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Educational Quality Improvement Program
Classrooms • Schools • Communities

EXCELL Project Seventh Quarterly Report
JANUARY 2005 – MARCH 2005

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Seventh Project Quarterly Performance Report: January – March 2005

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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 included preparing and disseminating training materials and continuing training for mid-level management in Sub-Component 1.1. Tasks planned in Component 1.2 included completing training of a team of national researchers on qualitative research.

Plans for Component 2 included continuing regular communications with MOE personnel at the national and local levels; regularly facilitating Quality Reflection Circle sessions; completing the development and dissemination of materials for use in principal training and technical assistance; training and providing technical assistance for principals; and generating monitoring information about the component.

Component 3 plans included completing a Teacher Profile study and beginning its dissemination.

Management activities included continuing Consultative Group sessions, continuing the implementation of a cost-share strategy, and tracking the project’s performance.

This document details inputs and outputs for each of the tasks and activities covered between January and March 2005, 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 and conducting mid-level management training and quality reflection circle sessions as planned. For component 1.2 results included completing the training of 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 sustaining ongoing communications with the MOE, especially concerning know-how transfer to the MOE about project processes, holding regularly planned training and Quality Reflection Circle sessions as well as completing all computer training sessions, completing and validating all training modules, providing at least one technical assistance visit a month (during the school year) to each school served, and monitoring ongoing activities. Further results here included the distribution of 83 books to each school and the delivery of over 32,000 books to the MOE.

Results in Component 3 included completing the report for the second study (a national quantitative and qualitative teacher profile).

Lessons gained from the Project this quarter concern the importance of scheduling training in a way that protects children's time in school but is also sensitive to teachers' and principals' personal needs; the value of empowering participants while making them aware of their co-responsibility with the institution in professional development, the importance of transferring of project know-how to the MOE over the last stage of the project; the need to involve pedagogical advisors as effective facilitators of principal and teacher empowerment, the usefulness of a "train-the-trainer" model in which facilitator's skills are enhanced on the job; the need to consider, address, or adjust for, local contractor's and counterparts' institutional strengthening needs; the importance of assigning specific resources to monitoring; and the need to either plan longer lasting interventions or make more realistic assumptions concerning projects that develop complex interventions involving multiple agents, as is the case of EXCELL.

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 seventh 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 completing the preparation and continuing the 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 completing 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).

Planned activities in Component 2 (Improve conditions for learning for student achievement in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals) included continuing 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); continuing 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, extended from Q6); continuing the dissemination of training materials for school principals in task 2.8 (adapt/create learning materials); continuing training and technical assistance for principals, including completing 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 completing the research for the second study – a qualitative study of teachers in El Salvador – and beginning the dissemination of its results under task 3.3 (Conduct research).

Additional management activities this quarter included continuing the implementation of the project's monitoring tools and holding monthly monitoring sessions and continuing the consultative group meetings and the continued 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 seventh 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 were completed for all remaining training activities.</i>	<i>Remaining material (modules 3 and 4) will be uploaded to project web page in April 2005.</i>
<i>Disseminate materials</i>	<i>Comments from MOE and USAID counterparts.</i>	<i>Final distribution will occur in April training sessions. Modules 1 and 2 have been uploaded to EXCELL web page.</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. Design for technical assistance interventions.</i>	<i>Five training sessions held with all except one manger group. Three quality reflection circle session held with all except two manager groups. Three regional meetings and one workshop held with manager follow-up group). On-line forum set up on MOE website.</i>	<i>Group 6 pending session 3, Module 4, programmed for April. Groups 11 and 12 pending third quality reflection circle for April.</i>
Sub-Component 1.2: Application of monitoring and evaluation systems and research			
Task 1.2.2: Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate's data processing and analysis capacity			
<i>Train personnel</i>	<i>Transcribers and recorders N6 software Direct and on-line training by specialist consultant.</i>	<i>Qualitative research skills developed among MOE-DNME staff, researchers from FEPADE, Centro Alfa and FLACSO and local researchers contracted by EXCELL.</i>	<i>Output of this activity relates to study 2 under task 3.3.</i>
Component 2: Improve conditions for learning for student achievement in 250 rural schools through training and technical assistance to school principals			
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. Know-how transfer plans for Component 2.</i>	<i>Regular management bi-weekly meetings held. Three project know-how transfer sessions held with managers and staff in MOE National Education Directorate.</i>	<i>Meetings resulted in the identification of key ways in which the MOE may use lessons learnt from EXCELL's implementation.</i>
<i>Meetings with MOE decentralized offices</i>	<i>Ongoing coordination needs.</i>	<i>Meetings held on ad-hoc basis.</i>	<i>As a result of transfer meetings with headquarters, a meeting will be held to transfer information about the status of each EXCELL school to the pedagogical advisors.</i>
Task 2.4: Organize principal Quality Reflection Circles (QRC)			
<i>Conduct QRC activities</i>	<i>QRC meeting schedule for 2005. Facilitators and technical assistants. Quality in education technical assistance consultant</i>	<i>One monthly QRC meeting held with principals in all departments.</i>	<i>Principals continue to participate enthusiastically on Saturdays. Facilitators and assistants receive support and guidance from a specialist consultant contracted to enhance their work.</i>

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
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.</i>	<i>The PIPs have been identified as a valuable resource and continue to be used as a means for training and transformation at the school level.</i>
Task 2.8: Adapt or create learning materials			
<i>Reproduce and distribute materials</i>	<i>Final versions of modules. Printed copies of class guides.</i>	<i>Sessions 1 and 2 of module III distributed to principals in training sessions. Class guides for language and mathematics distributed (2 for each school).</i>	<i>Additional Class Guides were distributed in MOE headquarters.</i>
Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance			
<i>Provide training and technical assistance</i>	<i>Principal Training and Technical Assistance Plan. Principal training session schedule for 2005. Principal technical assistance needs. Feedback from training sessions and technical assistance visits. Agreement with Asociación Infocentros.</i>	<i>Training sessions held on Saturdays as per schedule agreed with MOE. Technical assistance school visits planned and conducted on a monthly basis by facilitators and technical assistants. Computer training sessions with Asociación Infocentros completed in pending locations (Santa Tecla).</i>	<i>As part of its cost-share agreement, Asociación Infocentros will provide free advanced training for the 50 best participants, to be developed in April and May 2005.</i>
Task 2.10: Monitor technical assistance and training			
<i>Develop and implement monitoring for Component 2</i>	<i>Feedback from USAID counterparts. School visits by EXCELL Quality Manager, M&E Specialist and monitoring team (3 consultants).</i>	<i>M&E data from school visits. Preliminary monitoring report.</i>	<i>Results included as an annex to this quarterly report.</i>
Component 3: Extend Educational Policy research			
Task 3.3: Conduct research			
<i>Conduct study 2</i>	<i>National quantitative research specialist. International qualitative research specialist. National researchers from MOE, FLACSO, FEPADE, Centro Alfa and EXCELL. N6 software.</i>	<i>Results of quantitative teacher study presented to MOE management team (CONACORE). Results of qualitative teacher study discussed with USAID CTO. Draft version of qualitative teacher profile.</i>	
Monitoring and Evaluation			
<i>Conduct monthly monitoring meeting</i>	<i>Monitoring tools. Baseline study final report. Monitoring team Requirement for bi-weekly USAID update.</i>	<i>Monitoring meeting held on a monthly basis.</i>	

Tasks and Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Comments
Produce quarterly reports	Data from EXCELL team members.	Sixth quarterly report submitted and approved.	

4 Summary data regarding number of beneficiaries assisted (January – March 2005)

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 seventh quarter of the project's implementation included completing a fourth set of school visits, training sessions and Quality Reflection Circles for mid-level managers.

Activity	Category	Female		Male		Total	
		N	%	n	%	n	%
Training sessions	Mid-level managers	368	53%	325	47%	693	100%
	Others	64	71%	26	29%	90	100%
	Total	432	55%	351	45%	783	100%
	Average per session (6)	72	55%	58.5	45%	131	100%
Quality Reflection Circles	Mid-level managers	140	54%	120	46%	260	100%
	Others	5	45%	6	55%	11	100%
	Total	145	54%	126	46%	271	100%
	Average per session (3)	48.3	54%	42	46%	90.3	100%

4.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation system development

Between January and March 2005 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 the 35 members of the National Directorate for Monitoring and Evaluation (DNME) (13 female and 22 male), involved in a workshop to discuss the follow up to the results of the Information Uses and Needs study, and 126 mid-level managers (64 female and 62 male) who took part in training sessions on January 8, 14 and 21, when results of the Information Uses and Needs study were presented.

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 the last computer training sessions, and principals and teachers in Technical Assistance visits to schools in the six departments covered by EXCELL. The following table shows participation in training activities and Quality Reflection Circles.

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participants in training sessions ¹						
Principals	244	57%	184	43%	428	100%
Pedagogical advisors	7	54%	6	46%	13	100%
Others	16	76%	5	24%	21	100%
Total	267	58%	195	42%	462	100%
Average per month (2)	133.5	58%	97.5	42%	231	100%
Participants in Quality Reflection Circle meetings						
Principals	365	62%	222	38%	587	100%
Pedagogical advisors	8	73%	3	27%	11	100%
Others	29	66%	15	34%	44	100%
Total	402	63%	240	37%	642	100%
Average per month (3)	134	63%	80	37%	214	100%
Participants in computer training sessions ²	25	51%	24	49%	49	100%

¹No training sessions were held in January.

²Comprising last remaining sessions and groups (sessions 6, 7 and 8, group Santa Tecla B and session 7 and 8, group Santa Tecla A)

A total of 232 technical assistance visits were made to the schools served by the project between January and March 2004. The scope of these is shown in the following table.

Number of schools	250
Visits planned	217
Visits conducted	232
Percentage success	107%
Average visits per school	0.93

Two factors affected the technical assistance visit schedule this quarter: on the one hand, visits didn't begin until January 17, when schools opened, and schools were closed for one week in March for the Easter break.

Additionally, 88 MOE officials took part in workshops for the transfer of know-how from the project to the MOE, as detailed below.

Activity	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transfer workshop for managers and staff from the Manager's Office for Quality Monitoring (Gerencia de Seguimiento a la Calidad) (January 19 and 20)	6	30%	14	70%	20	100%

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

Activity	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transfer workshop for managers and staff from the Manager's Offices for Instruction, Institutional Development and Complementary Projects (Gestión Pedagógica, Gestión Institucional y Proyectos Complementarios) (February 10)	17	74%	6	26%	23	100%
Transfer session with staff from the technical area for curriculum (Jefatura del Área Académica - Currículo) (February 17)	7	39%	11	61%	18	100%
Transfer workshop for staff from the Manager's Office for Complementary Projects (March 9)	18	67%	9	33%	27	100%
Total	48	55%	40	45%	88	100%

4.3 Enhance the analysis of educational reform

Direct beneficiaries under component 3 included the members of the Research Committee and the researchers in the teacher profile study already included in section 4.1.2.

5 Issues encountered and solutions proposed

Issues and solutions encountered during the Project's seventh quarter are discussed in the following table.

Issues	Solutions Proposed	Results of Solution (if implemented)
General Project Implementation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is now in its last semester of operation.² 	A project closedown plan has been defined according to EQUIP1 and AED guidelines and is being implemented.	<p>Closedown activities and staff termination have been designed and discussed with team members to ensure the timely and effective completion of all project activities.</p> <p>Project information and lessons learnt are being transferred to MOE personnel through joint sessions and workshops.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff attrition 	Conversations have been held with personnel to identify their plans for future work and arrangements made to dovetail with current obligations and to distribute work among remaining personnel as needed.	Four team members have retired. One was substituted and the other three positions cancelled. Pending work has been successfully completed and/or redistributed without untoward effects on project implementation.

² This is not a problem issue but is detailed here due to its implications for the project.

Issues	Solutions Proposed	Results of Solution (if implemented)
Component 1		
Sub-Component 1.1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some managers in training have skipped sessions on Saturday and attended equivalent sessions on weekdays, thus affecting the logistics and resources budgeted. 	<p>The MOE was informed of this and agreement was reached that requests for changes by participants would be handled through a single channel. Participants were reminded to attend sessions on their scheduled dates.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At MOE's request training activities scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays exclusively. This conflicted with some participant's previously established obligations. 	<p>Increase follow-up to participants to ensure attendance. Organize complementary sessions to address need of participants who couldn't attend scheduled session.</p>	<p>Participation and attendance have stabilized at an average of 130 mid level managers per session. Managers took part in complementary session.</p>
Sub-Component 1.2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No outstanding issues in this quarter. 		
Component 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer skills training suffered delays because some Infocentros locales had problems with scheduling and attendance in the previous quarter. 	<p>Reschedule activities for January.</p>	<p>All remaining sessions were completed in February.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project closeout schedule requires ending activities in April instead of May 2005 	<p>Reschedule May training and technical assistance activities in April.</p>	<p>Activities were rescheduled with principals and program contents adjusted with trainers. Attendance has diminished from last quarter's averages of 241 and 229 for trainings and CIRECAs, to averages of 231 and 214, respectively.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resistance expressed by principals to MOE disposition about holding trainings exclusively on Saturdays. 	<p>Schedule adjusted and negotiated with principals.</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 collected data in Q6, but had insufficient time available to complete scheduled data collection. 	<p>Monitoring team to be contracted to conduct data collection and processing as of January 2005.</p>	<p>Monitoring team was selected, contracted and trained and began monitoring in January. Monitoring results for this quarter were processed and are included as an annex to this report.</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 1.2.2: Strengthen data processing capacity	Training in qualitative methods completed.	Training in qualitative methods was completed and applied to study under Component 3.

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 2.3 Sustain communications with MOE	Meetings held according to plan and needs.	Meetings with MOE officers focused on transferring project know-how and lessons learnt.
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 Projects implemented according to principal's commitments.	Facilitators continue to assist principals with Pedagogical Innovation Projects selected this year. Degree of actual implementation in the schools is shown in monitoring report.
Task 2.8: Adapt/create learning materials	100% of materials validated. Materials reproduced and distributed according to plan.	All modules completed and validated. Distribution proceeding with each session as planned (only materials for last session of the last module are pending for April 2005, as per adjusted program). Class guides for language and mathematics distributed to all schools (2 copies each). IBB donation books distributed to all schools (average 83 books per school).
Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance	Training and technical assistance provided according to program.	Sessions 1 and 2 of third module conducted. Sessions 3 and 4 to be completed in April (session 4 was reprogrammed from May to avoid delay in project closeout). Computer skills training module completed.
Task 2.10: Monitor training and technical assistance	Monitoring conducted according to program.	Monitoring results presented in annex.

IR 3: Policy dialogue generated through educational policy research and forums		
Tasks and Activities	Production Goals	Comments
Component 3: Research in education policy		
Task 3.3: Conduct research	Study 2 results presented and dissemination begun.	Final version of quantitative teacher profile received from consultant and presented to MOE. Draft of qualitative teacher profile received from consultant and is under review. External dissemination will begin in April.

7 Management Information

7.1 Intelligence about the sector and its context

This quarter was marked by two sectoral milestones: a) the presentation of a report by the “Presidential Commission for the Building of a Knowledge Society” in February and the launch by the MOE of the government’s “2021 National Education Plan” in March. These two publications clarify the government’s policy on education, suggesting coincidences between EXCELL and government policy, especially in areas such as prioritizing instruction over administration, instructional innovation, the recognition of the need for improved instructional practices among teachers and increasing the availability of teaching materials in schools. Challenges remain in making some issues and lessons learnt in EXCELL coincide with government initiatives. This includes strengthening instructional leadership rather than just administrative leadership among principals, effectively linking principal professional development to teacher professional development and developing school autonomy.

Maintaining ongoing high-level communications with the MOE continues to be a challenge, and communications have been fragmented, as the project no longer has a unifying, single project contact person in the MOE.

7.2 Information about relations with counterparts and partners in implementation

Day-to-day technical communications are very effective and have contributed significantly to the process of know-how transfer between EXCELL and the MOE.

7.3 Information about Project implementation and operation

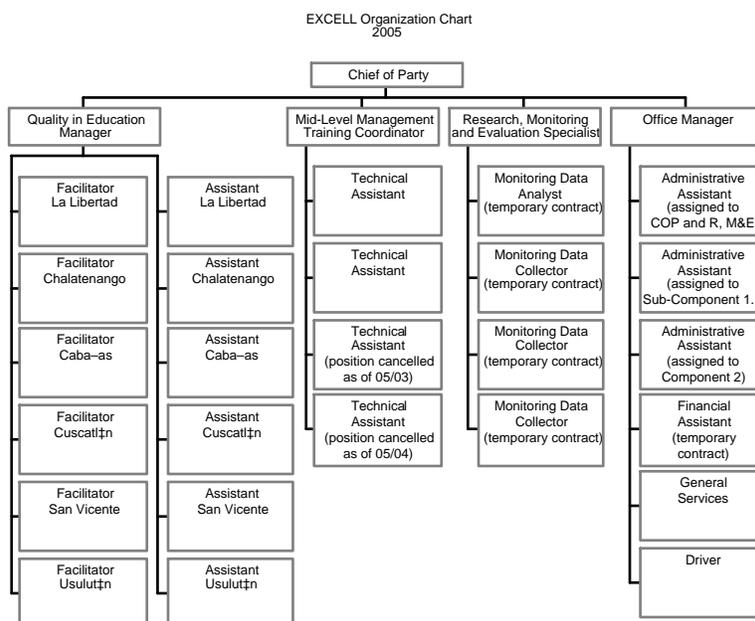
Staff meetings, both general and component-specific, continue to be held on a weekly basis to review technical and administrative issues. The fifth issue of the project newsletter was distributed electronically to all MOE HQ counterparts, other MOE personnel and other sector agents, and in paper form to all managers taking part in Sub-Component 1.1 and all principals taking part in Component 2 training, as well as to other contacts. All documents published by the project up to December 2004 were uploaded and are now available on a specific section of the EXCELL webpage on the EQUIP1 site.³

³ <http://www.equip123.net/equip1/excell>

8 Management activities

8.1 Organization

A revised organization chart was prepared and shared with the project CTO. It is included here for reference.



8.2 Staffing

The following changes have occurred in staffing:

1. Four monitoring data collectors were contracted to work on the project between January and April 2005.
2. The Receptionist was terminated and the position cancelled.
3. The Financial Assistant resigned and was substituted by another person on a temporary contract for the remainder of the project.
4. Two Technical Assistants for component 1.1 resigned and the positions cancelled.

All office team members, including administrative and support staff, attended one technical assistance visit with the Component 2 field team this quarter. This was the second of such activities, and was intended to increase sensitivity about the issues faced by the field team and to which office team members must give responses through administrative processes.

International technical assistance included:

- Training for the monitoring team;
- Organization and facilitation of an empowerment workshop for mid-level managers in the follow-up group;

- Technical assistance to Component 2 field team on effective facilitation and pedagogical practices;⁴
- Technical assistance to the national research team for the qualitative teacher study;
- Technical assistance from the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation for the preparation of an Inclusive Education Guide (to be delivered in April 2005);

8.3 Procurement

No relevant procurement was conducted this quarter.

8.4 Management visits

Management visits for the quarter included the AED project manager in charge of EXCELL who provided technical assistance in preparation for project closeout.

The project COP took part in a COP Summit organized within the EQUIP1 Leader Award. Through contact with other EQUIP1 COP's, EQUIP1 partner organization representatives and the USAID CTO for the leader award, insight was gained on the issues addressed by EXCELL.

8.5 Coordinated Activities

Key coordination initiatives included:

- Delivery of a donation of 1,068 technical instructional texts for principals and teachers involved in the EXCELL Project (two collections of 18 books for each of the 18 principal Quality Reflection Circles and one collection of 18 books for each of the 25 school networks organized this year by the MOE).
- Collaboration with FUNPRES for the development of an Inclusive Education Guidebook and four Special Education Needs training modules.
- Collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) team for the National Human Development Report in the preparation of a manual for supplementing language and mathematics materials with a human development focus for classroom use. The final draft of this version will be ready in May and will be published through a cost-share agreement with UNDP.

8.6 Progress on alliance formation

The working relationship with Asociación Infocentros has continued through the implementation of the computer training module for principals and will be completed with the allocation of 50 scholarships for further training to the principals with best performance in the computer skills module.

Work with FLACSO, FEPADE and Centro Alfa continued in the implementation of the qualitative teacher study, to be published in May 2005. Ongoing communication with the

⁴ The consultant responsible for this activity currently lives in El Salvador, but being a U.S. national is contracted out of AED's Home Office.

U.S. Embassy Office for Public Affairs was brought to fruition through the donation of technical instructional textbooks.

9 Timeline of activities

The following Gantt charts present activities completed or rescheduled to be conducted within the seventh quarter.⁵ 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

ID	Task Name	% Complete	Start	Qtr 1, 2005				Qtr 2, 2005
				December 2004	January 2005	February 2005	March 2005	April 2005
1	Establish project	80%	10/07/200					
2	Participate in USAID post-award orientation	100%	10/07/200					
3	Meet with all implementing partners	100%	21/07/200					
4	Set-up EXCELL office	100%	24/07/200					
5	Hire other project personnel	100%	22/07/200					
6	Prepare first year workplan	100%	11/07/200					
7	Establish Consultative Committee	100%	19/08/200					
8	Hold meetings of Consultative Committee	90%	02/10/200					100%
19	Present and promote EXCELL project	100%	19/08/200					
20	Prepare promotional material and organize reception	100%	19/08/200					
21	Hold opening reception and conference	100%	05/09/200					
22	Disseminate information about EXCELL project	100%	08/09/200					
23	Develop cost-share strategy	76%	01/09/200					
27	Component 1: Improve management and information strategies	97%	19/08/200					
28	Sub-component 1.1: Strengthen capability	92%	27/10/200					
29	Task 1.1.1: Build professional development strategy	100%	02/02/200					
30	Identify institutional development needs for mid Mgm	100%	02/02/200					
31	Prepare assistance plans for mid management suppor	100%	22/03/200					
32	Task 1.1.2: Develop T&A materials for mid-level Mgmt.	93%	05/03/200					
33	Assess specific T&A needs among mid-management	100%	05/03/200					
34	Design mid-management capacity-building program	100%	01/04/200					
35	Prepare and validate materials	100%	02/09/200					
36	Disseminate materials	85%	04/10/200					
37	Task 1.1.3: Train mid-level managers	89%	27/10/200					
38	Identify mid-manager training providers	100%	27/10/200					
39	Select mid-manager training providers	100%	05/01/200					
40	Deliver training for mid-managers	84%	30/09/200					
41	Sub-component 1.2: Apply M+E systems and research	100%	19/08/200					
42	Task 1.2.1: Identify information needs	100%	06/09/200					
43	Identify current information uses and needs	100%	06/09/200					
44	Task 1.2.2: Strengthen data processing capacity	100%	19/08/200					
45	Prepare procurement terms	100%	19/08/200					
46	Invite, select and contract providers	100%	14/09/200					
47	Procure and install hardware and software	100%	23/02/200					
48	Train personnel	100%	19/04/200					
49	Task 1.2.3: Deepen knowledge of management and qual	100%	06/10/200					
50	Identify study, prepare TORs and select researcher	100%	06/10/200					
51	Conduct study	100%	17/11/200					
52	Disseminate study results	100%	02/02/200					

⁵ 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	% Complete	Start	Qtr 1, 2005				Qtr 2, 2005
				December 2004	January 2005	February 2005	March 2005	April 2005
53	Component 2: Improve achievement through T&A	90%	21/07/200					
54	Task 2.1: Identify and train Department Quality Facilitators	100%	21/07/200					
55	Identify, select and contract Quality Coordinators	100%	21/07/200					
56	Design and implement Quality Coordinator training	100%	11/08/200					
57	Conduct follow-up training	100%	05/01/200					
58	Task 2.2: Promote and disseminate info. about EXCELL loca	80%	18/08/200					80%
59	Design promotion strategy	100%	18/08/200					
60	Present project to Mid-Level Managers (workshop in SS)	100%	01/09/200					
61	Present project to Technical Department Teams (regional)	100%	02/09/200					
62	Regional presentation TDT San Miguel	100%	02/09/200					
63	Regional presentation TDT San Salvador	100%	04/09/200					
64	Regional presentation TDT La Libertad	100%	16/09/200					
65	Sensitization workshops	33%	03/09/200					
69	Meetings with international organizations	100%	17/09/200					
70	regional meetings with coordinators and advisors	100%	24/09/200					
71	Pedagogical conferences	67%	01/07/200					67%
72	First pedagogical conferences	100%	01/07/200					
73	Second pedagogical conference	100%	08/11/200					
74	Third pedagogical conference	0%	28/03/200					0%
75	Task 2.3: Manage ongoing communication with MOE	90%	11/08/200					
76	Meetings with MINED professional development directive	90%	11/08/200					
77	Meetings with MINED regional professional development	90%	11/08/200					
78	Task 2.4: Organize principal QRC	97%	04/09/200					97%
79	Establish QRC	100%	04/09/200					
80	Design QRC plans	100%	01/12/200					
81	Conduct QRC activities	96%	12/01/200					96%
82	Task 2.5: Design training program	100%	11/09/200					
83	Prepare profile of schools and principals	100%	11/09/200					
84	Define training and technical assistance model	100%	20/10/200					
85	Design training and technical assistance plan	100%	03/11/200					
86	Validate and complete training and technical assistance p	100%	01/12/200					
87	Task 2.6: Assist with the identification and assesment of prc	80%	05/07/200					80%
88	Design pedagogical innovation plans	80%	05/07/200					80%
89	Task 2.7: Conduct baseline study	100%	05/01/200					
90	Design terms of reference for baseline study	100%	05/01/200					
91	Identify, select and contract provider for baseline study	100%	05/01/200					
92	Implement baseline study	100%	03/05/200					
93	Task 2.8: Adapt/create learning materials	97%	09/10/200					97%
94	Review existing materials	100%	09/10/200					
95	Design terms of reference for materials	100%	03/11/200					
96	Identify, select and contract provider for materials	100%	10/11/200					
97	Adapt/create modules	100%	12/01/200					
98	Validate and adjust materials	100%	26/01/200					
99	Reproduce and distribute materials	93%	09/02/200					93%
100	Task 2.9: Provide training and technical assistance	71%	27/10/200					
101	Design terms of reference for training providers	0%	27/10/200					
102	Identify potential training organizations	0%	24/11/200					
103	Invite, select and contract service providers	0%	05/01/200					
104	Conduct orientation of service providers	0%	02/02/200					
105	Invite, identify and select technical assistance providers	0%	16/02/200					
106	Identify needs for technical assistance	0%	05/01/200					
107	Conduct orientation for technical assistance providers	0%	02/02/200					
108	Coordinate technical assistance activities	0%	16/02/200					
109	Provide technical assistance	91%	22/03/200					
110	Task 2.10 Monitor technical assistance and training	90%	29/03/200					

9.3 Component 3 and Monitoring and Evaluation

ID	Task Name	% Complete	Start	Qtr 1, 2005				Qtr 2, 2005
				December 2004	January 2005	February 2005	March 2005	April 2005
111	Component 3: Educational policy research	93%	19/08/200					
112	Task 3.1: Conduct poverty and education study	100%	01/09/200					
113	Define terms of reference	100%	01/09/200					
114	Identify, select and contract researcher	100%	15/10/200					
115	Conduct Study 1 (Poverty and Education)	100%	05/11/200					
116	Conduct background research	100%	05/11/200					
117	Host research forum	100%	19/11/200					
118	Conduct study	100%	03/12/200					
119	Monitor study	100%	03/12/200					
120	Produce study findings	100%	11/02/200					
121	Disseminate study findings	100%	25/02/200					
122	Task 3.2: Define research topics	100%	19/08/200					
123	Set up research committee	100%	19/08/200					
124	Identify and contact researchers and research institutions	100%	19/08/200					
125	Design, prepare and conduct national education policy for	100%	26/08/200					
126	Select research agenda (6 issues)	100%	24/11/200					
127	Design, prepare and conduct national education research	100%	29/09/200					
128	Task 3.3: Conduct research	83%	02/08/200					
129	Conduct Study 2	81%	02/08/200					
130	Conduct background research	100%	02/08/200					
131	Host research forum	100%	23/08/200					
132	Commission study	100%	06/09/200					
133	Conduct study	100%	04/10/200					
134	Monitor study	100%	04/10/200					
135	Produce study findings	90%	10/01/200					
136	Disseminate study findings	42%	07/02/200					
137	Conduct Study 3	100%	20/09/200					
143	Monitoring and evaluation	67%	04/08/200					
144	Design performance-monitoring plan	100%	04/08/200					
145	Design monitoring tools	100%	01/09/200					
146	Conduct monthly monitoring meetings	89%	27/11/200					
166	Produce quarterly reports	86%	29/09/200					
174	Complete project assessment	7%	23/02/200					
175	Define evaluation questions and SOW	100%	23/02/200					
176	Conduct evaluation data collection and processing	3%	28/03/200					
177	Analyze assessment results and identify lessons learned	0%	13/05/200					
178	Produce final project report	0%	17/06/200					

10 Cost Share

The EXCELL project has contributed a total of \$1,176,596.00 in cost share. This total includes the \$1,127,315.00 cost share contributions from this quarter.

Participants in the Component 2 training sessions (now held on Saturdays) and Quality Reflection Circle sessions and Component 1.1 trainings and Quality Reflection Circles have donated an accumulated total 5,854 hours of their personal time on Saturdays to take part in project activities this quarter. This time has been valued at \$28,607.00 worth of cost share.

In the sixth quarter the EXCELL project began coordination with a Baltimore based organization, the International Book Bank for a second shipment of 33,255 books valued at \$33.00 each. This is equivalent to a wholesale value totaling: US\$ 1,097,415.00 in donated books.

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 were challenged by the requirement to conduct all training on Saturdays. This was addressed by rescheduling for 2005. However, principals in two departments objected to having all activities on their weekend personal time and threatened with resigning from the program. In agreement with the

MOE and USAID, this challenge was addressed by reprogramming and reducing content in the training sessions so they would end by 1:00 pm. Principals were invited to consider that, at this point, they stood to lose more than to gain by abandoning the program, as it was almost completed.

- *In future, if the Saturday-only training policy continues to be applied, training activities will have to be designed for half-days, if they are to be acceptable to participants.*
- *Given the need for teacher professional development within the governments 2021 National Education Plan, future technical support to the MOE should focus on studying, promoting and implementing a plan for the rational distribution of time throughout the school year for teacher professional development and other investments in quality in education in a way that doesn't threaten time in school for children but also doesn't occupy teacher's time off in a way that may be considered unreasonable.*

Establishing a follow-up group, implementing transformation projects and sharing their results with participants in the mid-level management training program has successfully involved them in sustaining the projects interventions.

- *The project's experience shows the value of empowering participants and promoting a vision of co-responsibility between institution and personnel concerning professional development. Continuing efforts should be fostered to develop a culture of support to development initiatives by the MOE while at the same time giving autonomy and requiring responsible achievement of goals from them.*

The know-how transfer activities with MOE staff have been well received by participants. Both the project's successes and limitations offer insight to MOE counterparts about how to improve their own work.

- *As far as possible, transfer should involve other agents in addition to the MOE, in order to favor the establishment of an "invisible college" of public and private agents sharing ideas and lessons derived from EXCELL. The project consultative group may be a means to tap into other institutions in the education sector.*

Early in the quarter it was recognized that the principal Quality Reflection Circles (CIRECAs) needed to be strengthened as opportunities for interaction between principals. A challenge was set to move leadership in the CIRECAs from the EXCELL field team to the principals. However, participants still continue to expect guidance from the project field team, and this trend may increase as EXCELL facilitators hand over the project results and interventions to MOE pedagogical advisors, accustomed to a relatively strong directive and supervisory role.

- *Ongoing technical support to the MOE should focus at least part of its attention on strengthening the role of pedagogical advisors as facilitators of self-motivated action by principals and teachers in schools.*

An international specialist living in the country was contracted to strengthen the Component 2 field team members' facilitation and instructional innovation skills. To maximize her time, this consultant accompanied field team members on a daily basis into the field, offering immediate feedback and advice to them about their work.

- *This ongoing train-the-trainer arrangement has proved to be a very powerful way to strengthen the team member's skills and should be adopted and assessed carefully in further interventions involving on-site technical assistance.*

Work with Asociación Infocentros evinced limitations in that entity's institutional capacity, which translated into problems in scheduling and others.

- *It is important to recognize that, although an intervention such as EXCELL does not have an institutional strengthening component, frequently weak local counterparts and subcontractors will need support and/or flexibility to complete their commitments successfully.*

The specific monitoring team was able to collect required data in an efficient, effective and timely manner.

- *Experience with the monitoring team has underlined the importance of the lesson identified in the previous quarterly report, concerning the importance of assigning specific resources (time, money, people) to the monitoring function.*

This quarter, the project's activities and structures appear to have matured to the point where all components are interacting and operating at full capacity. Unfortunately, this coincides with the beginning of the project closeout, so that in fact most of the "practical knowledge" developed in the project team will be lost.

- *The project's experience suggests that complex interventions depending on the interaction of large numbers of people have a relatively long development cycle of 1 to 1½ years. Such interventions should not be planned for short project cycles, or should be designed with more conservative assumptions and goals.*

Annex 1: Level of effort

Team Member	Level of Effort (in days)			
	January	February	March	Total
Chief of Party	17	18	18	53
Quality Manager	21	20	16	57
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	21	20	20	61
Management Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator	21	20	18	59
Administrative and Financial Manager	19	16	20	55
Quality Facilitators for Component 2 (6)	126	117	102	345
Quality Assistants for Component 2 (6)	126	117	102	345
Trainers for Component 2	0	18	18	36
Technical Assistants (Training Facilitators) for Sub-Component 1.1 (4)	84	64	54	202
Trainers for Sub-Component 1.1	50	24	12	86
Monitoring team (4)	29	84	75	188
Administrative Assistants (4)	105	100	71	276
General Services	21	20	18	59
Driver	21	20	18	59
TOTAL	661	658	562	1881

Annex 2: Project Monitoring Report