

Evaluation of the Alfalit Adult Literacy Program in Bolivia



BEPS

Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

in collaboration with

CARE, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, AND GROUNDWORK



United States Agency for International Development

Contract No. HNE-I-06-00-00034-00

MAP OF BOLIVIA



The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and not those of the U.S. Agency for International Development or Creative Associates International, Inc.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 1, 2002, USAID awarded a cooperative agreement to Alfalit International (Alfalit/I), a faith-based NGO that has been involved in grassroots literacy and community development for over 40 years. The organization works through affiliates in 21 countries. The cooperative agreement was awarded to Alfalit/I to implement adult literacy activities in Bolivia and Angola for an 18-month period, to August 31, 2003. This is the first USAID project ever implemented by Alfalit. The award was for \$1.5 million¹, plus \$362,000 in total cost-sharing for the countries of Bolivia and Angola. Congress has approved \$1.5 million of follow-on USAID funding, which will be used to extend the existing cooperative agreement from September 1, 2003 to December 31, 2004.

1. Evaluation Purpose and Approach

This evaluation was carried out in May-June 2002, near the end of the first phase of Alfalit funding. It is a mid-term examination of how the project has progressed in Bolivia and how it can be improved under the second phase of the USAID cooperative agreement. The three principal evaluation questions were:

- Are literacy students learning?
- As a result of the literacy classes, are students exhibiting changes in their behavior and role in the community?
- Is Alfalit delivering services effectively? How can the organization be strengthened?

The approach to the evaluation was participatory, involving stakeholders and beneficiaries at all levels of the organization. In addition to 44 individual interviews, 60 groups (totaling 675 people) were also interviewed – ensuring a very representative sample.

2. Principal Findings

- Literacy students in Bolivia are learning to read, write and do basic arithmetic in about 9-10 months, studying six hours per week. Certain factors – particularly the fact that many students speak an indigenous language rather than Spanish – delay the learning process somewhat.
- Alfalit has successfully instilled in students the concept that literacy is not an end in and of itself, but rather a means to increase their skills, expand their opportunities, and improve their quality of life. Most students are motivated and want to continue studying well past the basic literacy level. They are also very interested in receiving some type of complementary technical/vocational training.
- As a result of participating in Alfalit courses, students' feelings and attitudes are changing to reflect increased self-esteem and confidence, recognition of the importance and value of education, a desire to grow and get ahead in the future, and improved gender relations.
- Students' behaviors have also begun to change in the past year. Many said they are now able to speak without fear in public, help their children with homework, encourage friends and

¹ Alfalit/I's program in Bolivia was allocated \$698,273. The budget in country for Alfalit Bolivia is \$550,483.

family to study, and actively participate in their communities. It is noteworthy that the school attendance of literacy students' children is also improving.

- The start-up phase of any new project is always a navigation of expected and unexpected challenges, particularly for organizations facing USAID policies and regulations for the first time. Alfalit has successfully managed most of these hurdles and is achieving – or surpassing – most project objectives.
- Implementing a USAID project has required Alfalit Bolivia's transformation from a small, faith-based organization to a more modern NGO partner. This evolution entails organizational development and capacity building with the support of Alfalit International.
- The explosion of demand for Alfalit courses in the past year exemplifies the adage that "Success Breeds Success." Based on interview results, there is currently an unmet demand for at least 200 additional literacy centers around Bolivia.

3. Principal Recommendations

- Rather than trying to fulfill all unmet demand, Alfalit should stop its expansion efforts in the immediate term to consolidate the quality of service delivery in its existing literacy centers.
- While students have innumerable needs, Alfalit should build on its comparative advantage and continue to focus primarily on its central mission of nonformal adult literacy/basic education.
- While basic education was not budgeted for under the first phase of the USAID agreement, it should be included in the follow-on so that students can complete at least 8th grade.
- Alfalit should build on its current efforts to form partnerships and strategic alliances with NGOs, municipalities and other groups — seeking complementary services (e.g., technical training, early childhood care, health care) to the greatest extent possible.
- Alfalit has a long history as an interdenominational faith-based organization in Bolivia. Efforts should be made to continue working with traditional partners so that Alfalit is not totally dependent on USAID funding, improving its prospects for future sustainability.
- The capacity of Alfalit Bolivia should be strengthened through better planning, office systems and administrative/financial policies and procedures.
- Emphasis should be given to the training of all organizational actors, starting with facilitators (teachers). It is also necessary to hire additional promoters to ensure effective supervision.
- If funds are available, additional teaching resources (e.g., small blackboards, basic didactic posters) should be provided to centers, as well as additional reading materials for home libraries to promote a culture of reading and to sustain literacy.
- Although Alfalit should not develop an expertise in vocational education, it is important to provide some work-related information and technical training to students. This can be done by drawing on the expertise of various individuals and groups in local communities.

As this evaluation clearly identified demonstrated results in student learning and behavior change in a short period of time, we believe additional funding – preferably approved on a multi-year basis to permit better planning – would be a sound USAID investment.

ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

Alfalit/I	Alfalit International
Alfalit/B	Alfalit Bolivia or Alfalit Boliviano
BEPS	Basic Education and Policy Support Activity
ED	Executive Director
EGAT	Office of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/W	United States Agency for International Development/ Washington
USG	United States Government

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Participant Story

The Price of Not Knowing How to Read

María, a 23 year-old mother, whose humble condition prevented her from going to school, tells us her story.

My name is María Rosenda Rollano Cayo, I live in the Pampa Ingenio zone in Villa Colón (highlands of Potosí, Bolivia). I am the mother of two girls and I wash clothing for a living. The remainder of my time I spend doing housework. I come from a large family; I am one of eight children. My mother died a long time ago and my father lives in the countryside.

Two years ago I decided to live with my friend Sebastián Flores, who is currently in jail for having been accused of not paying alimony to his former wife. She says that my friend is the father of her daughter, which has not been proven. They put his fingerprints on a document recognizing him as the father. He put his fingerprints because he does not know how to read or write. For this reason he was put in jail and in two months expects to complete his sentence. This was my principal motivation to decide to enroll in Alfalit.

I found out about Alfalit through a relative who told me what it was like to attend a center called “Toward the Light.” Without thinking twice, I signed up at that center. Knowing that Alfalit also worked with inmates, I looked for the opportunity that would allow my friend to learn how to read and write. Currently, Sebastián takes classes with others from the jail (videos and photographs of these people exist). Meanwhile, I continue attending classes at the center with twenty other women taught by a facilitator, Ms. Fátima.

This group of attendees is made up of only women, some of whom work on the PLANE (National Employment Plan). The women attend fearfully because some of the husbands treat them poorly or do not let them come. Because of this difficulty, many women come to pick up their homework and generally there are no more than fifteen of us at the center.

All of the women come with their children; some bring five or six. I go with my two girls: Lady (six months old) and Jenny (two years old). It is difficult to concentrate on the class with the children along, but the women make every effort. Due to poverty, the children come poorly dressed, as do the mothers. I am one of them, but we all believe that with study and care, our situation can change. We have confidence that with Alfalit, the future will bring us hope to better our lives.

When we go to class, the facilitator motivates us to help us share our experiences. This gives us strength to continue learning to read, write and perform calculations. My aunt, the one who brought me to Alfalit, whom I can assure you did not know how to read or write, now can. I admire her and ever since we continue helping each other.

My hope is that things improve in the future; life is not easy for me. Currently, my two girls have a cough and I have to provide them with everything. For this reason, I ask that you continue to help us with more reading and writing materials and with projects like childcare facilities for our small children.

Narrated on behalf of the Bolivian Alfalit participant.

Potosí, June 2, 2003.

B. Context

On March 1, 2002, USAID awarded a cooperative agreement to Alfalit International (Alfalit/I) to implement adult literacy activities in Bolivia and Angola for an 18-month period, to August 31, 2003. This is the first USAID project ever implemented by Alfalit. \$1.5 million was awarded, with Alfalit/I responsible for \$362,000 in cost-sharing between both countries. \$698,273 was allocated for Alfalit/I's program in Bolivia², and \$801,727 for Angola³. Congress has already approved \$1.5 million of follow-on USAID funding, which will be used to extend Alfalit's existing cooperative agreement from September 1, 2003 to December 31, 2004.

C. Evaluation Purpose

As this evaluation was carried out near the end of the first phase of Alfalit funding, it is essentially a mid-term examination of how the project is progressing in Bolivia and how it can be improved under the second phase of the USAID cooperative agreement.

The three principal evaluation questions⁴ were:

- Are literacy students learning?
- As a result of the literacy classes, are students exhibiting changes in their behavior and role in the community?
- Is Alfalit delivering services effectively? How can the organization be strengthened?

D. Evaluation Methodology, Scope and Approach

The Alfalit evaluation was carried out in three phases. The evaluation design, logistical planning and initial data collection took place in Miami from May 19-22, while fieldwork and initial data analysis occurred in Bolivia from May 23 to June 11. The analysis was completed and the report written in Honduras from June 12-20. A detailed evaluation schedule may be found in Annex 1.

A team of two consultants performed the research and fieldwork, and produced the evaluation report. Danielle Roziewski, team leader for the activity, worked with Enrique Tasiguano. The work was coordinated and supervised by Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII) through its Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity. The Director of BEPS is Donald Graybill. At the time of the evaluation, LAC Activity Coordinator was Antonieta Harwood. The USAID Cognizant Technical Officer for Alfalit in EGAT/Education Office is James Hoxeng.

² The budget for the local affiliate -- Alfalit Bolivia -- is \$550,483.

³ A formative evaluation of the Angolan program will be conducted later this calendar year.

⁴ It is important to note that the following areas are not within the scope of this evaluation, and thus are only touched upon tangentially: (1) Project Materials. Alfalit contracted a Literacy Consultant and Program Evaluation Officer to perform an internal project evaluation in April 2003. One of the goals of that evaluation was to review materials (in all languages) and assess them for pedagogical consistency and relevance of content to learners' situation; (2) the Laubach Literacy Methodology; and (3) Financial and Program Records. The Miami firm of Goldstein, Schecter, Price, Lucas, Horwitz & Co. is undertaking a certified public audit of all of Alfalit/I for the year ending December 31, 2002. The audit will be performed according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Government Auditing Standards (GAS).

USAID stressed a collaborative, participatory approach to the evaluation from the very beginning, and suggested that it be done in the spirit of a broad “stakeholder consultation.” As a result, almost all Alfalit Executive Committee and staff members were involved in the overall evaluation design and planning, the development of group interview guides, the implementation of individual and group interviews around the country, data collection, and the analysis of results/findings.

In an effort to include a broad and representative sample of stakeholders, the evaluators visited Alfalit sites in six of seven active departments (of a total nine). Every effort was made to set up interviews with five key groups in each community in order to obtain a holistic perspective of Alfalit activities. As shown in the table below, 675 people in 60 groups were interviewed using standardized interview guides (see Annex 2).

Table 1. Summary of Group Interviews Held

Type of Group	No. of Groups	Total Participants
Current Literacy Students	17	274
Literacy Graduates	7	77
Facilitators	18	215
Community Leaders	13	53
Family Members of Students	5	56
TOTAL	60	675

In addition to these groups, 44 individual semi-structured interviews were held with Alfalit board members and staff, supervisors, promoters, Ministry of Education officials, mayors, community leaders, etc. A complete list of those interviewed may be found at Annex 3.

E. Adult Education in Bolivia⁵

The Ministry of Education (MOE) “National Literacy Plan for Life and Production 1998-2002” presents the government’s current strategy in this area. The approach is based on training for life and production, citizen participation and cultural diversity. The plan conceives of literacy as the start of a continuous educational process offered in Adult Primary Education. The provision of literacy services is decentralized to municipalities (in accordance with the Law of Popular Participation) and depends primarily on NGOs for implementation. **Based on many years of successful collaboration, the MOE regards Alfalit Bolivia as one of its key adult literacy partners.** This is especially important since the MOE’s budget for alternative and adult education is very limited, with most funds dedicated to the formal primary and secondary school systems.

The MOE is currently in transition to develop a new approach for alternative education under national “curricular transformation” reforms. A new Strategic Plan (through 2006) should be finalized shortly and will define the roles of the MOE: to set standards, experiment/innovate, validate, document, evaluate, systematize and train human resources for alternative education. One of the key goals will be to end absolute illiteracy by 2006. An overarching theme will be “education for production and work” so that citizens are better prepared and equipped to

⁵ A more detailed overview of the Bolivian education sector may be found at Annex 4.

participate in the economy and society. While NGOs will have latitude to design programs and deliver services, they must all operate within these overarching MOE parameters.

II. PROGRAM APPROACH/STRATEGY

Alfalit is a world literacy movement committed to eradicating human suffering by teaching illiterate people to read and write. The overall approach aims to provide basic education as a means to helping people reach their potential. The program helps participants become self-sufficient citizens who can participate in the development of their communities and countries, through its global headquarters in Miami and 21 affiliates around the world.

A. Alfalit International

Alfalit/I was founded in 1961 as a faith-based, educational, nonprofit organization that promotes literacy, elementary education, health, nutrition and community development. The organization's mission is to eradicate human suffering by equipping people to read and write, enabling them to become citizens who contribute to the realization of their own potential, as well as their communities and countries. Serving more than 85,000 students per year, Alfalit/I has trained millions of students by establishing affiliate organizations in 21 countries on four continents around the world.

For most of its history, Alfalit was a volunteer organization supported by individual contributors and church organizations based on the principle "Each One, Teach One." In recent years, Alfalit has expanded its potential to reach more students around the world through systematizing both its operations and educational materials/training.

Alfalit's literacy program – internationally recognized by UNESCO – is based on the Laubach method of teaching. This methodology uses simple words and pictures to progress from the spoken to written word in easy steps. Students are taught to associate easily recognized pictures with simple words, which are divided into syllables. Picture flashcards allow students to combine syllables to form words. Repetitive reading of these combinations in sentences ensures retention and develops the skill of decoding words. Writing and reading comprehension are also emphasized. Alfalit can teach illiterates in most countries to read, write and do basic math in 100 hours.

B. Alfalit Bolivia

Alfalit/B is a nonprofit, faith-based institution working with literacy and adult education in Bolivia. In 1965, Alfalit/I founder Eulalia Cooke moved to Cochabamba to help form Alfalit/B and expand its work to Santa Cruz, La Paz, and El Beni. It serves as the local affiliate of Alfalit/I based on a partnership agreement detailing the respective roles of the two organizations. Alfalit/I helped establish Alfalit/B and has been instrumental in guiding its development and sustaining its funding. Through the years, Alfalit/I has also played an important funding, training and mentoring role, building on Alfalit/B's years of experience in fighting illiteracy and its established networks throughout Bolivia.

Alfalit/B's vision is to construct a society where education is the fundamental instrument through which adults can improve their quality of life. Its mission is to eradicate illiteracy and promote the

human resource development of communities in need through alternative education. In its 37 years of work, Alfalit/B has helped more than 100,000 Bolivians become literate.

The organization's objectives are to: contribute to the eradication of illiteracy in Bolivia, principally in areas of greatest poverty and need; implement and expand access to adult primary education to complement the formation and integral development of men and women; train facilitators in the use of Alfalit's teaching methodology; develop and produce books/materials according to the socioeconomic realities of students; and develop partnerships and agreements with local institutions to strengthen national literacy and adult education programs.

Alfalit/B's philosophy that literacy is simply the first step in a continuing process of adult education, not an end in and of itself. In support of the MOE, the Alfalit/B plans to offer nonformal education services through 8th grade, or the full cycle of adult primary education.

1. Organizational Actors

Alfalit/B operates as a fairly decentralized organization of "loosely linked" relationships. While there is a small staff in the central office in Cochabamba, efforts are primarily focused on implementation in the field. The following is an overview of the various actors involved.

Facilitators. Facilitators are the essentially volunteer teachers who form the backbone of literacy activities around the country. Most teach two courses, with each course meeting six hours per week (24 hours per month). Facilitators receive a "bonus" of \$25 per course per month⁶ which helps cover their costs and provides a small incentive to participate.

Facilitator candidates are recruited from the communities where courses meet and are nominated by local institutions (e.g. municipalities, churches, NGOs). Alfalit reviews their qualifications according to the following criteria: secondary school graduates; some background or vocation in teaching/pedagogy; sufficient time availability; leadership skills/capacity; resident in locales where courses are offered; and bilingual in Spanish and local indigenous language. However, given the socioeconomic realities of rural communities with high illiteracy rates, the pool of qualified human resources is often quite limited.⁷

Once facilitator candidates are identified, Alfalit provides a two-day workshop on Alfalit's literacy methodology and materials, adult education, class administration, etc. At the conclusion of the workshop, Alfalit evaluates facilitators on both theory and practice (i.e. through teaching a "mock" class). The most qualified candidates are chosen to teach literacy courses, depending on the number of slots available and number of students in each community.

Promoters. Promoters oversee literacy centers and facilitators. They either work directly for Alfalit or for a partner organization. They receive an "incentive" between \$50-\$100 per month, depending on the number of centers supervised and the distance between them. Alfalit pays

⁶ As a basis of comparison, the lowest starting salary for a new Bolivian alternative education teacher is approximately \$70/month.

⁷ Based on a sample of 144 facilitators: 5% are university students (though not necessarily in education); 15% are teachers with four years of education (i.e. normal school) training; 14% are professionals (e.g., engineers); 33% are secondary school graduates; 20% have finished some portion of secondary; and 13% have finished all/part of primary.

transportation costs for its promoters, while local organizations cover transportation for theirs. It is important to note that most promoters only work on a part-time basis.

Ideally promoters have the following qualifications: minimum secondary school graduate, preferably a normal school (i.e. teacher training) graduate, resident of the local community, bilingual in Spanish and the local indigenous language, demonstrated leadership/community mobilization skills, with a calling/vocation for this type of work and a social commitment with the country.

Promoters are responsible for: observing classrooms and providing feedback to strengthen quality; monitoring facilitators' records and reports; developing monthly and quarterly statistical and narrative reports for Alfalit; promoting the creation of new centers; participating in the selection of facilitators; assisting with local partnership agreements; requesting books/materials from Alfalit and coordinating delivery to centers; and working closely with regional supervisors.

Supervisors. Supervisors are the highest level of field staff employed by Alfalit/B. They oversee activities in an entire region/department and currently earn about \$200 per month full-time. In order to be a supervisor, a person should be a professional/university graduate, or at the minimum a teacher. S/he should work in the field of education (or a related field, e.g. psychology), have good computer skills, be bilingual in the local indigenous language, possess a driver's license, and have a vocation for this type of work.

Supervisors recruit, oversee and support promoters, visit centers to monitor student progress and teacher quality (particularly in areas where there are no promoters), verify and centralize reporting on the centers in region, and promote Alfalit courses in order to open new centers. Supervisors handle operational planning (e.g. workshops, visits to centers, reports) and performance monitoring/evaluation strategies. They also contact various public and private institutions (e.g. municipalities, NGOs, churches) in order to enter into partnership agreements.

Central Office. Alfalit/B's headquarters consists of an Executive Director (ED), a 4-person Technical Team (Education Director, Pedagogical Advisor, Supervisor for Cochabamba and Education Technician), Inventory and Distribution Coordinator, Accountant and Secretary.

The office is responsible for: general oversight and quality control of the program; financial management; administrative and pedagogical support; development of annual workplans; organization and provision of training workshops; preparation of narrative/statistical reporting; relations with the MOE and other institutional partners; development and distribution of books/materials to centers; and promotion of Alfalit activities. The Technical Team provides statistical and qualitative supervision of the program in-country. The ED and Education Director are the primary contacts with the field. The Education Director is also responsible for maintaining all records and anecdotal information, while the ED serves as the official MOE liaison.

2. Organizational Partners

Public and Private Institutions. **Alfalit/B is responsible for leveraging a 20% cost-sharing or counterpart contribution in each location.** It is therefore critical that it work in close partnership with a variety of public and private institutions to implement literacy courses. These partners may include mayoral offices/ municipalities, local NGOs and community groups,

churches/religious missions, MOE offices and local primary/secondary schools, international organizations (e.g. World Food Program), etc.

Once a mutually beneficial partnership opportunity has been identified, Alfalit signs an official agreement with the organization. Local contributions range from donating space for classes or a local office for Alfalit, to paying facilitators' bonuses or providing a promoter to oversee centers. Partners also often provide school supplies (e.g. workbooks, pencils) and food/drink to students. In most cases, Alfalit's contribution to the agreement is the provision of books and educational materials, as well as the training and support of facilitators. The contribution made under each agreement is then quantified by Alfalit and tracked on a monthly basis.

Ministry of Education. Alfalit/B has worked under various agreements with the MOE since 1975. The renewal of its latest agreement has been delayed since late 2002 given a major MOE restructuring. The new agreement should be signed by the Minister in October of 2003. According to the Director of Alternative Education, *“Alfalit has been a strong partner of the Ministry, does good work and is well-regarded. As long as it continues to work within overarching MOE norms/policies/strategies and collaborate with district and departmental officials, Alfalit will be an important player in adult literacy in Bolivia.”*

As mentioned, the MOE is currently finalizing its long-term strategy for alternative education. Part of that process has been the development⁸ of nine modules for adult education (through 8th grade) under its curricular transformation plan. While adult education NGOs have latitude to develop their own methodologies and materials, they will now be required to include the content reflected in these modules. MOE officials have committed to reviewing the content in Alfalit's materials and collaborating on their update. What this means for Alfalit, in practical terms, is a revision of its existing materials to add missing content in collaboration with the Ministry. While materials revision will be a significant task for 2nd Cycle, it would be particularly time-consuming for 3rd Cycle since fewer Alfalit materials exist for that level.

C. Adult Education in Bolivia

Adult education programs are structured according to the following MOE parameters:

Table 2. Structure of Adult Primary Education

Name	Levels/Courses	Core Competencies	Formal Grade Equivalent
1 st Cycle:	Initial	Knowledge of the basic instruments of reading and writing applied with comprehension. Oral and written expressions related to immediate environment.	Literacy
“Cycle of Basic Learning”	First Complementary	Development of logical thinking, collection/ordering of data, and pattern identification. Ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide; use a calculator to solve life and work problems.	1 st grade primary
	Second Complementary	Knowledge and application of sound nutritional habits for a healthy life; body parts and functions; ecology	2 nd grade

⁸ In conjunction with the German Association of Adult Education.

Name	Levels/Courses	Core Competencies	Formal Grade Equivalent
2 nd Cycle: “Cycle of Advanced Learning”	Third Complementary	Application of the instruments of reading and writing in the drafting of documents and description of culture and social relations in the community/neighborhood; history; rights and responsibilities of citizenship.	3 rd grade
	First Advanced	Knowledge and utilization of problem-solving skills related to weight, price, area and volume. Application in the development of budgets and work contracts.	4 th grade
	Second Advanced	Recognition/understanding of health as a condition of harmony and equilibrium in order to promote, protect and recover human and natural resources; first aid and sexual education.	5 th grade
3 rd Cycle: “Cycle of Applied Learning”	“Medio Inferior”	Knowledge of national environment/relations (geographic, cultural, social, economic, political and legal). Use of dialogue/communication to foster community and family development, and to improve integration with equity.	6 th grade
		Application of basic family and communal accounting using advanced math operations; familiarity with productive processes/projects and financial management.	7 th grade
		Understanding of ecological systems and respect for rational use of natural resources; introduction to biology and chemistry.	8 th grade

Under its USAID cooperative agreement, Alfalit has worked primarily with students in the first three courses of the 1st Cycle of Basic Learning. To a limited extent, the organization is now working with literacy graduates entering 2nd Cycle, but these more advanced students currently constitute a small minority (about 6%). Alfalit has allotted three months for the completion of each course, or nine months for the completion of 1st Cycle.

Alfalit Courses. Alfalit courses are held in *centros* or centers around the country. These are “borrowed” locations such as elementary/secondary schools (evening hours), community centers, churches, municipality offices, people’s homes, prisons, military bases, etc. Some centers host various courses during day and evening hours. Because so many sites are improvised in non-educational settings, the accommodations are often quite uncomfortable for students where they sit on the ground, write on rocks, study by candlelight, etc.

The demand for courses usually springs directly from individuals and/or groups in local areas. Once there is sufficient interest — minimum class size is 20 — facilitators are sought from the community and a center is officially opened. Facilitators then do an initial assessment of all students to place them at the appropriate course level.

Of the current student population, about 36% are enrolled in initial level, 33% in 1st complementary and 25% in 2nd complementary. Most courses are multi-grade, meaning that students from 2 or 3 different levels attend the same class. **Although Alfalit/I’s official guidance is to teach initial literacy students in separate courses, Alfalit/B often combines them to**

reach a class size of 20. This is a quality issue that must be resolved. At the end of each course, students receive official Alfalit-MOE certificates attesting to their completion of the level.

III. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Evaluation Question 1 — Are literacy students learning?

Objectives:

1. Quantitative:

11,700 students will pass all three levels of basic literacy program over the course of 18 months.

2. Qualitative:

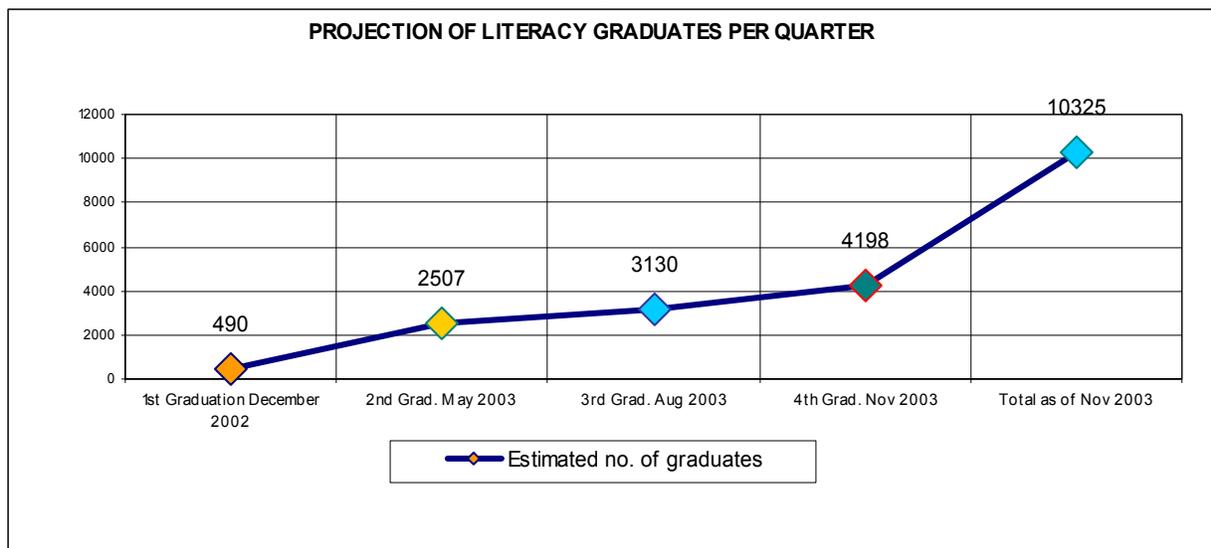
(a) When students graduate, they will be able to read, write, and do basic arithmetic within an average of 115 hours of study.

(b) Literacy graduates will have the skills to begin Basic/Primary education.

1. 11,700 students will graduate from basic literacy program by August 31

When the first phase of Alfalit’s cooperative agreement ends, it is estimated that 6100 students will have graduated from the basic literacy program, over 50% of the goal. As shown in the Table below, over 10,300 students should graduate by November – nearly 90% of the target.

Table 3. Projection of Literacy Graduates by Quarter (Dec. 2002 – Nov. 2003)



There are several important reasons for the delay:

- As will be further explained in Finding C-1, the initial start-up of activities in Bolivia was delayed for two months after the cooperative agreement was signed. It then took some time to create momentum in opening centers and recruiting students. This explains the small (490) first graduating class in December 2002.

- Although three months are allotted for each of the three courses, students are actually taking an average of 4-5 months to complete the initial literacy level. This situation is explained in greater detail under Objective 2(a).
- A drop-out rate of 28% means that many potential graduates have left the project. This abandonment increases inefficiency since materials and teaching time are lost. Now that one of the main reasons for drop-out – lack of materials – is resolved, this rate should decline in the future.

2(a). Students will be able to read, write and do basic arithmetic within an average of 115 hours of study

➤ ***FINDING A-1: Alfalit students are clearly learning to read, write and do basic math.***

Students are, however, taking about twice as long to complete the three literacy courses than originally projected: 240 hours (10 months) on average. A number of factors contribute to this situation.

One of the most important reasons is that only 13% of Alfalit students speak Spanish as their native language. Most speak Quechua (66%), Guarayo (13%), Guaraní (7%) or Aymara (6%) in their families/communities, with few opportunities to practice reading, writing or speaking Spanish on a daily basis. This circumstance obviously complicates their ability/facility to become literate in Spanish, particularly given the fact that Quechua only has three vowels.

For beginner students, facilitators must therefore explain each point in the native language before communicating it in Spanish. Many of those interviewed said there is a need for bilingual explanation throughout the 1st Cycle, further slowing the teaching process. Students' lack of comfort with Spanish was clear in many of our interviews. Even though they can read/write in Spanish, they answered our questions in the native language since they feel insecure speaking. While Alfalit does have some materials in Quechua, Guaraní, Aymara and Guarayo, many students said they only want to become literate in Spanish since it is the most “useful” language in Bolivia. Indigenous languages seem to be used more for oral communication.

Various other factors influence class participation (see Table 4). Since many participants live in rural areas, the seasonal demands of agricultural work are a serious constraint to completing courses in three months. If a student misses 1-2 months of class during planting or harvesting season, s/he will either drop out (worst case scenario) or need to repeat the missed coursework. The time needed for course completion also depends on whether a student is an absolute or functional illiterate. Absolute illiterates will obviously require more time and effort. Finally, the fact that initial literacy students are combined with others in multi-grade classes (against the guidance of Alfalit/I) means they are receiving less teaching time and individualized attention.

Table 4. Difficulties with Regular Class Attendance

Reasons Expressed by Current Students and Graduates	Frequency (No. groups)	% of Total (29 Groups)
Lack of educational materials (e.g. books)	20	69.0%
Situation of poverty (e.g. malnutrition, poor hygiene)	18	62.1%
Lack of adequate infrastructure in centers (e.g. tables/desks, chairs, blackboards, electricity)	17	58.6%
Lack of childcare (so women have to bring children to class)	15	51.7%
Physical impediments (e.g. poor eyesight and fine motor skills, illness, limitations of older students)	15	51.7%
Lack of school supplies (e.g. workbooks, pencils, chalk)	14	48.3%
Poor communication skills (e.g. fear of public speaking)	10	34.5%
Cyclical fluctuations in work (e.g. planting, harvesting)	10	34.5%
Long distances/difficult access to class	9	31.0%
Demands of work (e.g. long hours, heavy workload, migration)	8	27.6%
Lack of income/resources	8	27.6%
Little/no knowledge or practice of Spanish	8	27.6%
Lack of family/community support	7	24.1%
Inconvenient class schedules, cancellations	7	24.1%
Unemployment	5	17.2%
Lack of motivation/energy	5	17.2%

In order to verify the fact that literacy graduates are indeed learning, the evaluators reviewed tests from all three course levels, student workbooks/notebooks, and testimonial letters of graduates (see Section I.A). We also administered random “pop quizzes” during group interviews to confirm students’ abilities, and spoke with teachers about their progress. The following are the principal conclusions:

- Literacy graduates are able to read and write in Spanish, and do basic math (including multiplication and division).
- There is a generalized problem of poor spelling – with students as well as teachers. One Ministry of Education official noted that this is a weakness at all levels in Bolivia.
- Students take a test each month and a final test each quarter. The standard of proficiency is perhaps too low, but will increase in the coming year. In general, Bolivia bases grading on a 70 point system versus 100. The government requires 36 points, which is 51%. Alfalit’s requirements are higher than the government of Bolivia’s at 42 points or 60%. Alfalit plans to raise the bar to 49 points or 70% this year.
- No standardized MOE test currently exists for adult students finishing 1st Cycle; therefore, each NGO develops its own assessment tools. Alfalit is currently working with the MOE to review its final test for second complementary to ensure that MOE-defined capacities/objectives/indicators are being assessed. This is important since the existing tests appear too basic to the evaluators.
- Although native speakers of Quechua (or other languages) can effectively read/write in Spanish, they still lack practice, confidence and proficiency in oral communication.

- While students seem to be capturing reading and math relatively quickly, many expressed more trouble with writing -- perhaps because of students' difficulty with fine motor skills and/or lack of writing practice.

2(b). Students will have the necessary skills to continue basic education.

➤ ***FINDING A-2: Based on our assessment of literacy graduates, they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to continue studying in the 2nd Cycle of adult primary education.***

Currently over 1100 Alfalit students have registered for this level. Based on feedback from our group interviews, there is additional demand for these more advanced courses. What is missing is the development of complete and up-to-date books/materials, and the provision of additional facilitator training.

After completing the first three levels of the literacy program, many students write a brief testimony about their experience with Alfalit. The following are some illustrative excerpts from their letters:

- “We want to continue studying more in order to know better and to live better.”
- “We are grateful for learning to read and write in order to improve our lives... one day I would like to be a professional in order to help other people the same way.”
- “Now I can help my children and I can also improve myself more.”
- “I thank my teacher because [before] I was too lazy to study, now I regret it.”
- “Now I have children and for that reason I want to study... More to teach my kids and improve my home.”
- “Now we know how to read and write and do math, which helps us with money.”
- “We want to learn to live well.”

B. Evaluation Question 2 — As a result of the literacy classes, are students exhibiting changes in their behavior and role in the community?

Objectives:

2. Qualitative:

- (a) *The training provided to facilitators should emphasize the reinforcement of students' confidence, motivation and self-esteem.*
- (b) *When students graduate, they should have: improved confidence/self-esteem; improved life skills to obtain employment; and acquired the habit of reading and simple analysis.*
- (c) *Complementary reading materials will be designed to foster knowledge of health and nutrition, citizenship and human rights, family and community life, ethnic and governmental relationships, etc.*

➤ ***FINDING B-1: Students, graduates, family members and facilitators attest to the changes that are occurring in their lives as a result of becoming literate. While it is premature to expect major changes after only one year, students' roles and perspectives are already expanding.***

1(b). Literacy graduates should have improved confidence/self-esteem, improved life skills to obtain employment, and acquired the habit of reading and simple analysis.

It is clear that students view literacy/basic education as a means to an end. The ultimate goal is not simply being able to read and write, but actively using these skills to improve their income and quality of life.

Because changes in feelings/perspectives are a necessary precursor to changes in behavior, we have disaggregated the interview results in the tables below. With regard to Table 5, several areas are worthy of note:

- There is a clear improvement in the well-being of students, with most expressing that they feel happier as a result of participating and learning. Over half noted the pride of their family and friends.
- In terms of self-esteem, three-quarters of the groups mentioned feeling less shy/afraid as a result of learning, and 55% said they feel more confident and secure. **Since women comprised a large majority of those interviewed, these changes are significant building blocks to their increased empowerment in the future.**
- Over 60% of groups highlighted their desire to grow, improve themselves and get ahead in the future, with over half wanting to get a better job. 41% also said they now have higher expectations for the future. For participants living in difficult socioeconomic conditions, this sense of aspiration and drive is an invaluable foundation for improving their lives.
- It is encouraging that more than 80% of those interviewed said they now recognize the value and importance of education, and 55% want to continue studying through 8th grade, high school or even university. Lack of access to schools/programs after Alfalit's basic education courses was mentioned as a barrier to achieving this goal.
- Nearly half the student groups said that knowing math has helped them with shopping, paying bills, money management, checking their paychecks, selling products in the market, figuring out change, etc. Many proudly noted that they can no longer be "tricked, taken advantage of, or lied to" in money matters.
- In terms of gender relations, **79% of the groups expressed that there is now more unity/support between men and women.** Not only are many husbands encouraging their wives to learn and supporting their studies, but couples often attend class together. In addition, more than 60% of women said they feel more equal in society. They are more aware of their rights and the fact that they should not be marginalized or discriminated against.
- In about one-quarter of the cases, husbands were not supportive of – and sometimes abusive to – their wives studying due to jealousy, machismo, feeling threatened, etc. One husband candidly remarked that he feared his wife might leave him for a man who can read and write. In one region, wives were beaten for attending the courses. In another region, wives had to bring home food for their children, in order for their husbands to allow them to attend the courses.

Most groups avidly expressed their desire to combine literacy with technical/vocational/practical skills training. Women requested training in areas such as knitting, sewing, embroidery, baking, cooking, food processing, painting on cloth and secretarial skills. Men were

interested in agriculture, livestock, carpentry, electricity, plumbing, mechanics, tailoring, shoe-making, etc. Both groups requested training in computers, home gardens, vegetable growing, framing (for export) and microenterprise development.

Table 5. Summary of Feelings Noted by Students and their Family Members

Life Skill Area/ Personal Quality	Expressed Feeling “Now...”	Frequency (No. groups)	% of Total (29 Groups)
Self-Esteem	I am less shy/timid, I’m not afraid anymore”	22	75.9%
	I feel more secure, have more confidence, a better self-image”	16	55.2%
	I am more capable”	7	24.1%
General Well-Being	I feel happier/more enthusiastic”	26	89.7%
	I am very thankful/grateful [for the opportunity to become literate]”	22	75.9%
	My family and friends are proud of me because I can read/write”	15	51.7%
Future Aspiration	I want to grow, better myself, get ahead	18	62.1%
	I want to get a better job”	15	51.7%
	I have more hope/higher expectations for the future”	12	41.4%
Utility/Value of Education	I recognize the value/importance of education”	24	82.8%
	I want technical/vocational skills in order to improve my quality of life”	24	82.8%
	I want to continue studying” (e.g. through 8 th grade, high school)	16	55.2%
	I enjoy learning/studying”	15	51.7%
	I want to learn more about how the government works/what my rights are as a citizen”	8	27.6%
Ability to Function in Society	No one can trick me or take advantage of me” (e.g. in monetary transactions)	14	48.3%
	I want to live in greater harmony with nature/the environment	12	41.4%
	I feel more useful”	7	24.1%
Gender Relations	There is more unity/support among men and women”	23	79.3%
	Women feel more equal, and that they shouldn’t be discriminated against/marginalized/mistreated”	18	62.1%
	My husband doesn’t want me to study” (i.e. because he feels jealous/ bothered)	7	24.1%

In terms of behavior change, there were also many interesting findings:

- People in more than 60% of the groups noted being more open and able to speak in public. Many women remarked that they used to be very shy/timid, but now communicate with less fear and nervousness in various settings (e.g. community meetings).
- With regard to the utility of education, every group proudly noted their ability — albeit nascent — to read, write and work with numbers. Students also recognize the value of education, with nearly 60% encouraging other family members and friends to study.
- Almost 60% of groups interviewed said they are now able to help their children with homework, whereas they previously could not understand the assignments. One woman even bragged about “catching up to and beating” her grade-school son in his studies.
- **Parental attitude is particularly noteworthy because it translates into increased school attendance of children.** Many parents noted that because they now recognize the importance of education, they are making sure to send their kids to school.
- Over half the groups said they are doing better at work and/or valuing their jobs more. Several farmers noted their ability to read insecticide labels and better use other agricultural inputs. Other women said they are doing a better job selling at the market.
- 41% of groups said they are using their new literacy skills to teach others to read and write. They specifically mentioned teaching their spouses, children, parents, siblings, friends, neighbors, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces/nephews and co-workers.
- More than 40% of groups are using their new literacy skills to write letters. People are now able to communicate with their children, relatives and friends in distant places, and one teenage boy is writing “love letters” to his girlfriend. About one-third of the groups remarked that they are now able to read the Bible.
- 45% said they are practicing better eating and/or cooking habits, as well as better hygiene and nutrition. This knowledge is largely due to the “extracurricular” talks given by facilitators and/or outside experts in literacy classes.
- Nearly three-quarters of the groups commented on the increased friendship/camaraderie among classmates. Students are generally learning to open up more with those around them, to share their lives and problems, and to help each other. There was a noticeable sense of integration among the groups interviewed.

90% of groups already report higher levels of community participation as a result of becoming literate. This participation might include:

- going to town meetings and expressing their opinions/ideas
- joining groups and associations (e.g. mothers clubs, women’s organizations)
- attending lectures, talks, courses
- meeting with local authorities, “entering their offices without fear”
- meeting with school officials
- participating as union members
- teaching their friends/neighbors to read

Table 6. Summary of Behavior Changes Noted by Students and their Family Members

Life Skill Area	Stated Change in Behavior “Now...”	Frequency (No. groups)	% of Total (29 Groups)
Communication	I can speak in public without fear, I am more open”	18	62.1%
Utility/Value of Education	I can read, write (e.g. name) and work with numbers”	29	100%
	I am helping my children with their home-work/schoolwork”	17	58.6%
	I am encouraging/supporting other family members and friends to study”	17	58.6%
	I am doing my work better/valuing my job more”	15	51.7%
	I am teaching other people to read/write/do math”	12	41.4%
	I am writing letters”	12	41.4%
	I can read the Bible”	10	34.5%
Inter-Personal/ Group Relations	There is more integration/camaraderie/ friendship among students”	21	72.4%
	I get along better with my companions”	18	62.1%
	I share my problems with my companions, so we can solve/discuss them together”	14	48.3%
Community Participation	I participate more in the community” (e.g. in town meetings, mothers’ clubs)	26	89.7%
	I can take care of any type of procedure/ formality” (e.g. getting a carnet)	12	41.4%
	I can interact/deal better with different authorities and/or organizations”	12	41.4%
Health	I have better eating and/or cooking habits, better nutrition”	13	44.8%
	I have better hygiene”	13	44.8%

C. Evaluation Question 3 — Is Alfalit delivering services effectively? How can the organization be strengthened?

Objectives:

1. Quantitative:

- (a) Register 15,600 students (15 years and older) in the program through referrals from various organizations, with an emphasis on women.
- (b) Provide 202,800 student literacy books/complementary materials, and 5460 instructional books/manuals for teachers.
- (c) Extend the program to reach at least 250 communities in three departments.
- (d) Establish 210 literacy centers.
- (e) Train and develop 420 volunteer facilitators and expect that 210 will stay with the program.
- (f) Conduct 8 literacy training sessions for new facilitators and 4 workshops for active facilitators.

2. Qualitative:

- (a) Facilitators will be trained to apply Alfalit’s methodology for teaching illiterate adults.
- (b) Complementary reading materials (i.e. designed to teach individuals how to improve their health, welfare and community development) will be developed.

➤ ***FINDING C-1: Various delays in start-up have affected project implementation.***

The start-up phase of any new project is always a navigation of expected and unexpected challenges. For an organization facing USAID policies and regulations for the first time, the process can be even more daunting. While this has definitely been the case for Alfalit/I and Alfalit/B, both organizations have come through the steepest part of the learning curve and emerged stronger. The following were the principal delays experienced:

- Although the USAID agreement was signed on March 1, Alfalit/I received its first tranche of funding in late April, and Alfalit/B in early May. Activities were thus in “skeletal mode” during this period, delaying the opening of literacy centers and the recruitment of students. The annual workplan should have been adjusted to reflect this 2-month delay.
- Compliance with procurement regulations was cumbersome and lengthy in obtaining waivers to purchase foreign-made vehicles appropriate for the road conditions in Bolivia. Since the waiver was granted in October, the vehicles weren’t available until late 2002 – further delaying the opening of centers.
- Although office computers arrived in Bolivia in August, the Alfalit/I statistical software package didn’t function properly until February 2003 due to the office’s lack of systems knowledge. A data entry contractor entered the huge backlog of data into the system, but his computer crashed in May and most of the work was lost. Although Alfalit/B did not have the data entered using the Alumnos program, they were maintaining their statistics in Excel. As of September 2003, all data has been re-entered, verified, and is available in the Alumnos program.
- The redesign, printing and shipment of books from the United States have been the most serious delay. This point is discussed in detail under Finding C-3.

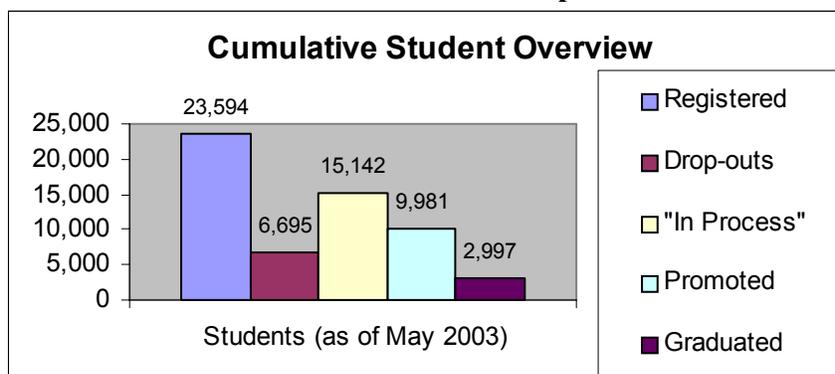
➤ ***FINDING C-2: Despite these implementation delays, Alfalit has far surpassed most project objectives.***

1(a). 15,600 students will be registered, with an emphasis on women

Since Alfalit/B began opening literacy centers in 2002, it has registered over 23,500 students⁹ – about 50% more than the target. Although registration started off slow in the initial months, student and community demand for literacy services has grown exponentially. Most students are laborers, farmers or workers in the informal sector, generally from poor rural and marginal urban areas. Approximately 70% are absolute, and 30% functional, illiterates.

In line with the project’s gender emphasis, three-quarters of participating students are women. This is significant given the traditional marginalization and high illiteracy of rural women in particular.

⁹ Given various difficulties with data collection in-country, the statistics presented have a $\pm 7\%$ margin of error.

Table 7. Overview of Alfalit Student Population

Despite the high registration rate, the number of students “in process” is about 15,000. This reflects the fact that 28% of those registered have abandoned classes. As Alfalit predicted a 25% drop-out rate, this situation is in line with initial projections. The principal reasons for student drop-out are:

- Lack of Alfalit materials (discussed in detail below). Given the extensive delay in the delivery of new books, many students lost their interest and motivation to participate. Not only were many people disappointed and frustrated, but Alfalit (as an institution) lost some credibility in the eyes of communities. This circumstance was exacerbated when the existing borrowed materials began to run out. This seems to be reflected in the number of drop-outs: from an average of 400 per month in 2002, the figure has risen to about 580 per month in 2003.
- The demands of agricultural work. Since most Alfalit students live in rural areas with seasonal harvests, many students are unable to attend class during certain times of the year. While more than half eventually return, it is difficult for them to reintegrate after missing months of class. More advanced students have a better chance of regaining their momentum since they have a stronger base.
- Various other difficulties to student participation (see Table 4).

1(c)/(d). The program will reach at least 250 communities in three departments, and will open 210 literacy centers.

The demand for literacy courses has grown dramatically throughout the country since the USAID project began. As a result, Alfalit/B is now working in seven departments and more than 500 communities. Moreover, as of May 31, 688 centers were functioning (of a total 814 opened) – more than triple the target of 210. This expansion is a result of: Alfalit’s promotional activities (e.g. radio spots, flyers, church announcements); word of mouth between participants and their friends/family; Alfalit’s long presence and credibility in Bolivia; demonstrated program results; and the establishment of successful partnerships in many communities.

While this growth has greatly improved access to literacy courses, it has generally been demand-led rather than strategic in nature. In the Alfalit philosophy of “serving God through serving others,” it is understandably difficult for the organization to turn interested communities away or

to deny students the opportunity to read and write. This relatively unmanaged growth, however, has burdened the project in several ways:

- The original budget – which was formulated for a given number of centers, facilitators and students – must be stretched to accommodate the unexpected expansion. This translates into fewer books per student, a much higher number of centers per supervisor/promoter, additional incentive bonuses for facilitators, and increased transportation costs.
- It has been very difficult to adequately monitor/supervise the centers as a result of insufficient staff – particularly promoters – and transportation challenges (e.g. huge distances. It seems the growth has outpaced Alfalit/B's capacity to effectively manage it.
- The quality of initial facilitator training workshops has been diluted by large numbers of participants and limited timeframes (generally 1-2 days).
- The provision of periodic facilitator “reinforcement” workshops has been limited due to Alfalit staff trainer constraints and large numbers of participating facilitators.

Despite Alfalit's admirable efforts to keep pace with the growing interest around the country, those interviewed expressed that there is additional unmet demand in many communities, as well as in the remaining two departments of Beni and Pando. There seems to be demand for at least 900-1000 centers, meaning an additional 200-300 than currently in existence. The following comments are illustrative:

Current Students/Graduates:

- *“It would have been better to learn/study when we were young, but this opportunity has presented itself and we're not going to waste it.”*
- *“We want to learn in order to be able to teach others in our communities.”*
- *“I would like these courses to be offered in my neighborhood and at the market because there are no classes there. We also need more teachers because there aren't enough – there's great need in the countryside.”*
- *“We need more help in remote zones – we also need more facilitators and more coverage.”*
- *“Now we can't stop/quit learning because we want to get ahead in life.”*

Facilitators:

- *“I feel very satisfied working on this project because people in the country need a lot more help than those in cities.”*
- *“Farmers have every right to learn to read and write.”*
- *“Students have really liked the courses. There's interest in the whole community – women, adults, teenagers – everyone.”*
- *“There's so much more to be done, many communities are lacking, we need a lot more help/support in the future.”*

Community Leaders:

- *“We would like this to continue in the future, we don't want to leave the work half done, we need continuity.”*
- *“We have to replicate Alfalit to the corners of the region. [The project] should go deeper – we need at least 15 or 20 more years in Punata. There aren't enough services now because there's great demand. We're at your disposal to help in any way you need.”*

- *“Once civil society is literate, people have more choices, more options, more capacity, better job opportunities – otherwise they are marginalized.”*
- *“This work is very important because people are forgetting how to read and write; they need to participate. They want to advance and get ahead in life.”*
- *“Literacy helps poor people in the countryside recuperate their dignity.”*

Partners:

- *“[This project] changes students’ quality of life – there’s a lot more demand than what’s being satisfied now.”*
- *“Please continue these courses in more depth, with more material, do a stronger campaign to eradicate illiteracy in all of Bolivia. We hope Alfalit continues with stronger and more intense support.”*

Given limited budgetary resources, there is a tradeoff between future expansion and consolidation of existing centers. This is a strategic issue for USAID and Alfalit further discussed in Section VI.

1(e). 420 facilitators will be trained and developed, with a 50% retention rate

As mentioned above, Alfalit/B has far exceeded the target in this area. Of an initial 1000+ candidates trained¹⁰, 724 passed Alfalit’s tests and were officially accepted as facilitators. This is over 70% more than the target of 420. Of those registered, about 100 have dropped out, with 598 currently working. This is an impressive retention rate of nearly 82%.

There are several benefits to having nearly triple the roster of facilitators: lower student-teacher ratios; increased capacity to handle demand for additional centers; and the development of community leaders/educators. There are also downsides to exceeding this target. It is a burden on existing project staff to have to train so many people; the quality of workshops can be compromised; and there are fewer resources available for reinforcement workshops, an important element of follow-up. The biggest impact is budgetary as hundreds more facilitators receive “incentive bonuses” each month.

Since there was an initial facilitator workshop scheduled during our evaluation visit, we were personally able to observe the first day of training. Our observations (albeit limited) were that:

- the introduction was long and focused on religion (discussed in more detail below);
- the presentation/methodology was more vertically oriented than participatory, so people were not very actively involved;
- while the first day of training is supposed to be devoted to educational theory, relatively little time was spent on these important issues. Much of the morning was dedicated to the ED’s introduction, while much of the afternoon focused on paperwork requirements, report preparation, course administration, etc. Since there were only 10 facilitator slots available (and 17 candidates) it seems this information could have been imparted later to those actually selected. Apparently this is a change that Alfalit/B made which is not in line with Alfalit/I guidance.

¹⁰ Even if they are not interested in serving as facilitators, many people want Alfalit training because it helps them professionally (e.g. they get official recognition from the Ministry of Education).

- the two-day period allotted for initial training is insufficient. Considering the extensive amount of material to be covered, the workshops should be expanded (see discussion in 2(a) below).
- 1(f). 8 training sessions will be held for new facilitators, and 4 sessions for active facilitators.

Given the unexpectedly large number of facilitators (and applicants) trained, Alfalit has held 55 initial workshops -- seven times the number projected. In terms of “reinforcement” training for active facilitators, about 20 sessions have been held. However, rather than formal, two-day workshops (as originally envisioned), these trainings have generally been shorter (1/2 or one day) and less structured. This explosion of training has understandably been difficult for four Alfalit staff members to handle, particularly when they need more training themselves. There has also been a cost in terms of their ability to visit/supervise centers and provide adequate follow-up training.

2(a). Facilitators will be trained to apply Alfalit’s methodology.

The following areas are currently covered in initial facilitator workshops: Adult Education; Psychology of the Adult Learner (with an emphasis on illiterate individuals); How to Establish and Run a Center; The Role of the Facilitator; Bolivia’s Educational Reform; Education Principles; Alfalit’s Methodology; The Teaching-Learning Process; and Curriculum Planning.

The consensus of most facilitators interviewed was that two days of training are insufficient to adequately address, absorb and discuss the amount of information presented. Taking into account that many are teaching for the first time, facilitators need a stronger initial foundation to prepare them for classes and enable them to effectively apply Alfalit’s methodology, a current weakness in the project. All groups thought the training should be expanded by 1-2 days.

Most facilitators said they like the Alfalit methodology and materials, but need more support through periodic reinforcement workshops. This would allow them to regularly exchange information and experiences, discuss and jointly solve problems, deal with certain topics (e.g. adult psychology) in more depth, and reinforce the practical application of the methodology. In our interviews, most facilitators requested 1-2 days of formal reinforcement training per quarter.

2(b). Complementary materials will be developed.

Once students learn the mechanics of reading and writing, it is critical that they practice these skills in order to strengthen their reading comprehension and develop a habit/enjoyment of reading. Alfalit offers a number of complementary reading materials for 1st Cycle students: Stories and Sayings, My House, Susana Goes to School, I Am a Worker, My Neighbors and Community, and *Donde Hay Amor*, among many others. Alfalit students also use books provided on environment and ecology, including home gardens and solar kitchens, as well as literature on history, Bolivian legends/stories, and simplified versions of classic novels. Alfalit also has bilingual Quechua/Spanish primers and reading books.

In close partnership with the MOE, Alfalit is developing additional materials in the areas of:

- citizenship and human rights (including gender issues);
- nutritious eating and cooking;
- health, hygiene and home/natural remedies;
- family planning and child care;
- economics/production (i.e. basic money management, how to get credit/loans, how banks work, how to organize microenterprises);

➤ ***FINDING C-3: The delivery of books and materials is the principal objective that has been delayed.***

Although Alfalit had an existing inventory of books in stock when the USAID project began, they had been produced by the Biblical Societies and thus contained religious content. The new USAID books therefore needed revision both to exclude this content and to make the materials culturally sensitive and relevant to Bolivia's context. While this revision process was underway, Alfalit "lent" its existing literacy materials to USAID in order to launch the project as quickly as possible. As a result, over 37,000 books were distributed early in the project.

The first delay occurred in the initial publication, since the design work was basically done from scratch. The second delay stemmed from USAID regulations requiring book printing in the U.S. — a much more lengthy and expensive process than in Bolivia. The third came when the first books were printed and air-shipped in October, and Customs asked Alfalit to pay duty.¹¹ After months of efforts to obtain duty-free status, Alfalit paid \$6000 for taxes/storage to release the books in January 2003. The most serious delay occurred when over 85,000 books were shipped by sea in January. Based on a series of bureaucratic requirements, Customs refused to grant the duty-free release of the container. Alfalit tried to resolve the problem for months, even appealing to the president of the Bolivian Senate for help. The books were finally released during our evaluation visit in late May.

This delay had a significant impact on the project since many students had few or no books. Despite Alfalit's explanation of the problem and reassurance that it would be resolved, many communities began to feel disillusioned and frustrated. As a result, the student drop-out rate increased and many centers closed. This situation should not reoccur in the future since a clause in Alfalit's new agreement states that the MOE will facilitate the release of all materials from Customs.

➤ ***FINDING C-4: Groups at all levels want and need additional training.***

One of our generalized findings is that most Alfalit volunteers and staff members are doing the best job they can, but also recognize that more training will enable them to better fulfill their responsibilities. The following is a summary of the feedback provided in our interviews.

¹¹ There was confusion due to the fact that Alfalit is a USAID/Washington – rather than a USAID/Bolivia – project.

- *Facilitators:* As mentioned above, teachers would like longer initial and reinforcement workshops. In addition to covering generalized themes, they would like contextualized sessions tailored to address the specific needs of different groups (e.g. urban vs. rural settings, absolute vs. functional literates). They also highlighted the need for more attention to writing and spelling.
- *Promoters:* Most have only had two days of general training regarding the program and its administration. These key actors are thus each responsible for overseeing 40-80 centers with only basic training in how to do so. Given their current level of preparation and huge workloads, it is difficult to provide the type of substantive advice/guidance/supervision that is ideally required. **Alfalit's ability to consolidate the quality of its service delivery will largely depend on expanding/strengthening this corps of promoters.**
- *Supervisors:* They have also had two days of general training to date. Since most are not education experts, they need adequate preparation and support to fulfill this important role. Because they are responsible for the administration of all centers in their regions, they should also be proficient in financial management, computer skills and statistical reporting. Most supervisors and promoters requested a two-day reinforcement training each quarter.
- *Alfalit/B staff members:* The technical team reported that they received information about the parameters of the USAID project (e.g. the goals and timeline) last year. However, they would like more specific training/guidance in: administrative and educational planning; adult pedagogy; performance monitoring and evaluation; state-of-the-art education policy (e.g. educational technology); human resource management and supervision; and project administration.

➤ ***FINDING C-5: Inter-sectoral partnerships are working well and represent an asset to the project.***

In order to fulfill its 20% local cost-sharing requirement – a significant achievement given the difficult economic conditions in Bolivia – **Alfalit/B places a great deal of emphasis on the formation of partnerships and the signing of organizational agreements.** We believe this is strength of the project for a number of reasons:

- It leverages a substantial amount of in-kind resources (e.g. centers, office space, school supplies, promoters, food for students) and, to a lesser extent, monetary contributions.
- As a result, it has allowed Alfalit to greatly expand its coverage around the country within a fixed USAID budget.
- It gives Alfalit access to other expertise and a variety of complementary skill areas to expand the learning environment of students.
- It expands and consolidates Alfalit's relationship with a wider variety of public and private institutions.
- It increases the ownership and support of local groups for literacy courses.
- It improves the likelihood of the future sustainability of Alfalit activities.

Alfalit/B has quantified the total national counterpart contribution up to June 30, 2003 as US \$132,936 or about 31%. Based on the results of our interviews, there is clearly interest and demand for additional partnerships. This bodes well for Alfalit's future efforts.

D. Evaluation of Alfalit Management

- ***FINDING D-1: Alfalit International and Alfalit Bolivia have very active and dedicated boards of directors and staff.***

The nine members comprising Alfalit/I’s Board provide tremendous voluntary support to the organization and devote a great deal of time and energy. Not only does the Executive Committee meet once a month, but several Board members are in contact with the organization several times a week. The Board President, Executive Director, and the USAID Project Director are very dedicated to ensuring successful operations. From the president to the office secretary, each member of the organization demonstrates a strong conviction that serving others is the best way to put their faith into action.

Alfalit/I has taken a proactive role in helping Alfalit/B to restructure its board to strengthen the governance of the organization. The new Alfalit/B Board, which was elected in February 2003, is dedicated to running an effective organization and wants to take a more active role than the previous Board. Since most of the members have been involved with Alfalit in the past, they have a strong interest in seeing it succeed. The new Board President currently works for the Peace Corps and has many years of experience with USAID/USG projects – a definite asset for the future. Staff members in Bolivia also exemplify the same spirit of service to changing people’s lives and improving the world.

It is important to note that the Executive Director in place at the time of our evaluation fieldwork subsequently left Alfalit/B to pursue other opportunities. Since he started working as an Alfalit facilitator in 1965 and rose through the ranks to become ED in 1986, he played a key role in shaping the organization and maintaining its presence over time. Recruitment efforts are currently underway to hire a new Executive Director who will oversee all of Alfalit/B’s technical, administrative and financial management operations.

- ***FINDING D-2: Alfalit Bolivia has retained many of the characteristics and operating procedures from its “pre-USAID” period.***

For 37 of its 38 years of operation, Alfalit/B has functioned as a small, faith-based educational organization. It is therefore not surprising that Alfalit/B is now undergoing a transformation into a stronger USAID partner, as illustrated below. It is important to note that Table 8 is meant to exemplify the broad parameters of change that apply to faith-based organizations in general. **Alfalit shares some, but not all, of these characteristics.**

Table 8. Differences in managing...

A small, faith-based organization	versus	USAID-funded project
Limited resources, uncertain budget levels dependent on church/mission contributions, few financial management requirements, emphasis on saving (rather than spending)		Relatively large, fixed budget. Extensive financial management regulations, requirements and reporting. Emphasis on spending all allocated resources (rather than saving)
Emphasis on teaching students to read/write as a means to serve God, share and expand religious (Christian Evangelical) faith		Emphasis on literacy as a means to improve the skills and productive capacities of citizens, to improve their quality of life

A small, faith-based organization	versus	USAID-funded project
Management based on personal relationships and interests, vertical/centralized authority over small staff, little delegation of authority or empowerment		Management based on organizational development assessment, modern personnel management of larger staff (including team-building), greater delegation of authority and decentralization
Little interest in office systems or policies, few internal controls (e.g. on vehicle use)		Great need for defined office systems/policies/procedures; clear staff roles/position descriptions
Partnerships based on church/religious ties, pastoral and personal relationships		Partnerships based on strategic, inter-sectoral alliances (e.g. with municipalities, NGOs, etc.)
Voluntary service based on spirit of faith and sacrifice, inspiring religious conviction and motivation – this energy and dedication is <u>also</u> valuable in USAID projects		Voluntary service based on aptitude for/interest in teaching, effectiveness maximized through training
Less emphasis on planning, few reporting and recordkeeping requirements		Great need for planning, timely and accurate reporting and recordkeeping (incl. statistical)
Less need for programmatic, administrative and financial management systems/processes		Great need for programmatic, administrative and financial management systems/processes
Little use of technology, other means for increasing efficiency		Need to take advantage of all possible tools/mechanisms to improve efficiency/effectiveness
Little emphasis on staff professional development (i.e. training, mentoring), constructive feedback		Great need to train and develop staff, strengthen their capacity and empowerment
Less accountability (i.e. private audits or evaluations)		Much greater accountability at all levels and publicly certified audits
Relative autonomy in operations		Much closer relationship to Alfalit/I, joint need to achieve USAID results

One point to note is that Alfalit has excelled in conducting certified public audits and developing a statistical reporting system that is so thorough that the MOE would like to adopt it.

➤ **FINDING D-3: Alfalit/B is very understaffed with promoters.**

Promoters occupy a critical position as the intermediaries between facilitators and Alfalit supervisors. The success of literacy centers partially rests on their shoulders as they supervise teachers *in situ*, provide monitoring and feedback support, and ensure the effective provision of courses.

There are currently five direct Alfalit promoters: one in Cochabamba (with 235 centers), two in Santa Cruz (167 centers) and two in Potosí (169 centers). There are ten other promoters¹² around the country whose services are “donated” to Alfalit by various organizations. In practical terms, five Alfalit promoters are overseeing more than 600 literacy centers – an average of 120 centers each. Not only are these numbers unmanageable, but the task is further complicated by the centers’ geographic remoteness. The promoters are doing the best job they can (especially on stipends of less than \$100/month, plus transportation) but most are only able to visit centers every 2-6 months. This level of support and supervision is inadequate to ensure the quality of centers.

¹² While they do assist the project, most of them devote less time/effort than direct Alfalit promoters, and supervise a much smaller number of centers. They are not as well-trained and have less connection/accountability with Alfalit.

➤ ***FINDING D-4: Communication and supervision at all levels should be strengthened.***

Many of those interviewed expressed a desire for more open communication. For example, during the project design and start-up phases, the principal communication channel was between Alfalit/I and the ED in Bolivia. Since the Board and staff in Bolivia were less directly involved, they were less knowledgeable about how the USAID project was being structured. More than a year into implementation, this situation is reflected in various uncertainties that could easily be resolved with staff training and broader information sharing.

There has also been limited communication within the Alfalit/B central office, as well as between the office and the Board. This situation should change with the recent appointment of an Executive Secretary who will work on site and serve as a direct liaison to the Board of Directors. The Board has also instructed Alfalit to institute weekly staff meetings and monthly travel planning to foster greater coordination. These are important and necessary steps to strengthen the organization.

Communication between Alfalit/B and its field staff (e.g. promoters) has also been challenging — largely due to the geographic distances involved, limited access to phone and internet, and time constraints of Alfalit/B staff. This circumstance will be partially remedied by the recent installation of computers in three departmental offices, which the Board plans to link via Internet. As a result, most supervisors will now have direct access to Alfalit to improve their data transmission.

Lines of supervision also need to be more clearly defined and enforced, as there is uncertainty and inconsistency in many reporting relationships. For example, it seems that supervisors¹³ should report to the Education Director, with general oversight provided by the ED. In reality, they report to the ED but don't receive the required level of technical support/follow-up. A systematic evaluation system should also be put in place for supervisors to better manage their performance.

E. Findings on Separation of Church and State

➤ ***FINDING E-1: Alfalit courses are open to any interested students. There is no discrimination based on religion, political party, or other factors.***

Alfalit's official policy is that no participant can be excluded from classes, nor be obligated to attend church or participate in religious activities. Based on our interviews with a broad sample of those involved, it is clear that Alfalit has made an effort to include all students possible. Recruitment channels have included radio/TV interviews and jingles, visits to various public/private institutions (e.g. municipalities, NGOs, churches), participation in MOE "education fairs," distribution of flyers, and house-to-house visits. The only instances we found of concentrated religious participants were in towns primarily comprised of people of one religion. Classes in these areas will obviously reflect the communities' composition.

¹³ One supervisor – who said he is completely overwhelmed by the current workload – noted that he doesn't have frequent or continuous contact with Alfalit. Since his interactions alternate between the ED and Education Director, he gets the feeling "there are different visions for Alfalit depending on who you talk to." He perceives that each supervisor is working fairly autonomously so there is no coherent vision or strategy shared by all.

The following are illustrative excerpts from our group interviews:

- *“In the workshop they taught us [facilitators] that people of any religion/color/political party can enter this project – it’s for everyone.”*
- *“They taught us that this is a process for people who haven’t had the opportunity to study. Everyone has to be treated equally.”*
- *“They taught us that there should not be any discrimination – any student that comes should be accepted.”*
- *“Everyone can enter. There’s no type of discrimination/distinction.”*
- *“Participation is open, not dependent on religion.”*

➤ ***FINDING E-2: With a few exceptions, Alfalit materials and workshops are largely free of religious content.***

As mentioned above, it was necessary for the project to initially “borrow” existing Alfalit/B books. These materials contained religious references since they were originally printed for Alfalit by the Biblical Societies. However, all new books printed under the USAID agreement were revised by Alfalit to remove religious content. The evaluators reviewed a full set of these new materials and found a few proverbs taken from the Bible in one reading book and one writing book.

A new training manual has also been written for facilitators. Based on our review in Bolivia, the recently completed draft still contains a number of religious references and passages. However, the entire document will be reviewed and revised by Alfalit/I before final printing.

With regard to training, we only had the opportunity to attend a few hours of one workshop. We observed that much of the introductory presentation given by the ED – rightly intended to be motivational – was reflection on a Bible passage.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

- The start-up phase of any new project is always a navigation of expected and unexpected challenges. For Alfalit/I and Alfalit/B — facing myriad USAID policies and regulations for the first time — the process has been especially daunting. While it is good to hope for the best in this situation, it is wise to also plan for delays and contingencies.
- Organizations — like people — change and evolve over time. While Alfalit is experiencing certain “growing pains” in its transformation from a small, faith-based organization to a USAID partner, the key is for both Board and staff members to keep an open mind, remain flexible and focus on organizational development. Even positive change can be stressful, so it is all the more important to emphasize clear communication, information sharing and the creation of organizational systems, policies and procedures.
- The explosion of demand for Alfalit courses in the past year exemplifies the adage that “Success Breeds Success.” Expansion of services to meet the additional demand for 200-300 centers, however, will translate into much greater needs for training, personnel, materials and supervision.

- As evidenced by poor Bolivian students literally sitting on the ground and writing on rocks, students’ motivation and desire to learn form the fundamental building blocks for program success. Other important and necessary elements are: the availability of books and materials; the effective training and performance of facilitators; the provision of adequate supervision (as well as enough supervisors/promoters to do so); and the institution of continuous project follow-up and support.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Organizational Strategy and Vision

- Alfalit has far surpassed its goals for opening centers and registering students. Rather than continuing to try and meet all expressed demand, **Alfalit should stop expansion efforts in the immediate term to consolidate the quality of service delivery** in the existing 688 literacy centers.
- While students have expressed innumerable needs and demands (e.g. for infrastructure, broad vocational training, health care) **Alfalit should continue to focus primarily on its central mission of nonformal adult literacy and basic education.** If it tries to become “all things to all people,” Alfalit risks losing its comparative advantage and spreading itself too thin.
- **While basic education was not budgeted for under the first phase of the USAID agreement, it should be included in the follow-on** so that students continue their learning process through at least 8th grade. This will require a substantial effort by Alfalit in both materials development/revision and facilitator training.
- In this regard, **Alfalit should continue dedicating substantial energy and attention to the formation of strategic alliances** with NGOs, municipalities and other groups. Alfalit should seek complementary services (e.g. technical training, early childhood care/education, food aid, health care) to the greatest extent possible and work closely with individuals and partner institutions who specialize in these areas. Under the Law of Popular Participation, Alfalit should work to ensure the inclusion of its literacy activities in municipalities’ annual operating plans.
- Alfalit has a long history as an interdenominational faith-based organization in Bolivia. While the current project has largely “consumed” the entire organization, it is important to maintain this diversified base for a post-USAID future. **Efforts should be made to continue working with traditional partners so that Alfalit is not solely dependent on USAID funding.** This will also improve the prospects for sustainability of literacy activities. Alfalit has been able to garner a large volunteer force precisely because it is faith-based and this strength should not be lost, as the organization undergoes transformation.

Both increased access to, and improved quality of, services are valid program priorities. However, either approach entails a cost and should be analyzed strategically.

B. Organizational Development and Strengthening

- **Now that Alfalit is a USAID implementing partner, it is necessary to transform its management style and *modus operandi* in certain aspects.** The effectiveness of the organization should be maximized through the establishment of office systems, policies and procedures, along with a more team-based management approach which capitalizes on the strengths of each professional.
- **As Alfalit/B recruits a new Executive Director, every effort should be made to hire a candidate who possesses strong technical, administrative, supervisory and financial management skills.** This will ensure effective project administration and office/personnel management, as well as the fulfillment of all USAID/USG regulations.
- Given their critical role, challenging workload and multifaceted project demands, **supervisors' salaries (currently \$200 per month) should be raised substantially.** If not, there is a real risk that these key staff will accept other, higher-paying jobs after being trained by Alfalit.
- **Priority should also be given to hiring additional promoters** so that each one is responsible for overseeing no more than 15-20 centers. Given the current universe of 688 centers, the promoter corps should be at least 35 people. This will ensure that each center is visited once a month — a minimum standard to ensure the provision of effective monitoring, supervision and guidance.
- **A concerted effort should be made to improve and facilitate communication at all levels.** This should include: weekly staff meetings; more frequent contact between staff and Board members; monthly conference calls (and personal visits, when possible) between the Boards of Directors in Miami and Bolivia; and improved technological mechanisms (e.g. central office networking, internet access of departmental offices).
- **Systems should be established for programmatic and administrative planning.** This should include regular meetings to monitor progress and proactively solve implementation problems, participatory planning sessions with staff regarding the achievement of project results, and monthly travel planning.
- **The roles and responsibilities of all organizational actors should be clearly defined, and the lines of reporting/systems of supervision well-established.**

C. Training

- **The initial training workshop for new facilitators should be expanded** to at least 3-4 days. The course content and structure should be reviewed by Alfalit to ensure that facilitators are effectively applying the Alfalit methodology in class, as well as covering priority topics – such as how to effectively handle multi-grade/level classes and how to make adult learning more dynamic through games and participatory exercises.¹⁴ It is also important to maximize the practical application by participants and teach them to creatively use the resources in their local environments.

¹⁴ An excellent resource for dynamic literacy materials, games and participatory learning exercises is the Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts. A list of publications may be found at: <http://www.umass.edu/cie/publications/PublicationsPage.htm#literacy>

- **1-2 day reinforcement workshops should also ideally be held each quarter** to strengthen active facilitators. To the greatest extent possible, workshops should be decentralized to the regions to minimize the time/distance burden on teachers.
- **Joint reinforcement workshops should also be held each quarter for both supervisors and promoters.** These actors are critical to the success of Alfalit activities, and therefore need additional training and support to perform their duties well. A common Alfalit vision and strategy should be communicated to ensure they are all working toward the same goals and with the same approach.
- **The training needs of Alfalit staff should be emphasized.** Since these technical professionals are “training the trainers” and overseeing the project on a daily basis, it is critical that they operate from a position of strength. While part of this support should continue to be provided by Alfalit/I, the MOE offers a variety of low-cost training that should be attended by many Alfalit actors. Participating in this training should be prioritized to ensure Alfalit’s support of national policies and to allow networking with other adult education organizations for improved coordination. The project accountant also needs more training and support on the use of financial software, instituting better financial systems, automating functions, etc.

D. Course Content and Administration

- In recognition of the realities of Bolivian students discussed above, **Alfalit should modify its timeline target to allow 4 months (96 hours) for completion of the initial literacy course.** While some functionally illiterate students may finish in three months, they are a small minority and should not be considered the norm.
- Since so many students are unable to attend class during sowing and harvest, **Alfalit should consider changing course schedules during these seasons and/or offering special remedial sessions once they return.** This would help students regain their momentum and discourage them from dropping out in frustration.
- **If funds are available, additional teaching resources should be provided to centers.** These could include a small blackboard, basic didactic posters/charts, educational videos/audiotapes, etc. While many students complained about lack of adequate infrastructure (e.g. desks, tables, chairs) this is outside the scope of Alfalit’s direct manageable interest.
- If possible, **even more additional complementary reading materials should be provided for Alfalit’s home libraries.** Since there is not a culture of reading in Bolivia (as in much of Latin America), every effort should be made to stimulate this interest and develop this habit in students to sustain their literacy.
- **Although Alfalit should not develop an expertise in vocational education, it is important to provide some work-related information and technical training to students.** This can be done in a variety of ways: providing basic training to facilitators in priority topic areas; inviting local “experts” to give class lectures and demonstrations (e.g. on sewing, cooking, carpentry, computers, etc.); partnering with local NGOs and technical training institutions that provide services in agriculture, health, microenterprise, etc.; and obtaining support from MOE officials. There are many creative ways to include practical skills training without great additional cost or burden to Alfalit.

- **More attention should be paid to correcting spelling by both facilitators and students.** This seems to be a generalized weakness in Bolivia that is being transmitted to literacy students. Improved spelling could be achieved through providing small dictionaries to each center and including a section on spelling rules and commonly-used words in the facilitators' manual. Additional student instruction and practice in writing also seems necessary.

VI. PENDING ISSUES

One important strategic issue to resolve is the trade-off between increasing coverage/access and improving the quality of service delivery. Given a “zero-sum” budget, Alfalit’s ability to meet the additional demand for courses (with all of the associated costs) will necessarily limit its ability to consolidate the quality of existing centers. Since both of these areas are valid priorities, an appropriate balance must be sought.

Another overarching issue is the availability of future USAID/W funding for the project. While this evaluation clearly identified demonstrated results in student learning and behavior change in a short period of time, funding for all projects is subject to USAID priorities and budget constraints. We believe additional funding — preferably approved on a multi-year basis to permit better planning — would be a sound USAID/W investment. We also recommend investigating the possibility of complementary funding from USAID/Bolivia in alternative development areas (i.e., Chapare) where the Mission is working to improve education and health conditions.

ANNEX 1

Evaluation Schedule

Date	Location	Activity	Persons Involved
Mo May 19	Miami	Data collection	Danielle Roziewski (DR), Enrique Tasiguano (ET), Jim Hoxeng, Aida Iglesias, Antonieta Harwood
Tu May 20	Miami	Data collection, Logistics, Evaluation design	DR, ET, J. Hoxeng, A. Iglesias, David Forsberg, A. Harwood
We May 21	Miami	Evaluation design, Logistics	DR, ET, J. Hoxeng, A. Iglesias, D. Forsberg, A. Harwood
Th May 22	Miami	Data collection, Logistics	DR, ET, A. Iglesias, D. Forsberg, Juan M. Bello
		Discussion of project training	ET, Mrs. David Forsberg
Fr May 23	Cochabamba (dept.)	Logistics, Evaluation design (finalize group interview guides)	DR, ET, Julian Coronel (JC), Oscar Ponce (OP), Rene Escalera (RE)
		Discussion of statistics and program data	DR, Wilfredo Galindo
		Interviews with Board President and Vice President	DR, ET, Remigio Ancalle, Filemon Magne
		Discussion of project training	ET, Pelagia Gabriel
Sa May 24	Cochabamba	Interviews with project staff, broad data collection	DR, OP, RE, W. Galindo, P. Gabriel
	Ivirgarzama, Chapare (munic.)	Group interview with facilitators (videotaped all wk)	ET, JC + other personnel
		Group interview with current students	
		Group interview with graduates	
		Group interview with family members	
		Group interview with community leaders + 1 promoter	
Mo May 26	Cochabamba	Interviews with project staff, data collection	DR, OP, RE
		Interview with mayor of Tacopaya	
		Group interview with facilitators	
	Tiquipaya (munic.)	Group interview with current students	ET, JC + other personnel
	Entre Ríos, Chapare	Group interview with facilitators + 1 promoter	
	Charagua(munic) Santa Cruz (dept)	Interview with 2 municipal leaders	
		Interview with MOE district director	
	Ibabiuyuti (town)	Group interview with facilitators	
		Group interview with current students	
		Group interview with family members	
		Group interview with local authorities	

Date	Location	Activity	Persons Involved
Tu May 27	Cochabamba [This was Mother's Day, therefore we could not set up groups]	Interviews with project staff, data collection	DR, OP, RE R. Ancalle, Margarita Arvidsson
		Interview with mayor of Tiquipaya	
		Interview with Board President and Secretary	
	La Brecha (town) Isoso (province)	Group interview with leaders and authorities	ET, JC + other personnel
		Group interview with facilitators	
		Interview with 2 promoters	
		Group interview with current students Group interview with graduates	
We May 28	Punata (munic.)	Group interview with facilitators	DR, OP, RE
		Group interviews with current students, graduates, family members and community leaders [although these groups were set up in advance, no one showed up because of Mother's Day celebrations]	
		Interview with mayor of Punata	
	Cochabamba	Interviews with project staff, data collection	ET, JC + other personnel
	Santa Cruz	Group interview with current students	
		Group interview with graduates	
		Group interview with facilitators	
		Group interview with family members	
		Interview with volunteer teacher	Lydia Salguero
	Th May 29	Tarata (munic.)	Group interview with local NGO partner, CODERTA
Group interview with facilitators			
Group interview with graduates			
Group interview with current students			
Group interview w/ community leaders			
Santa Cruz		Interview with local leaders	ET, JC, Lydia
		Group interview with facilitators	
	Visit to 4 centers		
Fr May 30	Tiraque	Interview with NGO partner, PDA	DR, OP, RE
		Group interview with facilitators	
		Group interview with graduates	
		2 group interviews with students	
		Group interview w/ community leaders	
		Press interview with radio station	
	Sucre (capital of Chuquisaca)	Group interview with facilitators	ET, JC, Willer Tellez (supervisor)
		Group interview with current students	
		Group interview with family members	
		Interviews with local leaders	
	Visit to 4 centers		

Date	Location	Activity	Persons Involved
Sa May 31	Potosí (dept.)	Interview with supervisor from Chuquisaca	DR, Willer Tellez
		Group meeting with various Alfalit Int'l and Alfalit Bolivia reps	DR, ET, JC, OP, Rex Barker
		Graduation Ceremony with students, facilitators, local leaders, Alfalit reps, family members, general public	Everyone
		Interview with 2 supervisors	ET, OP, Willer, Grover
		Interview with 2 promoters	ET, OP, Marco, Moises
Su June 1	Tarija (dept.)	Interview with supervisor	DR, JC, Manuel Montiel
	Potosí	Group interview with facilitators	ET, OP, Willer
		Group interview with family members (mothers)	
		Group interview with current students	
	Vacullo (town)	Group interview with facilitators	
		Group interview with current students	
		Group interview with graduates	
		Group interview with family members	
Group interview with local authorities			
Mo June 2	Timboy (town)	Group interview with facilitators	DR, JC, M. Montiel
		Group interview with current students	
		Group interview w/ community leaders	
	Potosí	3 group interviews with facilitators	ET, OP
		3 group interviews with current students	
		Press interview with radio and TV	
		Interview with departmental MOE rep and director of alternative education	
		Visit to a center	
2 group interviews with local authorities			
Tu June 3	Tarija	Group interview with facilitators	DR, JC, M. Montiel
		Group interview with students [no one attended b/c of cold weather]	
		Group interview w/ community leaders	
	Cantumarca (town), Potosí	Group interview with facilitators	ET, OP
		Group interview with male students (prisoners)	
		Group interview with female students (prisoners)	
We June 4	Cochabamba	Interviews with project staff, data collection and analysis	DR, ET, OP, RE, W. Galindo, Linett
	Colomi (town)	Group interview with current students	ET, RE
		Group interview with facilitators [although group was set up in advance, no one attended b/c community mtg was called]	DR, ET, JC, OP

Date	Location	Activity	Persons Involved
Th June 5	Punata (munic.)	Group interview with facilitators	DR, ET, JC, OP, RE
		Group interview with graduates	
		Group interview w/ community leaders	
		Group interview with current students	
		Attendance of training workshop for new facilitators	
Fr June 6	Cochabamba	Data analysis in preparation for final report	DR, ET, JC, OP, RE
Sa June 7	Cochabamba	Meeting with Board president	DR, ET, R. Ancalle
		Evaluation data analysis	DR, ET, OP, RE
Su June 8	Cochabamba	Evaluation data analysis	DR, ET
		Meeting with Alfalit Board members and Executive Director	DR, ET
Mo June 9	La Paz	Meeting with Minister of Education	DR, ET, JC, OP
		Meeting with MOE Director of Alternative Education	
		Meeting with MOE Director of Literacy and Adult Education	
		Interview with FIDA representative	
Tu June 10	La Paz	Group interviews with facilitators	DR, ET, JC, OP
		Group interviews with current students	
		Group interviews with local authorities	
We June 11	Depart Bolivia		
June 12-20	Honduras	Drafting of evaluation report	Danielle Roziewski

ANNEX 2 Group Interview Guides

GRUPO: ALUMNOS ACTUALES

Fecha: _____ No. de participantes: ____ [adjuntar lista de asistencia]

Lugar (dept/municipio): _____

Representante(s) Alfalit: _____ Anotador: _____

Rompehielo: Cómo se llama? De dónde son?

1. Cómo ingresaron al programa de Alfalit? (Ej. A través de qué medios: radio, TV, iglesia, alcaldía, amigos, u otro?)
2. Consideran que el proyecto acoge a todas las personas sin discriminar en base de clase social, religión u otros factores?
3. Qué les parece el proyecto de alfabetización y cómo se sienten por estar participando?
4. Qué les parece los materiales/textos/libros?
5. Cómo les parece la enseñanza?
6. Qué están aprendiendo en el tema de leer? (ejemplos concretos)
7. Escribir? (ejemplos)
8. Con matemáticas? (ejemplos)
9. Y qué otras cosas están aprendiendo?
10. Qué saben hacer ahora que no hacían antes del proyecto?
11. Están enseñando alguien más a leer/escribir/matemáticas [Ej. En la familia, amigos]
12. Están participando más en las comunidades de alguna manera?
13. Qué cambios hay en su vida como resultado de este proyecto?
14. Qué más te gustaría saber/aprender?
15. Qué dificultades han tenido en su participación en el proyecto y como sugieren resolverlos?
16. Qué sugerencias tienen para cambiar/fortalecer/mejorar el programa?
- 17.Cuál es la parte que más los ayuda/beneficia o les gusta?

GRUPO: ALUMNOS GRADUADOS

Fecha: _____ No. de participantes: ____ [adjuntar lista de asistencia]

Lugar (dept/municipio): _____

Representante(s) Alfalit: _____ Anotador: _____

Rompehielo: Cómo se llama? De dónde son? Hace cuanto tiempo se graduaron?

1. Cómo ingresaron al programa de Alfalit? (Ej. A través de qué medios: radio, TV, iglesia, alcaldía, amigos, u otro?)
2. Consideran que el proyecto acoge a todas las personas sin discriminar en base de clase social, religión u otros factores?
3. Qué les pareció el proyecto?
4. Cómo se sienten Uds. por haber participado en este proyecto?
5. Qué les parecieron los materiales/textos/libros?
6. Cómo les pareció la forma de la enseñanza?
7. Además de leer/escribir/matemáticas, que más aprendieron que les sirve en la vida?
8. Qué nuevas habilidades han desarrollado?
9. Este programa ha influenciado sus oportunidades de trabajo?
10. De sus compañeros, cómo están participando en las comunidades ahora?
11. Cómo ha influido esta experiencia con sus familias y comunidades?
12. Están enseñando alguien más a leer/escribir/matemáticas [Ej. En la familia, amigos]
13. Qué más te gustaría saber/aprender para la vida?
14. Qué dificultades hubieron en el proyecto y como se resolvería?
15. Tienen algunas ideas para cambiar/fortalecer/mejorar el programa?
- 16.Cuál es la parte que más les gustó del proyecto?
17. Siguieron estudiando después de completar este proyecto, con Alfalit u otra institución educativa?

GRUPO: FACILITADORES

Fecha: _____ No. de participantes: ____ [adjuntar lista de asistencia]

Lugar (dept/municipio): _____

Representante(s) Alfalit: _____ Anotador: _____

Rompehielo: Cuánto tiempo ha servido como facilitador? Cómo se involucro al proyecto de alfabetización? Por que esta participando en el proyecto?

1. Por medio de qué institución (Ej. alcaldía, iglesia, ONG) atrajeron/inscribieron sus participantes?
2. Qué orientación recibieron de Alfalit sobre la apertura a participantes que son de diferentes religiones, y también personas no religiosas?
3. Cómo lo están aplicando esa política en sus cursos?
4. Cuáles son sus responsabilidades como facilitador?
5. Cómo les pareció la capacitación inicial? Por que razón le sirve/no le sirve? [Ej. La metodología, los temas, el periodo de tiempo, etc.] Qué de lo aprendido en los talleres es aplicable en sus clases?
6. En los talleres, como les enseñaron a reforzar la confianza, motivación y auto-estima de los estudiantes? Danos algunos ejemplos de como Uds. lo están implementando en sus clases.
7. Cómo se puede mejorar la capacitación?
8. Han tenido talleres de reforzamiento? Cuántos/con qué frecuencia?
9. Qué opinan de los talleres de reforzamiento? Cómo se podrían cambiar/ampliar para que sean de máxima utilidad?
10. Cómo se relacionan con sus promotores y supervisores? Cómo les apoyan? Qué más apoyo les gustaría recibir de Alfalit?
11. Cada cuanto vienen los promotores/supervisores/otros a sus clases para observar? Qué tipo de apoyo/consejo les dan?
12. Qué dificultades tienen los participantes para aprender?
13. Cuántos de Uds. tienen participantes de más de un nivel en sus clases? Qué estrategias utilizan para esta situación? Los talleres han sido útiles en ese aspecto? Si no, qué sugerencias tienen para mejorar la situación?
14. Cuáles son sus recomendaciones para cambiar/fortalecer/mejorar el programa y retener los participantes?
15. Qué otros recursos/materiales están utilizando para enseñar sus clases?

16. Cómo podemos atraer más participantes en el futuro?
17. Qué tipo de ayuda han recibido de sus autoridades locales y otras instituciones?
18. Qué efecto han visto en la comunidad como resultado del programa?

GRUPO: LIDERES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Fecha: _____ No. de participantes: ____ [adjuntar lista de asistencia]

Lugar (dept/municipio): _____

Representante(s) Alfalit: _____ Anotador: _____

1. Cómo llegó el proyecto de Alfalit a su comunidad?
2. Y cómo se involucraron Uds.?
3. Cómo ven los servicios del proyecto?
4. Qué beneficios recibe la comunidad de este proyecto?
5. Qué beneficios reciben los participantes [Ej. trabajo, familia, etc.]
6. Qué cambios han visto en los participantes? [ejemplos concretos]
7. Quiénes son los colaboradores en la comunidad?
8. Cómo ha apoyado la comunidad al proyecto?
9. Cómo debe la comunidad apoyar en el futuro? Tienen sugerencias/recomendaciones para cambiar/fortalecer/mejorar el programa?

GRUPO: MIEMBROS DE FAMILIA DE ESTUDIANTES

Fecha: _____ No. de participantes: ____ [adjuntar lista de asistencia]

Lugar (dept/municipio): _____

Representante(s) Alfalit: _____ Anotador: _____

Rompehielos: Qué miembros de su familia están participando?

1. Cómo ven el proyecto de alfabetización?
2. Cómo se han beneficiado los participantes?
3. Cómo se ha beneficiado la familia?
4. Qué cambios de comportamiento o de conducta se han notado en los participantes? [Ej. Toma de decisiones, cocina mejor, se ha metido en un negocio, esta trabajando, etc.]
5. Con que frecuencia leen en la casa?
6. Cómo ha beneficiado a los niños el aprender a leer y escribir de sus familiares? [Ej. Los niños están asistiendo escuela, están leyendo, están ayudando con la tarea]
7. Tienen sugerencias/recomendaciones para cambiar/fortalecer/mejorar el proyecto?

ANNEX 3

Individuals Interviewed

Alfalit International	
David Forsberg	Executive Director
Aida Iglesias	USAID Project Director
Juan Marcos Bello	Systems Director
Mrs. David Forsberg	Trainer and Volunteer
Alfalit International Board Members	
Rex Barker	Treasurer
Alfalit Bolivia	
Julian Coronel	Executive Director
Oscar Ponce	Education Director
Wilfredo Galindo	Pedagogical Advisor
Linett de Lavar	Accountant
Pelagia Gabriel	Trainer/Assistant
Lorena Perez	Secretary
Rene Escalera	Supervisor, Cochabamba
Lidia Salguero Yapura	Supervisor, Santa Cruz
Grover Moreno	Supervisor, Potosí
Willer Tellez	Supervisor, Chuquisaca
Manuel Montiel	Supervisor, Tarija
Rene Choque	Supervisor, La Paz
Damaceno Cordoba	Promoter, Chapare
Daniel Gomez	Promoter, Charagua/Isoso
Moises Rojas	Promoter, Villazon
Felix Choque	Promoter, Macha
Cornelio Vega	Promoter, Tarija
Alfalit Bolivia Board Members	
Remigio Ancalle	President
Filemon Magne	Vice President
Eduardo Rojas	Treasurer
Margarita Arvidsson	Secretary
USAID	
Jim Hoxeng	Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO)
Ministry of Education	
Hugo Carvajal	Minister of Education
Jose M. Subirats Ferreres	Director of Alternative Education
Alcides Vasquez Bravo	Director of Literacy and Adult Educator
Gualberto Campusano	Departmental Office, Cochabamba
Ilsen Torrejon	Departmental Office, Tarija
Jaime Mercado Garcia	District Director, Charagua
Wilfredo Escudero	Director of Alternative Education, Potosí
Donor Partners	
Margarita Arvidsson	Swedish Mission

NGO/PVO/Church Partners	
Wilfredo Benavides	PDA/World Vision
Juan Carlos Mercado + staff	CODERTA
Victor Vaca Jerez	Christian Children's Fund
Angelica Palazuelos	World Food Program
Donald Smith	Pastor, Emanuel Evangelical Church
Local Authorities	
Juan Ramirez	Mayor of Tacopaya
Lucio Villazon Gonzalez	Mayor of Tiquipaya + staff
Juan Prudencio	Mayor of Punata
Roberto Vargas	Mayor of Charagua + staff

ANNEX 4 Overview of Bolivian Education Sector

General Context

According to economic indicators, Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, with a GDP per capita well below that of its neighbors. About two thirds of the Bolivian people are poor, with extreme lacks in health, education, and nutrition. Because it is landlocked and has a limited communications infrastructure, Bolivia does not have significant access to export markets. The stratified society and political instability in Bolivia mean that despite the successful economic stabilization of 1985-1998, little progress in the war on poverty has been achieved.

Political instability, corruption, and economic downfall have caused a migration to the larger cities, which has burdened the urban school system with indigenous students whose first language is not Spanish. As the increasing population finds no outlet for employment, Bolivians seek employment elsewhere, some as far north as the United States. Scores of qualified teachers have left the country, many settling in Colombia, Costa Rica or Mexico.

Development of public education in Bolivia has lagged behind that of its neighboring countries. In 1930, educational reforms began to take place in the Andean schools. Bolivia became the first country to start the concept of schools clustering to form a *núcleo*. This idea involved choosing a school to lead among a group of schools (made up of about ten schools) in the area. Supervisors worked out of these leader schools to monitor the surrounding schools. Approximately 1800 *núcleos* are functioning in the country currently.

Unfortunately, this initiative has not been followed by any significant action in education improvement. An economic crisis soon hobbled Bolivia, affecting the earning power of every household and keeping many of its citizens in dire poverty. In the grip of deep poverty and a lack of economic opportunities, children were forced into the labor force, resulting in alarming school dropout rates.

By 1952, the government of Bolivia initiated an educational reform under the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) party. The new education law focused on traditional methodology. The structure of the system did not consider early childhood development, nor did the plans and programs of the state include a curriculum. Everything was theoretical and there was no emphasis on practical aspects of teaching. At this juncture, Canada funded the Bolivian government to begin the training of teachers.

Another reform followed in 1990, supported with funding from the World Bank, and the Education Reform Program was formed. This far-reaching reform revolutionized the structure of the curriculum for primary grades. For the first time, higher learning was included as part of the system and there was a sudden explosion of private universities.

With the educational reform of 1994, there were very direct and clear guidelines on how the entire education system had to change. The old methods were discarded and the new were brought in, such as constructivist approaches, making teaching methodologies more child-centered. Unfortunately, the wide sweep caught teachers by surprise. Embedded in the vision of the 1950s,

as mentioned above, teachers were only used to traditional theory and no practice. Teachers had no concept of the new learning methodologies. Having never before been accorded any importance, teachers now found themselves expected to use learning concepts they did not understand. Teaching was highly traditional; dictation by teachers and memorizing by students were the main classroom activities.

Some advances have been made since the 1994 educational reform, the most significant of which has been the new commitment and effort from the government to restructure the system in an attempt to bring about overall quality in education. New guidelines in teacher training have been developed. The first graduates of the new system have not yet been evaluated.

However, of the 100,000 teachers in Bolivia, 23,000 have never received any type of training. Some have secondary education, but others have only a sixth-grade education before they go directly into teaching in the school system. There are currently 65,400 primary teachers, first through sixth grade, and 4,000 kindergarten teachers.

According to a World Bank report, one of the successes of the new reform is that the enrollment level in the primary grades is up to 97 percent. Gender equity problems exist in the rural areas, including differences in the age at which girls actually begin school and length of time they stay in school. Both boys and girls generally complete less than seven years of school, with 10 percent of the children being malnourished since early childhood.

Bolivia's financial commitment to education has been consistently low with minimal allocation of government resources. The statistics in the table below on public expenditure on education reflect the lack of funds available to follow up on educational reforms and reinforce teacher training, salaries, and classroom support. Due to tough fiscal challenges, Bolivia has undergone fiscal adjustments, resulting in a reduction of overall spending. Whatever the education budget, most of the money goes to pay teacher salaries. And because of this belt tightening, international donations are providing the funds for maintenance of and new development of infrastructure. Programs via the World Bank and IDB are providing the means to better the quality and efficiency of the education system. Donations from GTZ have included funding for successful bilingual programs. Other significant donors include the Spanish agency Cooperación Española.

Table 1. Public expenditure on education, 1996

Indicators	Bolivia
As % of GNP	5
As % of total govt. exp.	11.1

Source: UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook 1998

Little support comes from the teachers' union, to which 100% of the teachers belong. The union is a strong force in negotiations with the government. The union's power could extend even to the point of paralyzing the government with strikes.

Parent and community involvement is increasing, largely due to the legal stipulations in the educational reform laws, which encourage education to be participatory. Municipalities have been charged with the education of communities, which has produced local accountability and increased popular participation.

Disadvantaged Communities

In Bolivia, almost all children in the public schools are from disadvantaged, poor communities. The most disadvantaged communities are in remote rural areas. These communities suffer from their isolation, as it is difficult for supervisors to reach the teachers and difficult for teachers to access quality training. In addition, often the children are malnourished and the parents are illiterate. In many rural communities, there is still a schooling supply problem, with many communities only offering the first three or four grades of school.

Reading instruction

Bolivia appears to lead the effort in innovative reading instruction at present. As efforts in Bolivia have demonstrated, complex issues arise in reading instruction for indigenous language speakers, e.g., the need for multilingual teaching and learning materials and for adequate teacher training in multilingual teaching approaches.

Bilingual/Intercultural Education

In Bolivia, indigenous inhabitants constitute 56.8 percent of the total population, or 4.1 million people. There are 46 ethnic groups in Bolivia, with 32 distinct languages, including composite languages of Spanish-Aymara. While it is generally agreed that the preservation of cultural identity is important and that early instruction in the child's maternal language is helpful, there is far less agreement on how that should be accomplished and which language(s) should predominate. Across the region, support for bilingual education varies. In Bolivia, constitutional law supports the education of the large indigenous population. Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, and a large number of other indigenous languages, along with Spanish, are languages of instruction.

Reading instruction is particularly complex in Bolivia and research is needed in order to understand the best way to teach reading to children who speak other languages. Teachers need training not only in how to teach in bilingual programs, which initiate instruction in the native language and gradually make a transition to Spanish, but also in how to teach reading in Spanish to groups that may include some speakers of other languages.

Country/Regional Capacity

A historically segmented society, the region is primarily poor, with low levels of education, health, and nutrition. In Bolivia, for example, the average person completes less than seven years of schooling. Infant mortality stands at 69 per 1000 live births, while 10 percent of children under five are malnourished. The table below shows that Bolivia, in comparison with its neighboring countries, is the least populated country but has the lowest GDP per capita, life expectancy, and adult literacy rate.

Table 2. Basic Social and Economic Indicators

Country	Population (in millions) 1998	Av. Annual Rate of Pop. Growth (%) 1990-1997	Population ages 6-14 (thousands) 1997	GDP per capita (PPP) 1998	Life expectancy at birth (yrs.) 1998	Adult Literacy (% ages 15+) 1998
Bolivia	8	2.4	1,734	2,269	61.8	84.4
Ecuador	12	2.2	2,478	3,003	69.7	90.6
Peru	25	1.8	5,032	4,282	68.6	89.2

Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2000; UNESCO and UNDP

State of education in the region and by country

Like the rest of Latin America, the Andean region is characterized by a large percentage of teachers with poor preparation, a high percentage of students that leave the educational system at early ages and enter the workforce with inadequate quantity and quality of education. Other factors include repetition, late enrollment, absenteeism, and unprepared, often undernourished, entering primary-school students.

While some statistics in the table below, such as net primary enrollment, give encouragement, other numbers point to a prevalent situation in the region.

Table 3. Estimated number of illiterates by age, both sexes (Bolivia)

Year	Age											
	total	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	+65
1990	809,144	40,288	45,992	51,860	62,417	73,022	81,162	79,859	83,595	75,980	75,985	138,984
1995	745,434	30,854	39,040	44,455	50,391	60,516	70,545	77,876	75,965	78,325	69,309	148,158

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2002

Numbers of total primary-school enrollment are higher than the population of primary school-age children due in large part to overaged students who attend primary school. These overaged student are a portion of the population that later shift into adult literacy programs.

Table 4. Access to Education Indicators

Indicators	Bolivia	Ecuador	Peru
Population (1999-2000)	8.1 million	12.4 million	25.7 million
Primary school-age population ('98)	1,597,446	1,679,595	3,400,925
Total enrollment in primary education (1998)	1,705,551	2,457,454	4,144,379
Net Primary Enrollment (%) (1999)	97	97	96
Primary Student/Teacher Ratio (97)	22	28	27
Primary-School Teachers (2001)	38,737	32,279	72,641

Sources: UNESCO, UNDP, WORLD BANK, PREAL

Bolivia's educational situation is characterized by a high percentage of students that continue to leave school and enter the labor market with inadequate quantity and quality of education. Results of the Education Reform; the average amount of years required to graduate from 5th grade was 11 years, and in 2000 that number has been reduced to 7 years. In 1997, the number of children who graduated from 8th grade in the rural schools was 8.2% and; in 2000, the percentage grew to 29.2%. In the same period of time, the graduation rate in the urban areas rose from 28.6% to 64.5%. (IDB, Annual Supervisory Mission, November 2001)

Table 5. Years in school

Year	Avg years of schooling completed for those leaving the school system	Students leaving the school system having completed 12 years (%)
1975	5.5	11
1985	6.5	17
1995	6.9	20

Source: World Bank, Education Quality and Equity Strengthening Project, May 1998.

Bolivia's education indicators show also inequality regarding access to education based on gender. This tendency is most noticeable in rural areas, where the difference of attendance between males and females averages 7.6%; in urban areas, the difference is 3.3%. In both places, the difference tends to intensify with the increasing age of the students.

Table 6. School attendance, Bolivia

Age groups	Urban total (%)	Urban females (%)	Urban males (%)	Rural total (%)	Rural females (%)	Rural males (%)
6 - 14	90.9	90.1	91.6	74.9	71.6	78.1
15 - 19	65.9	63.3	68.6	29.3	24.3	33.8
6 - 19	82.5	80.9	84.2	62.9	59.3	66.2

Source: World Bank, Education Quality and Equity Strengthening Project, May 1998.

Resources

Although the MOE is providing texts to children in the primary grades, very few other materials are available in classrooms. Neither schools nor communities typically have libraries or resource centers. In most rural areas, an oral culture predominates, many adults are illiterate, and reading materials are not available. Computers are not generally available and are not used to teach reading. Internet cafés are common in the cities, but very rare in the countryside. In fact, one of the demands made by farmers has been for Internet cafés in the rural areas.

As mentioned above, the MOE has long-term plans to place a resource center in each *núcleo*. Each such center would have a library, science laboratories for secondary schools, television sets, videos, and possibly computers. These would be for the use of all schools in the *núcleo* and could also be used for distance education programs. The international organization *Fe y Alegría* has plans to develop a network of "telecenters" that could be used for distance education for teachers. The organization FUNDETIC also has plans to make access to a network of Internet cafés available at no cost to teachers and school children. Several of the universities, including La Católica, UN, USFA, and Aquino have Web sites and teleconferencing facilities. USFA has its own radio station and a video production center, La Católica has its own TV station, and both UN and USFA have agreements with ILCE in Mexico, enabling them to use a satellite dish to receive all programs produced by ILCE. There is a proposal to place 120 telesites in the municipalities, which are being decentralized. These could be used on weekends for teacher training.

Best Practices

USFA runs a laboratory school that is used for practice teaching experience by its education students. This school not only has integrated special education students into regular classes, but it also provides special in-class activities for especially talented students. In addition, the school runs a reading incentive program in the primary grades. In one part of this program, children in a class each read a book and summarize it. They then exchange books, so that by the end of the year, each student in the class has read all of the other students' books. Parents interviewed commented on the interesting way in which reading is taught. They felt that their children were learning to enjoy reading. In addition, they stated that their children were happy in the school, that they felt welcome in school, and that the individual attention and warmth had encouraged some very shy children to open up and participate comfortably in school activities.

CEMSE is a resource center serving a network of schools in La Paz. As mentioned previously, this center provides a particularly efficient way to provide library facilities and other resources usually lacking in Bolivian schools. In a program quite unusual in Bolivia, the center also provides *aulas de apoyo*, or classrooms in which children can receive special help during hours when they are not in school. The director commented that they had a good sense of children's needs and difficulties in reading because so many of the children who come to the *aulas de apoyo* need special help in reading.

The UN in Cochabamba publishes a whole set of books and modules used in its education courses. One of their books is devoted to the topic of evaluation; it has a particularly useful section on diagnostic evaluation of reading and writing.

The CBIAE begins by training a group of teachers from the first *ciclo* and continues with a commitment of 80 percent of these teachers and the principal to remain at least three years at the school. The center also asks teachers to promise to spend additional time to help train their peers and thus begin forming a network for those in curriculum design, math, reading, etc. Those coordinating the effort in the school are called *denamizadores* or motivators. The CBIAE training is based on three themes: forming the group teams, improving self-esteem, and developing the educational project within the school.