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Educational Quality Improvement Program
Classrooms • Schools • Communities

EXCELL Project Sixth Quarterly Report
OCTOBER 2004 – DECEMBER 2004



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Sixth Project Quarterly Performance Report: October – December 2004

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Executive summary

The “Excellence in Classroom Education at the Local Level” (EXCELL) Project has been designed to address educational priorities in El Salvador and improve student performance in 250 rural schools, grades K-6. Operating between July 2003 and June 2005, the Project’s interventions are directed at developing principals’ abilities to lead efforts to improve quality in education, strengthen mid-level management capacity in the Ministry of Education (MOE) in support of school principals, strengthen the MOE’s capacity to process and use information about quality in education, and improve production, availability and the use of education research for policy decision-making in this sector.

The Project consists of three components. *Component 1* seeks to strengthen the Ministry of Education’s capacity to improve decentralized school management and modify and implement educational reforms through two sub-components. Sub-Component 1.1 develops strategic planning and management capacity and Sub-Component 1.2 applies monitoring and evaluation systems and research on the Ministry’s information needs and use. *Component 2* is designed to improve learning conditions for student achievement in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals. *Component 3* seeks to extend educational policy research.

During this quarter, the project’s implementation covered tasks in Sub-Component 1.1, including continuing the preparation of training materials and training for MOE Mid-Level Managers. Tasks planned in Component 1.2 included disseminating results of an information uses and needs study, training a team of national researchers on qualitative research and expanding the dissemination of a special education needs study.

Plans for Component 2 included holding a second pedagogical conference, continuing regular communications with MOE personnel at the national and local levels; conducting Quality Reflection Circle sessions; continuing the implementation of Pedagogical Innovation Plans in schools; reporting on the baseline study for this Component; continuing the development and dissemination of materials for use in principal training and technical assistance; and implementing monitoring and evaluation tools for the component.

Component 3 plans included disseminating the results of an Equity and Quality in Education Study and continuing a Teacher Profile study.

Management activities included continuing Consultative Group sessions, presenting and promoting the project with education sector agents and other projects, continuing the implementation of a cost-share strategy, and tracking the project’s Performance Monitoring Plan and instruments.

This document details inputs and outputs for each of the tasks and activities covered between July and September 2004, as well as the achievement of quarterly performance targets. For Sub-Component 1.1 this included preparing, validating and duplicating management training materials in a timely manner, completing 8 school visits, continuing mid-level management training and beginning manager quality reflection circle meetings. For component 1.2 results included publishing and disseminating the final report of the Information Uses and Needs study and undertaking qualitative analysis training for a team of national researchers, including personnel from the MOE National Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation and other research entities.

Results in Component 2 included holding a second pedagogical conference, continuing ongoing communications with the MOE even in the midst of a significant change in MOE authorities and counterparts, expanding the implementation of Pedagogical Innovation Projects in the schools served, holding regularly planned training and Quality Reflection Circle sessions as well as completing most computer training sessions, validating and duplicating training modules as needed, providing at least one technical assistance visit a month (during the school year) to each school served, and monitoring ongoing activities.

Results in Component 3 included disseminating the results of the first study (on Equity and Quality in Education) through a national research forum and continuing the second study (a national quantitative and qualitative teacher profile).

Lessons gained from the Project this quarter concern the need to continue adjusting scheduling to changing MOE need and conditions, the urgency of increasing high-level communication with the MOE authorities, the importance of preparing and implementing a plan for the transfer of project know-how to the MOE over the last stage of the project, the value of Pedagogical Innovation Projects (PIPs) as tools for learning and change at the school and classroom level and for enhanced principal and teacher self-esteem and empowerment, the ongoing challenges in involving MOE personnel in project research and the value of the project's training-reflection-action model.

1 Project summary

The "Excellence in Classroom Education at the Local Level" (EXCELL) Project has been designed to address educational priorities in El Salvador and improve student performance in 250 rural schools, grades K-6. Based on the evidence from international literature on the strategic role of principals in school effectiveness, between July 2003 and June 2005 the Project's will stress development of principals' abilities to lead quality in education improvement efforts in schools, strengthen mid-level management capacity in the Ministry of Education (MOE) in support of school principals, strengthen the MOE's capacity to process and use information about quality in education, and improve production, availability and use of education research for policy decision-making in this sector.

The Project has been structured in three components, as follows.

Component 1. Strengthen the Ministry of Education's capacity to improve decentralized school management and modify and implement educational reforms.
This component is divided into two sub-components.

Sub-Component 1.1 Strategic planning and management capacity development.

Sub-Component 1.2 Application of monitoring and evaluation systems and research.

Component 2. Improve learning conditions for student achievement in at least 250 rural schools, K-6, through training and technical assistance to school principals.

Component 3. Extend educational policy research.

The Project contributes to the MOE's work in the context of USAID/El Salvador Mission's Strategic Objective 1 (Expanded access and economic opportunity for El Salvador's poor rural families).

The Project's conceptual framework builds on a quality in education model that brings together multiple elements such as teacher training, school infrastructure, curricula, textbooks, teacher performance, educational resources, school management, principal leadership, school climate, and time used on academic tasks, among others, within which the principal's role in quality in education in the school is a necessary, albeit insufficient factor. Education is developed with an integrated focus and excellence in the classroom makes evident the system's development. The Project seeks coherence with MOE initiatives and the quality in education model it espouses, the use of tools such as the Strategic Institutional Plan (PEI), as well as the mobilization of inputs from other cooperation agencies in support of the MOE. Additionally, the Project develops a focus seeking to proactively address inequities in access to education due to discrimination for reasons such as gender, socio-economic circumstances and different educational needs.

Among the tasks intended to be completed during the Project's second year are the complete implementation of its three components and of its monitoring and evaluation and cost-sharing strategies, as well as the identification of lessons learned and project finalization.

The Project is being developed through a strategy that includes strengthening leadership, integrated teambuilding, professional development (understood as co-responsibility between personnel (in this case managers and principals) and the institution for professionalization, inclusion of the Project's activities within the MOE's processes and systems, affirmative action as a way to address inequities deriving from diversity, strengthening knowledge-based activities and developing a systems perspective. This strategy has been formalized through a model for support for principals seeking to take this assistance and training to the principals' workplace; a model for support to mid-level management focused on pedagogical processes as the strategic object of management in the sector and on competencies for a positive organizational climate with effective problem solving as its goal; a model for support to research based on the dissemination of results and decision-making in public policy, with a methodological preference for action research as a way to obtain critical constructive thought by the agents of educational reform. In this way they can build knowledge based on practice, linking educational processes with human development, and provide a model supporting monitoring and evaluation in the MOE as a fundamental tool for institutional learning.

The Project is managed through a multidisciplinary team bringing together capacities in institutional management and pedagogical development, education policy, training and material creation methods, and educational research and action research. The team has its own administrative framework and maintains a network of strategic links through a Technical Follow-up group with the MOE and USAID, an informal consultative group for the identification of information, experience and resources that may strengthen the Project, and ongoing communications between EQUIP1 consortium member organizations to ensure a fluid and efficient performance in the field. The Project's management framework is complete with a monitoring strategy that allows for the monthly recovery of information for adjustment through communication with the MOE and USAID, and a cost-sharing strategy that seeks to mobilize resources to complement USAID's financing, both nationally and locally.

2 Technical activities during the reporting period

A summary by component is presented here of the activities defined for the sixth quarter of the project's implementation. In Component 1 (Strengthen Ministry of Education's capacity to improve decentralized school management, modify and implement educational reforms), Sub-Component 1.1 (Strategic planning and management capacity development) included the preparation and dissemination of materials for mid-level management training and technical assistance in task 1.1.2 (Develop T&A materials for mid-level

management) and continuing to conduct training of mid-level managers in task 1.1.3 (training of mid-level managers).

For Sub-Component 1.2 (Application of monitoring and evaluation systems and research) this quarter's program included the dissemination of the results of the information uses and needs study as parts of tasks 1.2.1 (Identifying information needs); continuing training in data processing and analysis in the National Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation in task 1.2.2 (Strengthening data processing capacity in the National Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation); and the dissemination of a study on special education needs in task 1.2.3 (Deepen knowledge of management and quality – extended beyond the fifth quarter).

Planned activities conducted in Component 2 (Improve conditions for learning for student achievement in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals) included a second round of regional pedagogical conferences as part of task 2.2 (Promoting and disseminating information about the EXCELL Project locally), regular meetings with both centrally located and decentralized MOE personnel in task 2.3 (communication and coordination between the Project and its counterparts in the MOE); continue the Quality Reflection Circles for school principals in task 2.4 (organization, planning and operation of Quality Reflection Circles); the development of pedagogical innovation projects in schools under task 2.6 (assist with the identification and assessment of professional development needs); completing the baseline study report as part of task 2.7 (design and implementation of a Baseline Study- delayed after Q4); the development, validation and dissemination of training materials in task 2.8 (adapt/create learning materials); the training and technical assistance for principals, including computer skills training, in task 2.9 (provide training and technical assistance to school principals) and conducting the monitoring of Component 2 in task 2.10 (Monitor technical assistance and training).

For this quarter, activities under Component 3 included the dissemination of the component's Equity and Quality study through a research forum as defined in task 3.1 (conduct a study of equity and quality in education in El Salvador) and implementing the research for the second study – a qualitative study of teachers in El Salvador – under task 3.3 (Conduct research).

Additional management activities this quarter included implementing the project's monitoring tools (delayed after Quarter 3 due to project redesign) and holding monthly monitoring sessions and continuing the consultative group meetings and the implementation of the Project's cost-share strategy.

3 Inputs and outputs by component

This section presents inputs and outputs for each of the tasks and activities scheduled for the Project's sixth quarter.

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
Component 1: Strengthen Ministry of Education's capacity to improve decentralized school management, modify and implement educational reforms			
<i>Sub-component 1.1: Strategic planning and management capacity development</i>			
Task 1.1.2: Develop T&A materials for mid-level Management			
<i>Prepare and validate materials</i>	<i>Mid-level management training and technical assistance plan.</i>	<i>Materials prepared and distributed to mid-level managers in training sessions.</i>	<i>Materials will be uploaded to project web page in January 2005.</i>
<i>Disseminate materials</i>	<i>Comments from MOE and USAID counterparts.</i>		

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
Task 1.1.3: Train mid-level managers			
<i>Deliver mid-level management training</i>	<i>Component 1.1 coordinator, facilitators and trainers. Mid-level management training and technical assistance plan. Specific session programs prepared by trainers and facilitators.</i>	<i>Third set of school visits conducted in EXCELL schools (8 schools). Three training sessions held with each manger group. Three quality reflection circle session held with each group. Technical assistance interventions designed.</i>	<i>Technical assistance will include four specific activities: a manager forum maintained on the MINED website, the compilation of best practices by the managers themselves, a regular e-mailing of "management tips" and the organization of three regional manager follow-up groups.</i>
Sub-Component 1.2: Application of monitoring and evaluation systems and research			
Task 1.2.1: Identify information needs			
<i>Identifying current uses and needs of information among managers in the MOE</i>	<i>Final study report.</i>	<i>300 copies of final copy report.</i>	<i>Report is being distributed to key users in the MOE.</i>
Task 1.2.2: Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate's data processing and analysis capacity			
<i>Procure and install hardware and software</i>	<i>Purchase orders for standard cassette and micro-cassette transcribers and recorders.</i>	<i>Transcribers and recorders.</i>	
Task 1.2.3: Deepen knowledge of management and quality			
<i>Disseminate study results</i>	<i>Study report.</i>	<i>Study report reprints (500 copies).</i>	<i>Reprint of study was made to respond to persistent demand after first print was used up.</i>
Component 2: Improve conditions for learning for student achievement in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals			
Task 2.2: Promote and disseminate information about EXCELL locally			
<i>Follow-up workshops (pedagogical conferences)</i>	<i>Workshop design Experiences by principals participating in EXCELL and other schools. International Consultant.</i>	<i>Series of three identical pedagogical conferences held November 29-30 and December 1.</i>	<i>Pedagogical conferences involved EXCELL principals, teachers, pedagogical advisors and special guests. Principals and teachers presented results of the implementation of Pedagogical Innovation Projects. Dr. María Bove, mobilized by the Joseph P. Kennedy foundation, was the keynote speaker.</i>
Task 2.3: Communication and coordination between the Project and its counterparts in the MOE			
<i>Meetings with MOE headquarters</i>	<i>Ongoing coordination needs.</i>	<i>Regular bi-weekly meetings held.</i>	
<i>Meetings with MOE decentralized offices</i>	<i>Ongoing coordination needs.</i>	<i>Meetings held on ad-hoc basis.</i>	

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
Task 2.4: Organize principal Quality Reflection Circles (QRC)			
<i>Conduct QRC activities</i>	<i>QRC meeting schedule for the rest of 2004. Facilitators and technical assistants.</i>	<i>One monthly QRC meeting held with principals in all departments.</i>	<i>Principals continue to participate enthusiastically on Saturdays.</i>
Task 2.6: Assist with the identification and assessment of professional development needs			
<i>Implement Pedagogical Innovation Projects (PIPs)</i>	<i>Principal training and technical assistance plan. MOE guidelines. Model for PIP. PIP documents prepared in schools. Feedback from school visits by Field and Office Teams.</i>	<i>PIPs implemented in schools by principals and teachers. Results of PIPs presented in pedagogical conference.</i>	<i>The PIPs continue to show progress and initiatives at the school level, and are discussed in QRCs and school visits.</i>
Task 2.7: Design and implementation of a Baseline Study			
<i>Implement baseline study</i>	<i>Baseline draft report. Comments from EXCELL team.</i>	<i>Baseline study final report presented to EXCELL team.</i>	
Task 2.8: Adapt or create learning materials			
<i>Validate and adjust materials</i>	<i>Module drafts. Comments from field team and other EXCELL members. Comments to draft of class guides for language and mathematics.</i>	<i>Final versions of all sessions for modules II and III.</i>	<i>Printed version of class guides will be distributed in January.</i>
<i>Reproduce and distribute materials</i>	<i>Final versions of modules and class guides. Infocentros' technical expertise.</i>	<i>Sessions 2, 3 and 4 of module II distributed to principals in training sessions. Computer skills module distributed to principals by Infocentros. Class guides for language and mathematics printed (600 copies).</i>	
Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance			
<i>Provide training and technical assistance</i>	<i>Principal Training and Technical Assistance Plan. Principal technical assistance needs. Feedback from training sessions and technical assistance visits. Agreement with Asociación Infocentros.</i>	<i>Training sessions held on Fridays as per plan. Technical assistance school visits planned and conducted on a monthly basis by facilitators and technical assistants. Computer training sessions with Asociación Infocentros completed in most locations.</i>	
Task 2.10: Monitor technical assistance and training			
<i>Develop and implement monitoring for Component 2</i>	<i>International consultant. Feedback from USAID counterparts. Feedback from Baseline Study draft report. School visits by EXCELL COP, Quality Manager and M&E Specialist.</i>	<i>M&E data from school visits.</i>	

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
Component 3: Extend Educational Policy research			
Task 3.1: Conduct a study of education and poverty in El Salvador			
<i>Conduct Study 1 (Education, Equity and Development)</i>	<i>Final version of education quality and equity report. International consultant in charge of education quality and equity study. International expert on compensatory programs in education. National representatives from MOE, Legislature and expert on economics and public finance.</i>	<i>Research forum conducted with participation of researcher and national and international commentators. Study results presented to National Education Commission. Study report disseminated at research forum and through direct mailing.</i>	
Task 3.3: Conduct research			
<i>Conduct study 2</i>	<i>Terms of reference for study on quantitative and qualitative teacher profile. National quantitative research specialist. International qualitative research specialist. National researchers from FLACSO, FEPADE, Centro Alfa and MOE. N6 software.</i>	<i>Draft of quantitative teacher profile. Taped interviews of teacher focus groups held in all 14 departments. Transcriptions of interviews from 5 department. Coding of transcriptions with N6.</i>	
Monitoring and Evaluation			
Conduct monthly monitoring meeting	Monitoring tools. Baseline study final report. Requirement for bi-weekly USAID update.	Monitoring meeting held on a monthly basis.	
Produce quarterly reports	Data from EXCELL team members.	Fifth quarterly report submitted and approved.	

4 Summary data regarding number of beneficiaries assisted (October – December 2004)

4.1 Improve the MOE's capacity to implement policy

4.1.1 Training of mid-level MOE managing team

Activities in Sub-Component 1.1 of the Project for the sixth quarter of the project's implementation included completing the third set of school visits, training sessions and quality reflection circles for mid-level managers.

Activity	Category	Female		Male		Total	
		N	%	n	%	n	%
School visits (8 schools in 1 days)	Mid-level managers	22	52	20	48	42	100
	Others	6	55	5	45	11	100
	Total	28	53	25	47	53	100
Training sessions	Mid-level managers	210	52	191	48	401	100
	Others	34	72	13	28	47	100
	Total	244	54	204	46	448	100

Activity	Category	Female		Male		Total	
		N	%	n	%	n	%
Quality reflection circles	Mid-level managers	191	53	167	47	358	100
	Others	11	52	10	48	21	100
	Total	202	53	177	47	379	100

4.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation system development

Between October and December 2004 Sub-Component 1.2 involved continuing technical assistance for the National Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation and researchers from FLACSO, FEPADE and Centro Alfa through the development of the qualitative teacher study.

Institution	Male	Female	Total
• MOE – DNME	1	1	2
• Centro Alfa		1	1
• FEPADE	1		1
• FLACSO		1	1
• Independent researcher	1	1	2
Total	3	4	7

Additional beneficiaries included recipients of the second printing of the Special Education Needs study (500 copies). Notably, this included 20 students in the graduate program in education policy in Universidad Centroamericana (UCA).

4.2 Improve the effectiveness and quality of school administration to provide quality education to students between kindergarten and sixth grade

Activities in Component 2 benefited principals and Pedagogical Advisors involved in the principal training and technical assistance process, including training sessions, Quality Reflection Circle Sessions and computer training sessions, and principals and teachers in Technical Assistance visits to schools in the six departments covered by EXCELL. Participation in training activities and Quality Reflection Circles can be seen in the following table.

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participants in training sessions ¹						
Principals	414	61	264	39	678	100
Pedagogical advisors	7	50	7	50	14	100
Others	15	45	13	39	33	100
Participants in Quality Reflection Circle meetings						
Principals	217	50	213	50	430	100
Pedagogical advisors	6	60	4	40	10	100
Others	11	61	7	39	18	100
Participants in computer training sessions	610	59	426	41	1036	100

No training sessions and quality circles were held in December due to the end-of-year vacations.

¹ Number refers to instances of services provided or activities conducted with individuals.

A total of 267 technical assistance visits were made to the schools served by the project between October and December 2004. The scope of these is shown in the following table.

Number of schools	250
Visits planned	461
Visits conducted	446
Percentage success	97
Average visits per school	1.78

The number of visits in this quarter decreased because no visits were programmed after the end of the school year (November 19).

Additionally, three identical pedagogical conferences were held with principals, teachers and pedagogical advisors from the three regions served by EXCELL. Details of attendance are summarized below.

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Principals	147	59	103	41	250	100%
Teachers	252	74	90	26	342	100%
Pedagogical advisors	22	55	18	45	40	100%
Others	39	51	37	49	76	100%
Total	460	65	248	35	708	100%

4.3 Enhance the analysis of educational reform

Direct beneficiaries under component 3 included the members of the Research Committee, the researchers in the teacher profile study already included in section 4.1.2, above, and 85 participants in the Equity in Education research forum (49 female and 36 male).

5 Problems encountered and solutions proposed

Problem issues and solutions encountered during the Project's sixth quarter are discussed in the following table.

Issues	Solutions Proposed	Results of Solution (if implemented)
General Project Implementation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education has instructed the project that all training activities in MOE be conducted exclusively on Saturdays. 	Maintain scheduling for this year and reschedule activities for 2005.	With support from USAID, MOE accepted proposal. Training activities for Sub-Component 1.1 will be conducted on Fridays and Saturdays and for Component 2 exclusively on Saturdays.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOE and USAID have confirmed that the project in its current form will end on June 2005. 	Project know-how transfer for Subcomponent 1.1 and Component 2 has begun to be planned with project team and counterparts.	

Issues	Solutions Proposed	Results of Solution (if implemented)
Component 1		
Sub-Component 1.1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance to training sessions is uneven: participants are summoned from MOE for a variety of reasons. Some participants only attended the initial session and others didn't attend any activities at all. 	<p>Review list of participants and remove those that have not taken part in any activities or cannot complete 80% attendance requirement. Remind participants of their commitment to 80% attendance.</p>	<p>MOE sent note to participants. List was revised and confirmed.</p>
Sub-Component 1.2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No outstanding issues. 		
Component 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some Infocentros localities had problems with scheduling and attendance. 	<p>Activities rescheduled for weekdays to take advantage of year-end vacation.</p>	<p>Time lost was made up, and only a few sessions for some groups left for January 2005.</p>
Component 3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No outstanding issues. 		
Monitoring and Evaluation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research, Monitoring and Evaluation specialist and Quality Manager have collected data, but have insufficient time available to complete scheduled data collection. 	<p>Monitoring team will be contracted to conduct data collection and processing as of January 2005.</p>	<p>Monitoring team positions advertised through newspaper. Selection and contracting will occur in January 2005.</p>

6 Results and project performance targets

This section reports progress for the sixth quarter on activities as defined in the latest approved revision of the Annual Plan (■: goal achieved; ■: goal pending or reprogrammed for next quarter).

IR 1: Strengthen the Ministry of Education's capacity to improve decentralized school management and modify and implement educational reforms		
Tasks and Activities	Production Goals	Comments
Component 1: Improve management and information strategies		
Sub-component 1.1: Strengthen capacity		
Task 1.1.2: Develop mid-level management T&A materials	Materials prepared, validated and duplicated in time for delivery at each session.	
Task 1.1.3: Train mid-level managers	Training conducted according to program.	
Sub-component 1.2: Apply M+E systems and research		
Task 1.2.1: Identify information needs	Uses and needs study disseminated.	
Task 1.2.2: Strengthen data processing capacity	Training in qualitative methods under way.	Training is running parallel with second study under Component 3.
Task 1.2.3: Deepen knowledge about relations between management and quality in education	<i>Task extended:</i> disseminate results of special education needs study	A second printing of the special education needs study was made (500 copies) and distributed entirely, given the large demand for it.

IR 2: Student achievement improved in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals		
Tasks and Activities	Production Goals	Comments
Component 2: Improve achievement through T&A		
Task 2.2: Promote and disseminate information about EXCELL locally	Second pedagogical conference held.	
Task 2.3 Sustain communications with MOE	Meetings held according to plan and needs.	
Task 2.4: Organize principal QRCs	QRC activities held according to plan.	
Task 2.6: Assist with the identification and assessment of professional development needs	Pedagogical Innovation Plans implemented according to principal's commitments.	Best practices in development of Pedagogical Innovation Plans were presented in the second pedagogical conference.
Task 2.7: Conduct baseline study	Baseline study report received.	
Task 2.8: Adapt/create learning materials	100% of materials validated. 66% of materials reproduced and distributed.	All modules completed and validated. Distribution proceeding with each session as planned (only last module pending for 2005, as per program). Computer skills training material prepared and distributed by Infocentros in computer training sessions. Class guides for language and mathematics completed.
Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance	Training and technical assistance provided according to program.	Second module completed according to program. Third module will be developed between February and May 2005. Computer skills training module conducted and completed with most principals. Last sessions will be held with three groups in January 2005.

IR 2: Student achievement improved in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals		
Tasks and Activities	Production Goals	Comments
Task 2.10: Monitor training and technical assistance	Monitoring conducted according to program.	Final monitoring tools now being implemented by Component 2 manager, field team and M&E specialist.

IR 3: Policy dialogue generated through educational policy research and forums		
Tasks and Activities	Production Goals	Comments
Component 3: Research in education policy		
Task 3.1: Conduct equity and education study	Research forum for study 1 conducted.	Research forum conducted in October 2004.
Task 3.3: Conduct research	Study 2 under way.	Implementation coordinated with training of research team in qualitative methods under Sub-Component 1.2.

7 Management Information

7.1 Intelligence about the sector and its context

During this quarter, two issues concerning the education sector had an impact upon the project. The first of these is the instruction from the minister to conduct all training activities exclusively on Saturdays. This issue posed a serious short-term challenge to scheduling and agreements already reached with participants and MOE officials. Fortunately, this issue was adequately resolved with the timely intervention of USAID in favor of both the EXCELL and EDIFAM projects. A second, more complex issue has been the difficulty of maintaining an ongoing high-level communications with the MOE. The monthly meetings previously held with the counterpart team and minister and/or viceminister have now all but been suspended. This matter should be discussed further with USAID/El Salvador.

Additional information about the sector is obtained through meetings with international cooperation agencies in the sector and COP and team member participation in a variety of sector functions organized by the MOE and other organizations.

7.2 Information about relations with counterparts and partners in implementation

Despite the challenges to communication with the MOE at the upper level, regular technical communications, continue to be held as per scheduling with the counterparts for each of the components and have served to resolve issues as these arise.

7.3 Information about Project implementation and operation

Overall project staff meetings and component-specific meetings continue to be held on a weekly basis to review technical and administrative issues.

A quarterly update bulletin was again distributed electronically to all MOE HQ counterparts, other MOE personnel and other sector agents, and in paper form to all principals taking part in Sub-Component 1.1 and Component 2 training, as well as to

other contacts. The EXCELL webpage on the EQUIP1 site² also continues to be updated regularly with project information and project documents.

Taking advantage of the reduced workload, a special lessons learnt workshop was conducted in December to identify key findings from the design and implementation of the project so far. The facilitator has presented a report which, after review, will be disseminated to all stakeholders in January 2005.

8 Management activities

8.1 Organization

No further changes in project organization have been undertaken.

8.2 Staffing

Staffing remained stable for the quarter under report. Positions were published for four monitoring data collectors who will be contracted in January 2005.

International technical assistance included:

- Presentation of the education and equity study by the researcher;
- Presentation by an international expert on compensatory programs in education in the equity in education forum;
- Technical assistance on gender focus in materials and training for Sub-Component 1.1 and Component 2;
- Technical assistance to the national research team for the qualitative teacher study;
- Technical assistance from the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation for the Component 2 field team on special education needs and presentation on inclusive education in the pedagogical conferences;
- Technical assistance on management training for the Sub-Component 1.1 training team;
- Facilitation for the lessons learnt workshop.

8.3 Procurement

Procurement for this quarter included four transcribers to be used in the qualitative teacher study and then transferred to the MOE Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation as per project design for sub-component 1.2.

8.4 Management visits

Management visits for the quarter included the AED financial backstop in charge of EXCELL who provided technical assistance on project accounting and documentation, and the EQUIP1 deputy director, who took part in the lessons learnt workshop.

² <http://www.equip123.net/equip1/excell>

8.5 Coordinated Activities

Key coordination initiatives included:

- Preparation of two articles on quality in education for publication in the MOE bulletin by the project Quality Manager.
- Review and selection of proposals for the development of language and mathematics teaching modules with human development content in coordination with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report Project.
- Presentation of the book donation of over 17,000 language, mathematics and science textbooks for all 250 schools. The Minister of Education and the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador held a joint press conference covered by all the main printed, radio and television media.

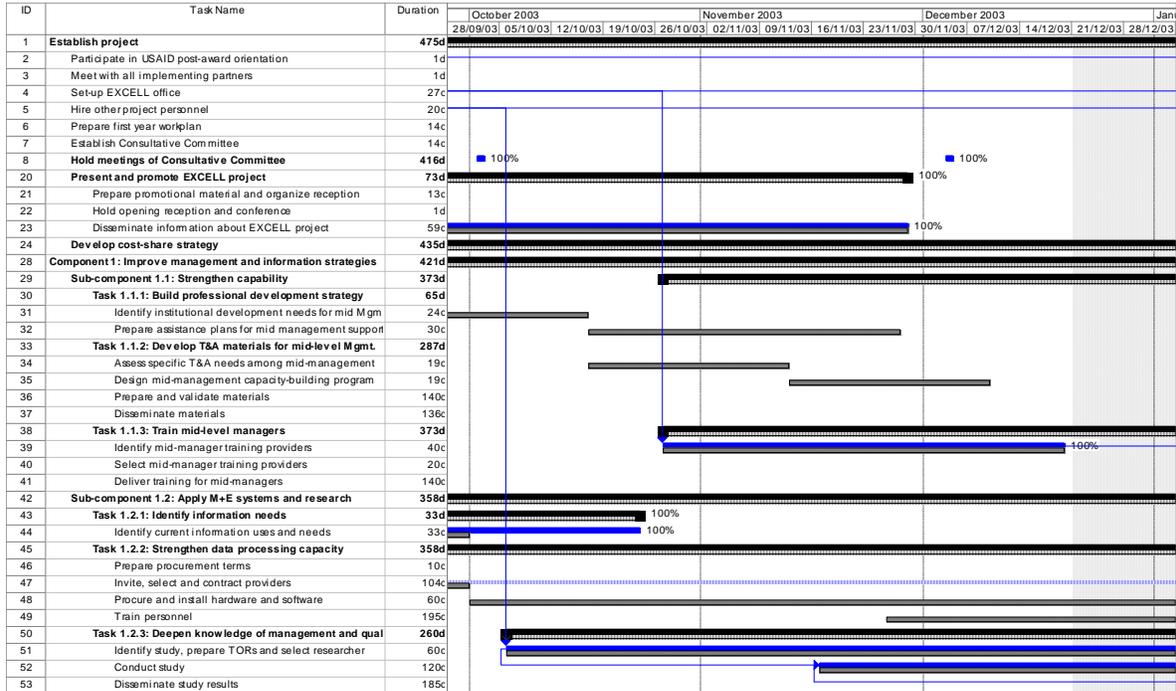
8.6 Progress on alliance formation

The working relationship with Asociación Infocentros has continued through the implementation of the computer training module for principals. Associations with FLACSO, FEPADE and Centro Alfa were further developed as agreements were signed for the implementation of the qualitative teacher study and will lead to a joint publication in 2005. Ongoing communication with the U.S. Embassy Office for Public Affairs made it possible to obtain the book grant from the International Book Bank and will be followed up with a second donation.

9 Timeline of activities

The following Gantt charts present activities completed or rescheduled to be conducted within the sixth quarter.³ Rescheduling is charted against the original schedule. In some cases this means original activities were redefined or cancelled.

9.1 Project Setup and Component 1



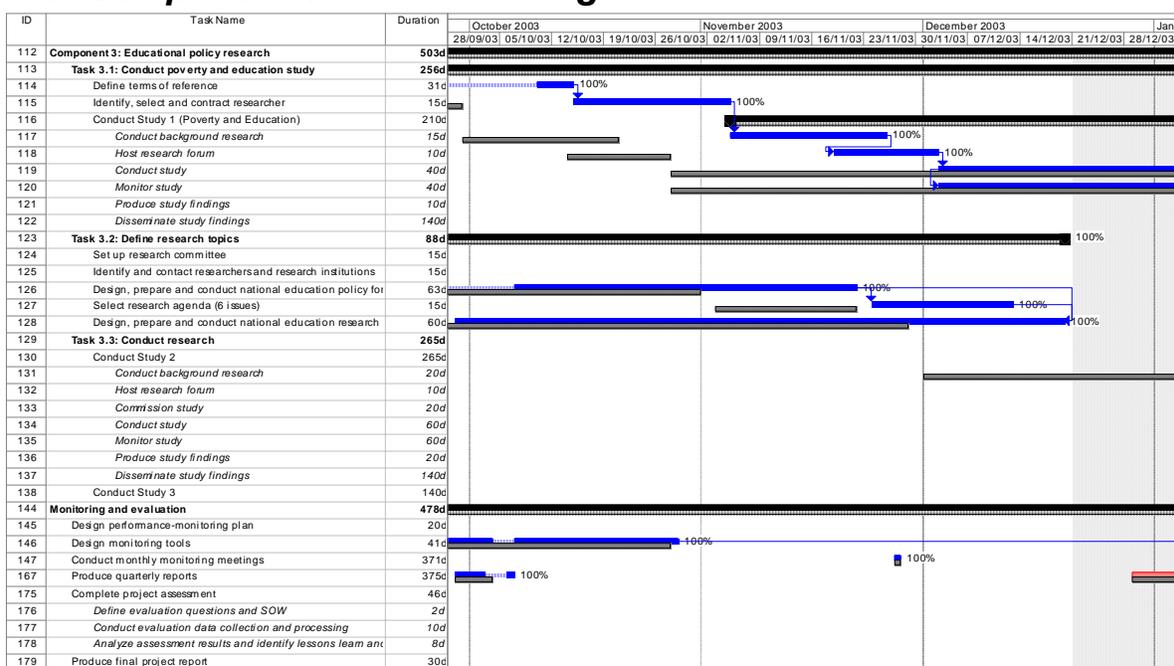
³ Notes:

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Critical | | Baseline | | Project summary | |
| Critical split | | Baseline split | | External task | |
| Critical progress | | Baseline milestone | | External milestone | |
| Task | | Milestone | | Deadline | |
| Split | | Summary progress | | | |
| Task progress | | Summary | | | |

9.2 Component 2

ID	Task Name	Duration	October 2003			November 2003			December 2003			Jan	
			28/09/03	05/10/03	12/10/03	19/10/03	26/10/03	02/11/03	09/11/03	16/11/03	23/11/03		30/11/03
54	Component 2: Improve achievement through T&A	609d											
55	Task 2.1: Identify and train Department Quality Facilitators	114d											
56	Identify, select and contract Quality Coordinators	20c											
57	Design and implement Quality Coordinator training	15c											
58	Conduct follow-up training	5d											
59	Task 2.2: Promote and disseminate info. about EXCELL loca	419d											
60	Design promotion strategy	30c											
61	Present project to Mid-Level Managers (workshop in SS)	1d											
62	Present project to Technical Department Teams (regional)	10c											
63	Regional presentation TDT San Miguel	1d											
64	Regional presentation TDT San Salvador	1d											
65	Regional presentation TDT La Libertad	1d											
66	Sensitization workshops	10c											
70	Meetings with international organizations	5d											
71	regional meetings with coordinators and advisors	10c											
72	Pedagogical conferences	202c											
73	First pedagogical conferences	20d											
74	Second pedagogical conference	20d											
75	Third pedagogical conference	20d											
76	Task 2.3: Manage ongoing communication with MOE	470d											
77	Meetings with MINED professional development directive	470c											
78	Meetings with MINED regional professional development	470c											
79	Task 2.4: Organize principal QRC	576d											
80	Establish QRC	50c											
81	Design QRC plans	20c											
82	Conduct QRC activities	485c											
83	Task 2.5: Design training program	76d											
84	Prepare profile of schools and principals	26c											
85	Define training and technical assistance model	10c											
86	Design training and technical assistance plan	20c											
87	Validate and complete training and technical assistance p	20c											
88	Task 2.6: Assist with the identification and assesment of prc	148d											
89	Design pedagogical innovation plans	148c											
90	Task 2.7: Conduct baseline study	115d											
91	Design terms of reference for baseline study	23c											
92	Identify, select and contract provider for baseline study	60c											
93	Implement baseline study	30c											
94	Task 2.8: Adap/creat learning materials	407d											
95	Review existing materials	10c											
96	Design terms of reference for materials	5d											
97	Identify, select and contract provider for materials	20c											
98	Adapt/create modules	159c											
99	Validate and adjust materials	159c											
100	Reproduce and distribute materials	330c											
101	Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance	395d											
102	Design terms of reference for training providers	20c											
103	Identify potential training organizations	5d											
104	Invite, select and contract service providers	10c											
105	Conduct orientation of service providers	10c											
106	Invite, identify and select technical assistance providers	20c											
107	Identify needs for technical assistance	5d											
108	Conduct orientation for technical assistance providers	5d											
109	Coordinate technical assistance activities	5d											
110	Provide technical assistance	300c											
111	Task 2.10 Monitor technical assistance and training	295d											

9.3 Component 3 and Monitoring and Evaluation



10 Cost Share

The EXCELL project has contributed a total of \$270,712.00 in cost share. This total includes the \$5,804 cost share contributions from this quarter.

Participants in the Component 2 CIRECA and Component 1.1 trainings have donated an accumulated total 1788 hours of their personal time on Saturdays to take part in project activities this quarter. This time has been valued at \$5,804 worth of cost share.

In the sixth quarter the EXCELL project began coordination with the Baltimore based company, the International Book Bank for a second shipment of over 30,000 donated books. The final coordination and shipment of the second batch of donated books will take place in the next quarter. The value of this book donation will be included in next quarter's cost share report.

11 Lessons learned and recommendations

This section summarizes key lessons learned from the Project's implementation during this quarter. Each lesson is followed by specific recommendations signaled by bulleted paragraphs.

Implementation of the project's training and technical assistance activities under Sub-Component 1.1 and Component 2 have been challenged by the requirement to conduct all training on Saturdays. This was adequately addressed in rescheduling for 2005. Furthermore, attendance by mid-level managers continues to be challenged by conflicting demands from the MOE itself.

- In face of the changes in scheduling, attendance to training sessions and quality reflection circles will need to be monitored very closely in 2005 and corrective action taken as soon as possible in order to ensure project results.*

- *Ongoing communications with the MOE must seek MOE fulfillment of commitments to allow participants to complete their training activities.*

High-level communication with the MOE about the project has diminished after the change of administration, at least in part due to the intensive activity undertaken by the new administration.

- *Management focus for the next quarter must seek to improve strategic communication with the MOE. The presentation of lessons learnt and technical know-how transfer should help in this.*
- *Future project interventions and USAID initiatives should explore the possibility of support to the MOE to improve time management issues.*

The Pedagogical Innovation Projects (PIPs) have proved to be a valuable resource in focusing training and technical assistance at the school and classroom level. Furthermore, the presentation of examples from participating schools in the pedagogical conferences boosted participants' self-confidence and moral.

- *The project must continue to use the PIPs as critical training and transformation resources, revising and improving their methodology over the next two quarters.*
- *A special effort must be made to offer participants further opportunities to demonstrate their results to each other and become empowered about the various training and reflection activities.*

Emphasizing the nature of studies under Component 3 as opportunities for training improved the involvement of MOE personnel in these and helped to establish a functional "research community" around the qualitative profile. However, it continues to be difficult to ensure MOE personnel presence as scheduled.

- *Ongoing communications with the DNME director must focus on ensuring that DNME personnel are accorded the time needed to fulfill their commitments in the Project.*

Project monitoring has continued to be difficult, given the multiple demands on personnel.

- *Monitoring must be designed as an independent task and accorded the time, human resources and budget required to function independently from other project tasks and demands.*

The project implementation continues to show valuable results in terms of the training-reflection-action model and of the various interventions it implies.

- *As the project comes to a close, it is increasingly important to devise and implement the means to transfer knowledge acquired to other local entities, including the MOE itself, national universities and NGOs and other cooperation agents.*

Annex 1: Level of effort

Team Member	Level of Effort (in days)			
	October	November	December	Total
Chief of Party	16	22	16	54
Quality Manager	21	22	13	56
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	21	22	13	56
Management Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator	21	22	13	56
Administrative and Financial Manager	21	22	13	56
Quality Facilitators for Component 2 (6)	126	132	78	336
Quality Assistants for Component 2 (6)	126	132	78	336
Training specialist for Component 2	21	22	13	56
Trainers for Component 2	16	22	0	38
Training Facilitators for Sub-Component 1.1 (4)	21	22	13	56
Trainers for Sub-Component 1.1	12	12	12	36
Administrative Assistants (5)	105	110	65	280
General Services	21	22	13	56
Driver	21	22	13	56
TOTAL	569	606	353	1528