project in the Field of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean and the promotion of the CATs by PPMS. Making this official and establishing the coordination unit could promote a broad in-service training expansion in just a few years. And taking advantage of distance teaching methods, already used in the country, could keep the cost at a very low level.

4. The years 1990 and 1991 could well be set aside for the training of teachers already in-service.

Inasmuch as new enrollment in the teacher training programs has been frozen at least for 1990, the opportunity is present to mobilize all forces for this single goal. As we have seen, the need is there. Teacher trainers need updating, first cycle teachers need help with basic subjects, directors and administrators need new information and ideas, and almost all educators are missing skills necessary to promote active classroom participation and a community-based education.

The practicing teachers and those currently available for

teaching positions are all graduates of a two-year, higher education, non-university course. Those who will enter the teaching profession after 1990 will be graduates of at least a three-year course. Clearly the current teachers and those waiting for positions need in-service training using all of the techniques available (distance education with radio and television, face-to face interaction, combinations) to bring them up to date on active methodologies and content. This is urgent and critical.

5. Teachers need incentives to perform their best and to create good learning experiences.

After what teachers have suffered over the past decade in terms of lost salaries, infrequent opportunities for advancement, the ever-threatening war situation, and the lack of moral encouragement, the time has arrived to turn this situation around. But how can this be done within the financial restrictions the government must face? Some answers come from the in-country experiences of recent years:

- Link in-service training to an advance in the pay scale, as in the case of the long PPMS courses.
- Teachers tend to participate when courses are well organized, touch themes of immediate interest, and when they receive at least a noon lunch.
- If additional financing can be found by locating the phantom teachers, by lowering the number of administrative personnel, or by an increased education budget, this could be passed on to the teachers.
- Above all else, the teacher needs to be treated once again like a professional.

6. A broader exchange of personnel to learn of the innovative experiences within the country and those in neighboring countries is needed.

Again and again, this was requested by teachers we visited. They have little way of knowing about innovations in other parts of El Salvador or in neighboring countries. This can be remedied partly through study visits of groups of educators and partly through scholarships.

7. Evaluate recent methodologies used in experimental, in-service training programs.

Different units have used different methodologies and organizational forms in the past. Some of the courses have been evaluated, but none have received close enough scrutiny to permit

comparative analysis.

8. Use more fully the tremendous potential of the highly qualified and dedicated people within the teacher training area.

In the past few years over 1,200 administrators have been trained in both technical and administrative aspects. In addition, in recent years, some educators have been trained in New Mexico and elsewhere. With the formation of a working network, they could pass their knowledge on to other administrators and teachers. To use these educators effectively, materials are needed as well as help from a central unit.

9. Research studies should again form the core of in-service training programs.

The first step is a national research course using distance teaching. Here research could be used both as a teaching method and as a means of learning about the local community. Participative research and nonparametric statistics could be stressed.

Information related to the training of teachers from such research efforts could be assembled in short resumes and distributed to teachers in all parts of the country. Initially, themes could reflect the special needs each teacher faces: contrasting methodologies, interests of students, ideal classroom conditions, community resources, etc.

10. Teacher training centers need to expand their community participation.

This has already begun. In San Vicente, teachers have set up a primary school during their free time for the poorest of the poor. In Sonsonate, future teachers go out and work on farms. At ITCA, students have started interviews with parents on the topic of school failure. This is an all-win situation. These continuing actions provide concrete, practical experience for the students and a different perspective for the teachers.

Some Immediate Actions

1. From existing information, PPMS could take the leadership in creating the file on teachers and their training needs.

2. Ongoing courses, particularly those of a distance teaching nature, need to be carefully evaluated.

3. The year 1990 could be set aside as the year to rebuild the primary school teaching staff by organizing a massive in-service, in-country, training program around detected needs, and using distance teaching.

IV. THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

To define better the way in which the primary school teacher needs to be prepared, one must look at the curriculum at that level. In fact, it is generally believed that at least three technical elements are involved in any process of educational change:

- The preparation of teachers (pre- and in-service training).
- The development of the primary school curriculum.
- The construction and use of materials and communication supports (textbooks, teachers' guides, radio, television, A-V materials) to strengthen these two processes.

A. Historical Overview

In El Salvador, in the past two decades, there have been two large efforts to change the technical and/or administrative structures as they pertain to primary education. The Educational Reform of 1968 was born within a package of other reform proposals which sought to modernize the social-economic structure and adjust the separate sectors to the new five-year social and economic plans. It was initiated with the Educational Television project, starting at the 7th grade level. Thus, the central focus was at the upper level of the educational system, from 7th through 12th grades. As such, its main impact was on the urban areas, leaving almost untouched the rural zones where over 60% of the population lived.

While criticisms as well as favorable comments on the 1968 Educational Reform still dominate the literature in the country, a type of counterreform occurred at the end of the 1970s which had (and has) its impact on both the training of teachers and the primary school curriculum. Several issues are worth noting again:

- The Ciudad Normal, or Normal School, which had served as a pre- and in-service training center for all the teachers of the country, was dismantled and pre-service training parcelled out to the Technological Institutes.
- The Technical-Pedagogical Division of the Ministry of Education, where the research, curriculum, evaluation, and in-service training functions were developed or coordinated, was also abandoned.
- The idea of educational television slowly gave way to a proposal of educational technology and this became the

new unit where most of the technical functions of the Ministry were centered.

- The departments of primary, secondary, higher, and adult education were strengthened and slowly took on some of the responsibilities for curriculum, for materials development, and for in-service training, including the establishment of standards or profiles for the teachers.

- An effort at regionalization and even nuclearization was made, decentralizing many of the administrative and technical responsibilities.

- A series of projects sponsored by international organizations or friendly countries started producing movements and materials which slowly began to dominate the MOE's efforts in the curriculum and teacher training programs. In part, this was due to the gradual fall in the percentage of the national budget devoted to education and the corollary rise in the percentage of the education budget needed for teacher salaries (95%) and the subsequent dependance upon outside support for the more technical aspects. Especially noteworthy here for their impact on curriculum and teacher training were the BIRF loan project which, among other things, set up the textbook center and the in-service training center (PPMS); the USATD support for the construction of primary schools, production of didactic materials, and the training of teachers; and the Population Fund-UNESCO project for the development of materials and the training of teachers in population education.

- The great proliferation of private universities in the 1980s, each with its own particular orientation and philosophy, and their incursion into the area of teacher education and the preparation of the educational specialists in administration, planning, curriculum, research, evaluation, etc.

- The impact of the 10-year war in terms of displaced persons, limitations on financial resources, availability of teachers, and other similar elements.

- The earthquake of 1986 which dislodged the Ministry of Education from its old building in the center of San Salvador and forced the establishment of "temporary" facilities in the Central American Technological Institute in Santa Tecla.

All of these changes and movements have made it impossible for the MOE during this period to:

- Establish a single unified plan, or even guidelines for the overall pre- and in-service training of teachers in terms of psychological, sociological, or philosophical orientation.

- Develop a national plan for the in-service training of teachers.

- Coordinate curricula orientations around a unified standard or banner.

- Integrate into a single plan the preparation of student and teaching materials.

These have now become priority actions.

B. Some Research Findings

How close has the curriculum come to fulfilling the needs of the students? This can be answered from two levels; the opinions of the teachers and the performance of the students. First, it is no understatement to say that the majority of the teachers themselves are not satisfied with the curriculum. During this study we had contact with about 300 primary classroom teachers and none indicated satisfaction. Statistics bear them out. Also, through the in-depth studies with selected teachers, the findings were largely negative. The specific criticisms were that the curriculum is too broad, it does not give them latitude to adjust to student needs, and that it assumes that all students come from the same background, causing more prejudice against students from lower income areas.

On student performance, it was obvious that the teachers were not satisfied with the accomplishments of the students. Teacher trainers complained about the students coming from secondary education with a low level of preparation even though they were priveleged in an educational system where just 10% of those who start primary education finish secondary. The repetition rate and dropout problems have been documented in other baseline studies in this series and need not be repeated here.

On a national scale, two efforts in the past decades have measured student achievement in the primary school. These too will be detailed in another baseline study, but need to be mentioned here to highlight the issue of curriculum irrelevancy.

The first of these efforts was in the 1970s when the Tecnico-Pedagogico Department conducted a nationwide study of what the students were learning in primary school. The results were not encouraging.

In the 1980s, with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Research and Evaluation Section of the Educational Technology Division initiated a project known as PIELSE (Proyecto de Investigación Evaluativa de Logros del Sistema Educativo). In the 1983 study which measured student achievement in the four major subject areas (mathematics, the national language, natural science, and social studies) it was found that in the sample of 1,244 students from 33 schools representing the cohort of students in the 1977-82 period the overall achievement (what the students had learned of the curriculum program) varied from 18.9% in natural science to 34.8% in the national language. In addition the study noted that:

- Students in urban areas performed better in all subjects than their counterparts in the rural zones.
- Students in the larger cities, especially San Salvador, generally faired better than those in smaller cities.
- Within the natural science area, students had most trouble with the unit on plants and animals, reaching only 10.1% of the total. Rural students in this case had a slight advantage over the urban children.
- Differences existed, but were not overwhelmingly significant, among the geographical divisions in the country.

The study went on to analyze other variables. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this was a study of the sixth grade graduate and did not focus on the problem by years.

A second study sought to distinguish between the achievement and the social advances of students who had used the "restored or renovated" curriculum programs and those who had not. The cohort was taken from the 1980-85 first through sixth grade primary school students. Surprisingly, the 1986 study indicated no statistical differences between the experimental and the control groups. The basic conclusion was that the implementation of the new curriculum programs did not significantly influence the real learning of the students.

A third study, published in mid-1987 by the same PIELSE project, focused on student desertion at three levels: the nine-year primary school, the secondary, and the university. Seven causes were found for those deserting primary school; however, statistical significance was encountered only in rural areas where family problems and teachers were listed as the main causes for dropout. Urban schools were not divided into marginal and non-marginal groups.

C. Experimental Alternatives

From this analysis emerges a strong condemnation of the primary school, of its curriculum, of the way in which teachers are developing that curriculum, and of its academic success. Even the social achievements are put in doubt.

Recognizing these shortcomings there have been, in recent years, some experimental attempts to make the curriculum more relevant to the needs of the students, notably:

- The new primary school curricular programs and their emphasis on a more active learning process while, at the same time, giving the teacher more latitude in the selection of content and in the use of methodology.

- The programs being applied in the Pedagogical Departments of the Technological Institutes under the new three-year plan. As we have seen, this has led to fundamental changes in the approach to training teachers.

- The so-called "flexible curriculum" movement which uses the perceived needs of the learner to make learning more useful, more meaningful, and more applicable to the life of the student. This has been applied by PPMS in its programs for school administrators and in its short courses, by a selection of primary schools, and by the Department of Higher Education through the Technological Institutes. It is, perhaps, the most widely spread curricular innovation at the moment.

- The population education seminars where the relation of content to the needs of students and the use of more active methodologies have been promoted. This is reflected in the guides published by that project and in the intensive training programs it has established.

D. Conclusions and Observations

It is perhaps a moot question to ask whether or not the new teacher training programs, as they are applied in the 13 different centers, really prepare the teacher to teach the current primary school curriculum, also revised in 1988. Three issues should be considered:

- Do teachers actually teach and do children actually learn what is in the new primary school programs?

- What methodologies do teachers use in their classroom work?

- What other topics are teachers teaching and/or students learning during the primary school years? Where do these additional learnings originate?

Reflections on these questions are offered in the following conclusions and observations.

1. A more diversified, integrated, locally-oriented curriculum plan is needed.

Many students leave primary school during the first three years. While many are genuinely needed to work at home, it appears that most leave because the school has little to offer. Parents become disgruntled and see little value in keeping their children in school. The school remains separated from the family's daily reality.

Experiments on and experience with a more integrated curriculum are already underway in El Salvador. In many cases the local needs, interests, and problems (NIPs) are known. The next steps are to devise practical ways in which this integrated curriculum can be combined with the pressures for technological and scientific knowledge in the modern world. To do this, a curriculum group needs to be formed, a type of motor to an ongoing process.

2. A sharp increase in the local community's participation in the curricular process is needed.

The school has become something the government offers to the community, not something the community assumes for itself. Thus, while community participation has increased in terms of financial contributions, it has not advanced in curricular aspects. This is still left to the specialist. Yet, if parents are dissatisfied or uninformed as to the new role of the school, their active participation is one means of changing that perspective. What is more, it is needed for the improvement of the curriculum itself.

3. A new system for evaluating students in the primary school is urgently needed.

There is considerable confusion here. Some teachers in the early grades follow the promocion orientada (guided promotion) idea. Essentially, this moves the child to the next grade with the idea that he or she will be helped to overcome any detected shortcomings. Unfortunately, many teachers have not interpreted it in this way and have done little to help individual students.

Evaluation should be linked to learning, not just to promotion or finishing a curricular plan. Inasmuch as each child is an individual learner, it is necessary to adapt an evaluation system which reflects that idea. This will come with the incorporation

of the integrated curriculum proposed above.

4. A regular student testing program is needed to detect strengths and weaknesses and to promote programs of special help for the needy.

There is considerable discussion as to the level and content of such a nationalized testing program. Some want to start it at the completion of the first grade, others at the end of each cycle. Some want to include only academic aspects, other propose social, ability, interest, or creativity measurements.

That such a program is needed there is no doubt. It is difficult to plan without knowing the problems. As to type and level, a careful assessment is needed by the Salvadorans as to what is possible within the cultural boundaries of their society. Would early testing provide necessary information as to the shortcomings of students? Would it be used in that way?

Inasmuch as this would require such a massive commitment of resources, both human and financial, a broad-based commission should be set up to carefully study, plan, and oversee any such plan.

5. Consideration needs to be given to each cycle as a separate block within the primary school structure.

This means that the objectives, the content, and the orientation of, for example the first cycle, would be on a three-year basis. Teachers would need to work with parents for the improvement of students, not just for deciding if they pass or fail a particular grade. Students, especially those from marginal urban or rural areas, would have a longer time period to develop their skills. There would be no "failure" as it is known today within each cycle.

The idea is not new and has been successfully tried in various contexts around the world. It is especially pointed toward the slow learner, or to those who come from marginal areas. It replaces the emphasis in the primary school upon learning. As a further stimulus, a type of special certification could be given at the completion of each cycle.

Such a program could be set up first on an experimental basis in several marginal areas, providing special orientation for the teachers. It could gradually be extended to national coverage.

6. Extend the "Grade 0" project to be included in all urban marginal and rural areas.

Under this program, children of six and seven years of age are placed in a special program where they can begin to level their

skills. It is well known that children from poorer homes start school at a greater disadvantage. Some estimates are that they take up to three years to overcome their own environmental limitations so that they can compete evenly. In some cases, where early damage has been done, they never completely recover.

As a first step, the existing program should be evaluated. Then, using the results of that evaluation, a broader scale project should be launched. This would be a type of "kindergarten for environmentally limited children".

7. A curriculum evaluation committee needs to be formed to assess all of the existing materials and to determine future directions.

This study has indicated the wide dispersion of materials directed at the primary school. It also has shown that little guidance is given to the production of these materials. Each unit does what it considers best.

However, the production of materials to stimulate learning has made great advances in recent years. Impact materials do not just happen, they are carefully planned and part of a coordinated program. At the same time, materials are a means and not an end in themselves. It is important that they be carefully coordinated with existing curricular plans, at the national, regional, or local levels.

In addition to the materials used in the learning act itself, reference materials are needed. This could be fomented through the Biblioteca Popular del Niño program which is already underway. Here, community resources are tapped to make available information from within the local area itself.

Some Immediate Actions

1. Orient curricular actions toward the poor child. Here the idea of the single cycle, Grade 0, simplified materials (mentioned above) could be initiated.

2. Reorient the curriculum so that it integrates community needs with the academic and scientific elements.

3. Bring parents and community members into the planning and execution phases of curriculum development.

V. A NEW MINISTRY STRUCTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

A. The Proposals

The new government in El Salvador has undertaken an analysis of the MOE structure with the idea of making it more efficient and more relevant to the most needy of its population. This is in keeping with the government's general proposal in the social area to reorient programs and actions toward the poorest people. While this was still under discussion during the time of this mission, several immediate actions can be discussed:

1. Quick action was undertaken to move part of the estimated 24-25% administrative personnel back into teaching posts. No specific goals have been published, but a more reasonable percentage of administrative personnel might be in the 15% range. Therefore,a 10% reduction of this nature implies the movement of over 2,000 educators out of central or regional Ministry offices back into the classroom. Many, but not all, of the personnel involved in this movement had been transferred "temporarily" to positions in projects or on to commissions. Many did not have typically administrative duties, but rather were used as trainers in in-service programs, as evaluators, as curriculum specialists, and the like. The loss of some may be felt, as we have already noted in the movement of the 46 "trainers" under the APRE program back to their original teaching positions; now, other technicians, or some other method, will need to be found for the in-service training of teachers.

2. The MOE was considering a proposal to regionalize the actions of the various departments -- that is, the primary, secondary, higher, and adult education divisions currently located at the Ministry's Santa Tecla offices. While it is not clear whether a token force would be left in the MOE central unit, the proposal seems to imply the movement of at least 100-200 personnel from their current position to another.

Along with the proposal to regionalize the departments, there is also under discussion an idea of creating certain special technical units at the central level. These might include new divisions devoted specifically to curriculum development, to the pre- and in-service training of teachers, to materials construction, to supervision, or to other tasks of this nature. Inasmuch as these tasks are currently undertaken by many of the technicians in the existing departments, it is possible that the movement of the 100-200 personnel mentioned above will be, for some, from one office to another in the Santa Tecla headquarters.

In the quest then to streamline and make the MOE more efficient, the government is faced with personnel movements of perhaps as much as 10% of the overall total. This is always a delicate matter and was being handled with extreme caution during the period of this mission. However, decisions were imminent, decisions which will sharply affect the new proposed USAID project.

B. Some Possible Consequences

Among the criticisms leveled at the current structure were that the technical personnel at the central level were not in a position to provide the assistance needed in the regions. It was said that the gerencias, or regional offices, became little ministries, responsible directly to the Minister and Vice Minister, often bypassing the technical personnel who could provide them the support they needed.

It also has been pointed out that the system has operated for years without a real supervision program. In principle, this function was to be handled by the directors of the nucleos, but in practice these people were not always qualified to handle the technical aspects or were not trained for their new role. More often than not, supervision just did not take place.

In addition, as indicated earlier, the in-service training of teachers has been handled by many units and with very little real coordination. At the same time the pre-service training, bouncing from one type of institution to another over the span of a decade, has not always been able to coordinate with the in-service efforts. Thus, the current structure fosters a wide variety of methodologies and proposals in the training of teachers, carried out by units on different levels. The new structure pretends to remedy that malady.

Finally, the production of materials for the classroom teacher has been like having several leaky faucets, each spilling out droplets at intermittent intervals in different receptacles. The end result has been the production of materials varying greatly in quality and in quantity, ones which have not always been what the classroom teacher has needed. By creating a special unit at the central level for coordination and production of materials, this problem may be alleviated.

Evaluation and research remain big questions. Until now, a special group with the Educational Technology division has carried out those responsibilities. But they have been cut off from the other operational units and, as we have seen, their work has not been fully used. At the same time, the departments have had to set forth evaluation systems for each level and have even ventured into the research area. At the regional level also, efforts have been made to promote these activities. Universities, too, have made

their limited but qualitative efforts to foment research and evaluation.

C. Implications and Repercussions

As has been discussed already, the pre-service training of primary teachers jumped in 1988 from two to three "years" thus extending the grades in which a graduate can teach from six to nine. There is, within the discussion for reorganization of the MOE a proposal to raise the number of postsecondary years from three to five, thus placing the training at the level of most professional careers in the universities. This proposal merits closer examination.

At present, teachers are certified, for purposes of finding a place on the government pay scale, on three levels:

- Docencia I - This qualifies the teacher for Grades 1-6 of the primary school.
- Docencia II - This is for the teacher of Grades 1-9.
- Docencia III - This is for the secondary school teacher.

At the same time, a teacher certificate corresponds to the grade level. Thus, primary school teachers at present are in one of two categories on the pay scale, Docencia I or II, but both have the certificate of Professor of Primary Education.

It has been proposed for some time to eliminate the importance of the I, II, and III indicators by creating certification only by level. Thus, certification would be given to teach in early childhood education, in primary education, at the secondary level, or in adult education and to have steps within each category in which the teacher could ascend according to his or her continued training and years of service. It is thought that this system would create a greater incentive for the primary school teacher to remain at that level. This proposal is included in the new Education Law, which is before Congress for consideration.

Within the package of changes which the new government is considering is the idea of creating a longer period of pre-service training for the teacher, perhaps up to five years in length. As mentioned, this would place the preparation of the teacher at the level of most other professionals. In addition, the idea is to bring the preparation of all teachers (early childhood, primary, secondary, adult) into the same program. Some have even considered bringing this program back under one roof, a type of modern day Superior Normal School.

The proposal includes two years of basic training in teaching

methodologies and related areas, two years of specialized training according to the level, and a final year for the development of educational projects within the communities. Emphasis would be on the traditional roles which a university has employed in the past: teaching, research and pedagogical experimentation, and community work.

D. Conclusions and Observations

In terms of the proposed new five-year program for the training of teachers, several issues should be considered:

1. The first step should be to tighten up existing programs.

The current three-year programs are half-day programs at the Technological Institutes. Just by creating full-time programs, the amount of student time is reduced to one and one-half years, with the same curricular plan. The first question is whether the proposed new program should be full time (in which case it would need full-time personnel) or half time. A five-year program of half-time study is not the same as a five-year program of full-time study.

2. A second area of concern involves the trainers of the teachers.

Inasmuch as most Technological Institutes draw upon qualified personnel available in the communities for several of the subjects, and many of the full-time professors have had limited advanced training, it would be necessary to use 1990 as a period for their additional preparation. Here, a USAID project of scholarships would be most useful.

3. The situation of the students now in the training program and those who might enter in the future should be considered.

We have already documented the fact that most students come from low-income families and that the efforts made by their parents, as well as their own efforts, are already great for the three-year period. Moving to a longer program would probably make it impossible for the majority of those from the lower income strata (now a majority in the country) to enter the teaching profession.

4. Geographical location of the future teacher training center(s) is important.

It is true that El Salvador is a small country, but when the training was centered at a single location, many of the young people from the distant parts could not attend. When the program was decentralized into the Technological Institutes, opportunity

opened for a greater number of young people from lower income families to attend the more local schools. At least in part, this has been the chief reason for the current surplus of teachers.

5. Cost must be considered.

It certainly is less expensive to train a teacher in his or her local community than to bring him to a central location. In fact, the burden passes to the student. Centralizing the training would mean that the government would have to take a greater share in financing living costs for those who come from more distant parts.

6. The legal status of a person trained under a five-year program must also be analyzed carefully.

In our visits to the Technological Institutes, one of the chief concerns of the students was their future status, something not yet legally determined. This will require a very careful study of existing laws and potential modifications.

7. There needs to be a very sharp increase in teaching materials available for the teacher and for the student.

Acute shortages already exist for the three-year program and this would become even more evident with the addition of one or more extra years.

The proposed structural change in the MOE would place El Salvador in the position of most other Latin American countries. In a day when specialization is increasing, there is a need for technical support in the areas suggested, support which has some access to recent information. The danger, however, is in re-centralizing the technical functions of curriculum development, training, supervision, and materials production and taking away the initiative of the regions. This centralization appears necessary at the moment since none of the regions have the technical personnel necessary to carry out these functions.

While some technical personnel exist to fill the positions in the suggested structure, others will require additional training, particularly those in supervision, in curriculum development and in research and evaluation. The 1990 year could be a transition period, one in which personnel are trained for new roles or updated in their specialty areas.

Inasmuch as research is needed for making decisions and evaluation is part of the natural process of selecting among various alternatives, both are needed in all the technical areas in the proposed new structure -- supervision, curriculum, training, and materials production. Herein lies the dilemma. If research

and evaluation are created as a separate unit, the risk is strong that results obtained will not be used, as now. If the functions are woven into one of the technical departments, the other departments are left once again without support. Some alternatives might include:

1. The creation of a research and evaluation department which focuses on a specific function, such as classroom teaching or the improvement of learning. All the technical divisions are set up to support such functions.

2. Defining the objectives of the research and evaluation section in terms of training. Thus, their main task would be to train others to do the research and evaluation. This has the advantage of promoting these technical tasks at a more regional and even local level.

3. Give the research and evaluation unit the power and the finances to make contracts or agreements with the MOE units which need these services and with the universities or private organizations who can fulfill the need. As such, they would serve as an intermediary force.

In short, it appears that the historical moment has arrived in El Salvador to make structural changes in the MOE and to increase the number of years of pre-service training of teachers. But the previous cautions should be noted and a very careful strategy worked out before launching abruptly into something which will change the history of education in this country.

VI. 25 QUOTABLE QUOTES

During the course of the mission we noted a number of very revealing and positive statements about the educational system in El Salvador from educators at all levels. Perhaps more than statistics, these "quotable quotes" indicate the faith of the teachers in the future.

1. I hope to perform as a teacher in the future with great pride and a lot of love. (Teacher trainee)

2. We are really interested in giving of ourselves to the community. (Classroom teacher)

3. In my spare time I work in the adult literacy program in order to better get the feel of education. (Teacher trainee)

4. We have felt the need to know better the technical-administrative aspects of our work. (School director upon completing three-year educational administration course)

5. I want to be a teacher because I feel the need to help other people. (Teacher trainee)

6. In one urban marginal school, "clubs" were organized as workshops and with community participation. Such skills as carpentry, bread making, ice cream making, sewing, weaving, etc. were learned by primary school children. (Educator from central department)

7. It is more important that the child learn than that the teacher complete the curricular plan. (School director)

8. Our problem is how to prepare a teacher to work in a society in crisis. (Technological Institute teacher)

9. I chose this career because it was my only opportunity. But now that I am in the process I see the need for education and I want to feel the satisfaction of cooperating in the development of my country. (Teacher trainee).

10. Many of the students who enter the teaching career arrive scientifically undernourished. (Trainer of teachers)

11. To help a person and see him advance is one of the greatest feelings a person can have. (Teacher trainee)

12. We need to orient other educators toward an awareness of the reality in which they work. (School director)

13. I decided to become a teacher because the future of our country lies with the children and the young. (Teacher trainee)

14. In this course, we have discovered our service role as educators. (School director)

15. I was inclined to be a teacher from my earliest days when in play I often took on the role of the teacher and felt the need to teach the less fortunate. (Teacher trainee)

16. The most important thing about this course (educational administration) is the change in myself and the way in which I work with teachers. (School director)

17. As a teacher I feel that I can be useful to others, cooperate better in the building of a new El Salvador, and be a change agent. (Teacher trainee)

18. I've worked 20 years as a teacher and have never had the opportunity to study the reading-writing process as now. (First grade teacher)

19. Teaching is a human profession in which we can help people who want to make a better life for themselves. (Teacher trainee)

20. A ministerial decree cannot make us improve our teaching; that is something which must come from within. (Classroom teacher)

21. I feel that teaching is the best career to help other people, starting with children and moving upward. (Teacher trainee)

22. We are interested in knowing how we can give more to the community. (Classroom teacher)

23. In my own town the educational reality was rough inasmuch as most families had about 10 persons and only 2 could read a little. To help improve this reality I decided to become a teacher. (Teacher trainee)

24. We need to find solutions to the problems of the children, not just analyze them. (First grade teacher)

25. I have been an observer of the traditional school and feel that it must be changed. Now with the "flexible curriculum" approach I feel that the change is within our grasp. (Teacher trainee)

VII. DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Some suggestions for maximizing the investment and impact of development agencies in the El Salvadoran educational system include the following:

1. Organize the project so that 80-90% of the actions and the budget directly benefit those at the field level.

In this context, an impact project would be one in which the direct beneficiaries receive the great majority of the efforts. So often the development projects, using the high officials in the government as their chief interlocutors, do not have the opportunity to know the situation of those at the base, in this case the teachers, the students, and the local community. It is easy to state that the central units need strengthening, which they do, and not realize what the classroom and community situations are like. This is doubly important in El Salvador where the government is continuing a policy of educational decentralization.

In this specific project, this would mean putting greater emphasis on:

- Support to the organization of a nationwide network for the permanent training of teachers in which constant in-service programs are in evidence for all teachers.

- Promotion of the development of local capabilities for the production of didactic materials, including a kit for the construction of didactic materials in each classroom, support to local capacities for the building of school furniture within the self-help principle, the strengthening of community organizations and their participation in education, using local facilities to promote early childhood education.

- Strengthening of intermediate and local capabilities to conduct research, experimentation, and evaluation in a participative nature. This would involve both the training of teachers in research and evaluative skills and the provision of resources at those more local levels so that these activities can be undertaken. Eventually it would mean a network for the exchange of innovative experiences, of research results, and of items used in evaluation processes.

2. Focus a large proportion of actions and budget on the urban marginal and rural areas.

Everyone agrees to this principle. It is in almost all GOES and development agency documents. Methodologies vary considerably.

Even the definition of "marginal" is disputed. However, in the case of El Salvador we are talking about a great majority of the people. We are projecting actions in education which will directly benefit children in marginal areas. Specifically, this could orient the project toward the following activities:

- Research related to the specific situation of children living in marginal areas, their learning pace and skills, their nutritional situation, their needs.

- Training teachers to become aware of the real-life conditions of their students and the home situation. This would involve a reorientation of the curriculum to focus on local problems, needs, and aspirations.

- The construction of didactic materials which reflect the realities of the daily life in marginal zones. This applies to textbooks, guides, handouts, and to the visual or audio materials.

- Relating educational actions more closely to health, agriculture, and development efforts.

3. Do not promote ideas which are in contrast to the GOES' positive experiences, or which are beyond its capacity to absorb at this time.

El Salvador has had many positive experiences in education in general and in teacher training, curriculum development, and materials production in particular. The need is perhaps not so much for more experiences, particularly experiences which cannot be applied to the great majority of people, but for an analysis of those already existing.

At the same time, El Salvador is much closer to the experiences of its neighbors than to those of the economically developed countries. Their problems and culture are Central and Latin American first. The models they seek are from these countries. The materials which are most easily absorbed are from the region. A development project should first help them to bring these ideas in to focus on their specific realities.

4. A large share of the training can be in-country, or in neighboring countries.

Training is usually a debated question in development projects. Many donor countries feel that the only place the person can really be trained is in the donor country. This negates the cultural aspects which are so important in any training. It is a question of transferability. Are the ideas which the trainee studies in another cultural context transferable to his own?

Certainly some are, but how many?

Perhaps it is a question of balance. In-country training has the great advantage of not taking people out of their own environments and of reaching more people at less cost. It also is easier to use the better trained from within the country itself. El Salvador has had several positive experiences of this nature, particularly in the Population Education course.

Neighboring country training has some of the advantages of in-country training, but not all. Few Latin American universities stand out from the others. Study visits have their value but need to be well programmed and require a wide knowledge of similar experiences in the region. This third country training is also expensive and limited to a few in number.

5. Assure that the privatization of educational action is not an additional burden on the poor.

There is a great difference between privatization of education and the contributions of the private sector to educational development. The first brings in the profit motive to what is essentially a nonprofit, more humanitarian venture. The second promotes community and business participation in the educational process. The key word here is participation and not just in the economic sense.

During the last decade in El Salvador, community contributions to education have mounted steadily, covering such basics as teacher salaries, chalk, classroom materials. This can potentially balance the situation of the poorer communities with that of the more privileged. But it also has the danger of asking the poor to pay for education when they do not have the resources. Eventually this would lead to their marginalization from the public education system. Certainly development agencies need to be aware of this danger and build in precautions in their projects.

6. Use simplified technologies which are within the grasp of local technicians and which can be sustained when the project exits.

Acting in all sincerity and with the idea of helping the country, development agencies are often guilty of transferring technologies which are beyond the current capacity of the country to absorb. These actions often benefit a specific part of the unit, creating a privileged situation for a few, while the great majority are left to fend for themselves with meager resources. In education, the tendency has been to create rather sophisticated technologies at a central level while the classroom teacher in marginal areas operates without even chalk or the simplest of materials.

These technologies are often expensive and beyond the capacity of the country to sustain when the project ends. Thus, at project end, little is left beyond the fond memory of a few and machines which fall quickly into disuse.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A - ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY PLAN

Career - Professor of Primary Education

No.	Subject	Semester I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Hrs. Sem.
		Weekly Hours						
1	Society and Work	4						72
2	Psychology of Work	4						72
3	Psychology of Development	6						108
4	Philosophy of Education	5						90
5	General Education	5						90
6	Research Methodology	6						108
7	Educational Sociology		5					90
8	Professional Ethics		4					72
9	Curricular Theory		5					90
10	General Methodology		6					108
11	School Evaluation		6					108
12	Technology & Environment		4					72
13	Economy & Work			4				72
14	Curricular Development in Natural Science I			6				108
15	Curricular Development in Mathematics I			6				108
16	Curricular Development in Language & Literature I			6				108
17	Curricular Development in Social Studies I			6				108
18	Psychology of Education			4				72

		IV	V	VI	
19	Educational Guidance	5			90
20	Curricular Development in Natural Science II	5			90
21	Curricular Development in Mathematics II	5			90
22	Curricular Development in Language & Literature II	5			90
23	Curricular Development in Social Studies II	5			90
24	Practice Teaching	3			54
25	Curricular Development in Natural Science III		5		90
26	Curricular Development in Mathematics III		5		90
27	Curricular Development in Language & Literature III		5		90
28	Curricular Development in Social Studies III		5		90
29	Curricular Development in English I		5		90
30	Curricular Development in Esthetic Education I		4		72
31	Practice Teaching		4		72
32	Educational Administration			5	90
33	Curricular Development in English II			5	90
34	Curricular Development in Esthetic Education II			5	90
35	Practice Teaching			15	270

	Hrs. Per Week/Cycle						Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
General Totals	30	30	32	28	33	30	3,294

ANNEX B - ORGANIZATION OF STUDY PLAN FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Course- Educational Administration

Area I - Understanding Your Community

Unit	Theme	Weeks & Credits
1	How to read to learn	4
2	Education & society	6
3	Philosophic reflection & education	6
4	Curriculum, education & society	5
5	Toward a better teacher in El Salvador	6
6	Practical guide for the utilization of the school programs	3
	Total	30

Area II - Educational Innovations

Unit	Theme	Weeks & Credits
1	Failures of the current curriculum	4
2	Fundamental principles in curricular organization	4
3	New curricular sources	4
4	Organization, methodologies, resources and the analysis of experiences	5
5	Planning and executing a curricular project	5
	Total	22

Area III - Educational Administration

Unit	Theme	Weeks & Credits
1	Administration & the administrator	4
2	The Business	4
3	Planning in the administrative process	5
4	The work plan	5
5	Organization in the administrative process	5
6	Administrative execution & direction of the school	6
7	Administrative Control in the School	5
8	Regionalization and nuclearization	5
9	School legislation	5
	Total	44

Total number of weeks and credits - 96

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