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EXCELENCIA Quarterly Report
April 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008



submitted by:

American Institutes for Research

With:

**Academy for Educational Development
Save the Children Federation, USA**

**U.S. Agency for International Development
Cooperative Agreement No. GDG-A-00-03-00006-00**

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Title of Project: Expansion of Centers of Excellence in Nicaragua with Emphasis on the APA Methodology (EXCELENCIA)

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Associates: Academy for Educational Development (AED)
Save the Children Federation USA

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ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AIR	American Institutes for Research
APA	Learn, Practice, Apply (Aprendo, Practico, Aplico)
BASE	Basic Education and Training Program II
COP	Chief of Party
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EIB	Bilingual Intercultural Education
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
EXCELENCIA	Expansion of the Excellence Centers in Nicaragua with Emphasis on the APA (Learn, Practice and Apply) Methodology
FADCANIC	Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
MINED	Ministry of Education
PRONICASS	Nicaraguan Support to the Social Sector Program
SO	Strategic Objective
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAAS	South Atlantic Autonomous Region
TEPCE	Educational Evaluation, Planning and Training Workshop (Taller de Evaluación, Planificación y Capacitación Educativa)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EXCELENCIA/USAID team spent the second quarter of 2008 supporting the Ministry of Education's (MINED) process of developing and implementing the national Integrated Quality Education Model, which is the framework for institutionalizing the Project's pedagogical approach and expansion. EXCELENCIA/USAID has added 318 new schools to its network during this quarter (274 public schools and 44 NGO-managed schools, for a new total of 2,625 schools). Under Component 4, The Project completed agreements with the NGOs and already surpassed the number of subsidized schools it had expected to cover.

EXCELENCIA/USAID, together with other donor agencies, has been part of the Facilitation Group (*Grupo Impulsor*), created by MINED to facilitate the development of a quality education model and incorporate local authorities in its implementation in the different regions.

The project has made significant progress this quarter toward institutionalizing the project's approach, in particular with regard to its school network management model. Under the national Integrated Quality Education Model the country is broken down into eight educational regions around the eight Normal Schools. In each region, the project will set up quality modules, made up of one so-called BASE school and several neighboring schools to which the base school will disseminate quality. This is the institutionalization of the management model for the EXCELENCIA/USAID network of schools, with mentor and satellite schools.

Once this management structure is set up, the following step by MINED will be to train the directors of the BASE schools in the application of the new curriculum and in those aspects from the EXCELENCIA/USAID pedagogical approach that the MINED will incorporate in its model. EXCELENCIA/USAID will support the MINED in these activities.

EXCELENCIA/USAID continued supporting MINED in the analysis of the results from the national curriculum consultation, and hired the consultants who are revising the materials based on the review. These consultants joined the team of authors that MINED has put together with the involvement of different donor agencies.

Project representatives take part in the different national committees that MINED set up for implementing its policies. The Project's presence on the Committees enables it to contribute to national educational policy decisions. Project facilitators continue to participate in the monthly Educational Evaluation, Planning and Training Workshop (Taller de Evaluación, Planificación y Capacitación Educativa, TEPCEs) in the regions.

In the area of assessment, the third grade Spanish reading and mathematics tests were piloted with students in the schools managed by NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs). The Project is preparing reports on the results from the performance tests in reading comprehension and applied mathematics in third grade.

The evaluation component, in coordination with the Result 4 team, designed a conceptual framework and specifications for formative tests in Spanish reading and

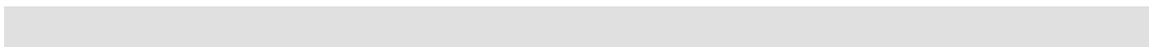
mathematics for third-grade students in NGO- and FBO-managed schools. This formative assessment process aims to aid teachers to detect learning gaps in their students in a timely fashion, and to then use methods that will help them to overcome these gaps.

In the Autonomous Regions on the Caribbean Coast, the project has continued with the validation of the EIB materials for third and fourth grades of multi-grade primary schools and has continued to produce the corresponding materials for fifth and sixth grades. All activities have been implemented in coordination with local MINED educational authorities and the Education Secretariats of the regional governments.

In the component for the expansion of APA to NGO- and FBO-managed schools, EXCELENCIA/USAID finalized agreements with all seven selected NGOs, adding a total of 311 schools (300 was the proposed target for expansion in the modified Cooperative Agreement). These schools are currently training directors and teachers in the use of the APA methodology and in first-grade priority activities.

In addition to in-service training for teachers and directors of privately managed schools Result 4 has also been in the process of providing pre service teacher training by partnering with the Núcleo de Educación Rural)/ La Asuncion in association with Fe y Alegría. An agreement has been signed with the national university UCA (Universidad Centroamericana) to provide accreditation to the students in this program. Students have been registered and the program is in the process of systematization.

Save the Children continued preparing the final baseline report, which includes the evaluation of the transition education strategy that the project has been testing. The report was submitted to the local educational authorities and educational communities that have participated in the study for their feedback. The three teacher-training modules that go along with the transition education strategy's approach have also been completed. The topic of transition education has been included in the Component 4 work with the NGO- and FBO-managed schools.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Progress in Institutionalization

The project has made significant progress this quarter toward institutionalizing the project's approach, in particular with regard to its school network management model. Under the national Integrated Quality Education Model the country is broken down into eight educational regions around the eight Normal Schools. In each region, the project will set up quality modules, made up of one base school and several neighboring schools to which the base school will disseminate quality. This is the institutionalization of the management model for the EXCELENCIA/USAID network of schools, with mentor and satellite schools.

A Facilitation Group comprised of various donor organizations including EXCELENCIA/USAID, was formed to support MINED in the implementation of this model. This group has been meeting frequently to reinforce the model, set the criteria for training the quality circles in the regions, and to introduce the EXCELENCIA model to MINED representatives and authorities. For the upcoming quarter, the Facilitation Group has organized a program of workshops in the regions to support regional authorities in designing quality circles in their regions.

Alongside the work of the Facilitation Group, MINED has requested support from EXCELENCIA/USAID to design the contents of the quality model, based on the educational approach that the Project has been successfully implementing in its school network. The Project has made an initial contribution in this area by preparing a proposal for training the directors of the base schools in the components of the Model School that the Project is promoting, the application of APA methods in classrooms, and the other components in its educational approach. This plan is expected to be implemented during the next school year, at the same time as the application of the new competency-based curriculum.

The Project's technical team is working on a compendium that describes all aspects of the EXCELENCIA model school approach, with special emphasis on the technical aspects of its active teaching and learning methodology. This exercise includes collecting, revising, and updating of all modules for trainings provided by the EXCELENCIA technical team, as well as other relevant documentation for implementing the APA methodology.

I. Result Number 1: Expansion of the network of EXCELENCIA schools that apply the APA Methodology

A) School Network Expansion

During the second quarter of 2008, EXCELENCIA/USAID added 318 new schools to the network (274 public schools and 44 NGO-managed schools), for a total of 2,625 participating schools. This is 1,985 additional schools over the number of schools received when the Project began (640). This group of schools includes the 311 schools added as part of Component 4.

Table No. 1. Schools Served by EXCELENCIA, by Quarter and Category through June 2008

Schools Served by EXCELENCIA per Quarter and Category										
	Feb. 2006	Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007	Jun. 2007	Sep. 2007	Dec. 2007	Mar. 2008	Jun. 2008
Public schools										
Mentor Schools	112	184	184	190	232	232	232	232	245	245
Satellite Schools	528	526	749	930	899	1,327	1,473	1,530	1,795	2,069
Sub-Tot. Public									2,040	2,314
Result 4 schools										
Mentor Schools									41	45
Satellite Schools									226	266
Sub-Total Result 4									267	311
Total	640	710	933	1,120	1,131	1,559	1,705	1,762	2,307	2,625

Source: EXCELENCIA Project, June 2008.

Table No. 2 shows the distribution of schools in the EXCELENCIA/USAID network, by type of school and department, as of June 2008.

Table No. 2. EXCELENCIA's Network Schools by Type and Department

Department	School Type				Status		
	Multi-grade	Bilingual Multi-grade	Regular	Bilingual Regular	Satellite Schools	Mentor Schools	Total
Boaco	62		19		73	8	81
Carazo	77		34		99	12	111
Chinandega	144		80		204	20	224
Chontales	90		26		104	12	116
Estelí	81		34		106	9	115
Granada	70		33		88	15	103
Jinotega	101		29		120	10	130
León	106		60		137	29	166
Madriz	105		22		113	14	127
Managua	74		180		214	40	254
Masaya	39		59		85	13	98
Matagalpa	150		55		189	16	205
Nueva Segovia	166		31		181	16	197
RAAN	66	29	32	19	120	26	146
RAAS	211	10	60	13	266	28	294
Río San Juan	94		18		104	8	112
Rivas	99		47		132	14	146
TOTAL	1,735	39	819	32	2,335	290	2,625

Source: EXCELENCIA Project, June 2008.

Table No. 3 shows the departmental distribution of the new NGO and FBO schools in the Project network.

Table No. 3. NGO-Managed Schools, by Department and Type of School, June 2008

Department	School Type				Status		Total
	Multi-grade	Bilingual Multi-grade	Regular	Bilingual Regular	Satellite	Mentor	
BOACO			1		1		1
CARAZO			6		5	1	6
CHINANDEGA	2		4		5	1	6
CHONTALES			4		3	1	4
ESTELÍ			3		2	1	3
JINOTEGA			1		1		1
LEON	8		23		24	7	31
MANAGUA	1		79		70	10	80
MASAYA			10		9	1	10
MATAGALPA			7		6	1	7
NUEVA SEGOVIA			1		1		1
RAAN	47	2	23	1	58	15	73
RAAS	61	3	22	2	76	12	88
Total	119	5	184	3	261	50	311

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008.

Table No. 4 shows the number of schools managed by each of the organizations with which a contract has been signed, as of June 2008. Of the schools managed by these organizations, 52% are in the North and South Atlantic Autonomous Regions.

Table No. 4: Distribution of Schools, by Department and Organization, June 2008

Department	Alistar	FADCAN IC	Fe y Alegría	Fundación León 2000	Moravian Church	Centro Nehemías	Bluefields Vicariate	Total
Boaco						1		1
Carazo						6		6
Chinandega						6		6
Chontales						4		4
Estelí						3		3
Jinotega						1		1
León			8	15		8		31
Managua						80		80
Masaya						10		10
Matagalpa						7		7
Nueva Segovia						1		1
RAAN	13				13		47	73
RAAS		21			4	6	57	88
Total	13	21	8	15	17	133	104	311

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008

The graph below tracks the progress of the expansion of the EXCELENCIA network under Result 1. As can be observed from the graph EXCELENCIA is well on target of reaching its expansion goal towards the end of the project.

Graph 1: Quarterly progress chart - Number of schools served by EXCELENCIA

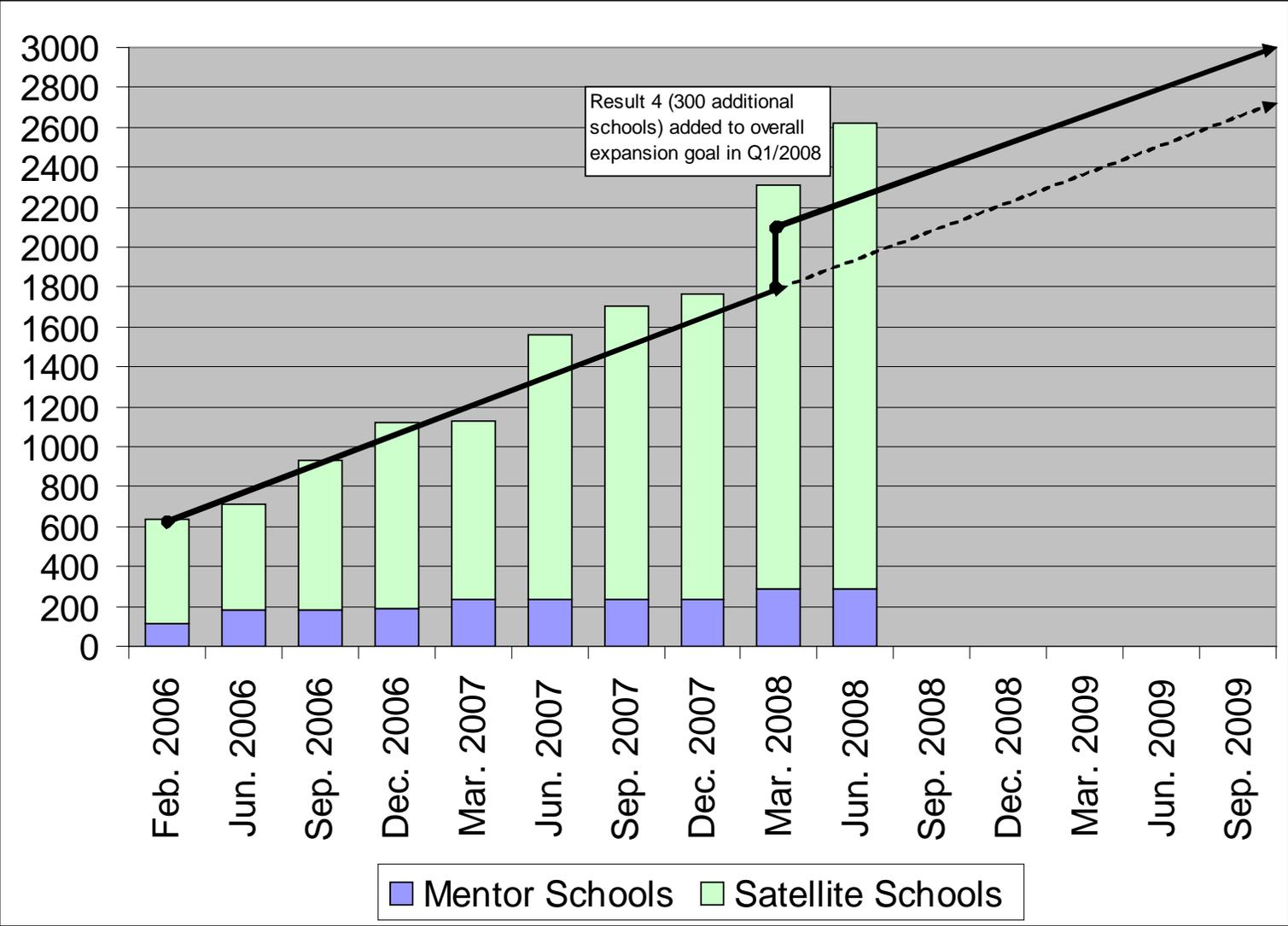


Table No. 5 shows the increase in coverage by EXCELENCIA/USAID, using current information from the MINED Statistics Directorate as its reference. According to the data, in the second quarter of 2008, the Project has been serving in its network 31% of primary schools and 46% of primary school students enrolled in the country. In addition, 46% of primary teachers are working in EXCELENCIA/USAID network schools. Likewise, the Project began working in 144 municipalities in 2007, and during the period it has expanded to 151 municipalities, covering 99% of the country's municipalities (153).

Table No. 5. EXCELENCIA Expansion Status as of June 2008

Coverage by Municipality	
Number of municipalities in the country	153
Number of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA, June 2008	151
% of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA in June 2008	99%
Coverage by schools	
Number of primary education schools (MINED 2007)	8,520
Number of schools served by EXCELENCIA as of June 2008	2,625
% of primary schools served by EXCELENCIA as of June 2008	31%
Coverage by student enrollment	
Total of initial enrollment in primary education 2007 *	952,964
Total of enrollment at EXCELENCIA school as of June 2008	434,466
% of enrollment at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2008	46%
Coverage by teacher	
Total number of primary education teachers 2007*	30,192
Number of teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2008	14,132
% of Teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2008	46%

* Enrollment figures for 2008 will become available in August, according to information from the MINED Statistics Directorate.

Table No. 6 shows enrollment figures for NGO- and FBO-managed schools.

Table No. 6. Enrollment in and Number of NGO- and FBO-Managed Schools, June 2008

NGO or FBO	No. of Schools	No. of Students
Alistar	13	2,377
FADCANIC	21	2,884
Fe y Alegría	8	727
Fundación León	15	2,946
Moravian Church	17	2,364
Centro Nehemías	133	16,043
Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields	104	4,469
Total	311	31,810

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008

As of June 2008, there were a total of 14,132 teachers (11,433 women and 2,699 men) working in EXCELENCIA/USAID network schools. Table No. 7 shows teachers, by department and gender, including teachers working in NGO- and FBO-managed schools.

Table No. 7. Number of Teachers at EXCELENCIA Schools as of June 2008

Department	FEMALE	MALE	Total
Boaco	343	51	394
Carazo	465	118	583
Chinandega	1,181	195	1,376
Chontales	419	41	460
Estelí	574	102	676
Granada	511	125	636
Jinotega	567	121	688
León	601	313	914
Madriz	389	104	493
Managua	1,780	348	2,128
Masaya	710	165	875
Matagalpa	930	174	1,104
Nueva Segovia	661	164	825
RAAN	501	252	753
RAAS	888	234	1,122
Rio San Juan	279	89	368
Rivas	634	103	737
TOTAL	11,433	2,699	14,132

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008

B. Training

During this quarter, 10,463 people (8,091 women and 2,372 men) participated in training events given by EXCELENCIA/USAID.

Training sessions during this quarter have continued teaching subjects necessary for expanding the Project's school network. For Component 1, the Second Technical Meeting was held with directors and instructional advisors from the departments. In many of the meetings, departmental and municipal representatives also participated. The meetings evaluated the progress made in this component. They found that in most schools the application of the Project approach is working well, and parents are actively participating and supporting the teachers, and teachers are concentrating on first-grade strategies and have made excellent progress in reading and writing with their pupils.

Local workshops for first, second, third, and fourth grades were also held. The workshop subjects were quite varied since in each case they were chosen by the directors of the Mentor Schools and the instructional advisors. MINED representatives also requested the inclusion of several subjects. These training sessions are very well received by the participants, given their practical and operational focus, making them very effective tools for the Project's impact in the regions. The Project's facilitators on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts have also continued to support the monthly TEPCEs held by MINED in the departments, in many cases facilitating the workshops.

In the Atlantic Coast Autonomous Regions, FADCANIC continued to conduct the trainings on the Project approach, as required by their implementation plan, in the schools under its responsibility. FADCANIC also carried out the trainings corresponding to the validation of the EIB materials for third- and fourth-grade native languages and math in multi-grade primary schools.

Component 4 has continued implementing the training program on the components of the Project's educational approach, and will continue until these have been completed in the schools under its responsibility.

Table No. 8 lists trainings given, by organization and number of participants, broken down by gender.

Table No. 8. Quarterly Training Events

NGO	EVENT	Duration	No. of Participants		TOTAL	Comments
			Female	Male		Reported by
EXCELENCIA	1 st and 2 nd grade local workshops	1 day	833	160	993	Component 1
	3 rd and 4 th grade local workshops	1 day	3,911	835	4,746	Component 1
	Second Technical Meeting	1 day	287	155	442	Component 1
	Assessment Testing	1 day	24	5	29	Component 3
FADCANIC						
RAAS	APA Methodology	2 days	145	33	178	FADCANIC
	Student Government	2 days	117	68	185	FADCANIC
	School Council and Parents' Committee	2 days	301	72	373	FADCANIC
	Student Government in the Bluefields Normal School	2 days	20	25	45	FADCANIC
RAAN	Validation Strategies and Technical Tools	2 days	45	64	109	FADCANIC
	APA Methodology (for Mentor School directors)	2 days	31	35	66	FADCANIC
ALISTAR	Training Workshop for Directors and Assistant Directors of Mentor and Satellite Schools	3 days	14	10	24	Component 4
	Duplicate training for 1 st and 2 nd grade teachers	3 days	32	2	34	Component 4
	Duplicate training for 3 rd and 4 th grade teachers	3 days	24	5	29	Component 4
	Duplicate training for 5 th and 6 th grade teachers	3 days	16	13	29	Component 4
	Workshop on student government	1 day	18	15	33	Component 4
	Training workshop for School Councils (parents) in mentor and satellite schools	1 day	20	8	28	Component 4
FE Y ALEGRÍA	Inter-training with facilitators and directors, La Asunción Fe y Alegría	1 day	3	2	5	Component 4
	Technical Meeting	1 day	2	1	3	Component 4
FUNDACIÓN LEÓN 2000	Department-wide meeting with 5 th and 6 th grade teachers	2 days	25	0	25	Component 4
	APA methodology, Pedagogical component, and	2 days	24	0	24	Component 4

	3 rd and 4 th grade LRCs					
	Inter-training with Fundación León 2000 facilitators	1 day	2	0	2	Component 4
	Second meeting of 1 st and 2 nd grades	2 days	21	0	21	Component 4
	Strategies for working with numbers and basic operations	1 day	17	5	22	Component 4
	Project No. 1: <i>My Own Name</i>	1 day	14	2	16	Component 4
CENTRO NEHEMIÁS	Training on APA methodology, pedagogical components, and <i>My Own Name</i> project	1 day	922	162	1,084	Component 4
	Training for student governments and school committees (parents)	1 day	930	199	1,129	Component 4
VICARIATE OF BLUEFIELDS	Training workshops for schools committees (parents)	2 days	123	260	383	Component 4
	Training workshop for members of student government	2 days	168	226	394	Component 4
	Inter-training for Vicariate coordinators and technical specialists	2 days	2	10	12	Component 4
TOTAL			8,091	2,372	10,463	

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008

C) School Site Visits

The facilitators made a total of 310 visits during the second quarter to support the expansion process. These visits have several different objectives: providing advice and follow-up to network schools; monitoring the application of pedagogical components of the Project approach; verification of schools proposed by departmental and municipal representatives for membership in the Project network as Mentor Schools; coordination of local workshops in Mentor Schools; and, as part of MINED technical teams, supporting the implementation of the TEPCEs in their departments.

The early grades were prioritized during the school visits in order to provide technical support for the application of the pedagogical components. Substantial progress has been made in the students' reading and writing in the schools visited. Teachers were given special attention and the necessary recommendations in schools where first-grade teachers were found to have some weaknesses.

It was recommended that first-grade teachers who are successful at applying the proposed method for teaching reading and writing should become advisors to the other first-grade teachers in their schools. The facilitators also recommended choosing student monitors, who could be the most advanced students in the same grade or from higher grades. They would be guided by the teachers to aid first-graders in learning to read and write. Another suggestion from the facilitators is for the parents to provide more support to students both at home and in the classroom, with teacher guidance.

In general, the schools visited have made good progress in the different pedagogical components, although they need reinforcement on the use of the resources centers and how to better take advantage of all of its possibilities.

The verification visits to the schools nominated by MINED representatives for becoming Mentor Schools found that the schools that will become Mentors have been well chosen. They show many pedagogical strong points and staff members have positive attitudes.

Due to MINED's decision on training, the Project focused its training activities at the local level and prioritized workshops for teachers. Planning and preparing the local workshops require close coordination with the departmental and municipal representatives, deciding on common criteria and making agreements with them for conducting the workshops. During this quarter, 66 visits were made to coordinate local workshops for first- and second-grade and third- and fourth-grade teachers from Mentor Schools and their satellites.

In support of the three TEPCEs held this quarter, the facilitators made a total of 30 visits, during which they worked on different tasks, including advising the departmental and municipal representatives, the advisors in the local MINED offices, and the directors of the TEPCE host schools. They also provided general support before and during the TEPCEs. The Project provided strategies from several TEPCEs for first-grade teachers and the facilitators pledged to train the schools that requested this support.

Table No. 9 shows the number of facilitator visits in the Pacific Coast region, by department and number of municipalities visited.

Table No. 9. Expansion Plan Visits: Pacific Coast

Department	Municipalities	Visits
León	6	14
Masaya	12	39
Jinotega	2	8
Matagalpa	7	17
Granada	7	20
Río San Juan	6	13
Zelaya Central	5	6
Carazo	6	18
Rivas	9	18
Managua	8	37
Boaco	10	20
Chontales	9	17
Chinandega	19	48
Estelí	7	15
Nueva Segovia	4	10
Madriz	4	10
Total	121	310

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project. June 2008

Table No. 10. Expansion Plan Visits: Atlantic Coast

Region	Schools Visited	Total Visits	Teachers Served		Total
			Female	Male	
RAAS	42	42	151	37	188
RAAN	42	90	84	22	106
Total	84	132	235	59	294

Source: FADCANIC. Quarterly Report. June 2008

D) Achievements under Result 1

- *The institutionalization process is advancing.* EXCELENCIA/USAID was invited on several occasions to present its educational approach to central, regional and local MINED authorities, as a preview of the model school that the Ministry is seeking through the National Integrated Quality Education Model. The Project's facilitators have been supporting departmental MINED representatives in their work to form the *núcleos educativos* in their regions, based on the school network model established by the Project. Many of the current Mentor Schools in the Project will become BASE schools in the new model. The Minister requested a plan from the Project for applying its educational approach to the new management model. This plan sets forth the subjects and timeframe for training the directors of the future BASE Schools on the Project's educational approach.
- *There are 318 new schools in the network.* Of the new schools that have joined, 44 are managed by NGOs and FBOs (surpassing the goal of 300 by 11) and 274 are public schools.
- *EXCELENCIA/USAID has continued increasing participation in training.* Once again, the demand at the local level for technical training from directors, MINED representatives and instructional advisors has led to an increase in the number of people trained. In addition, the Project has gotten involved in the monthly MINED trainings (TEPCEs), using this opportunity to respond to the demand for technical assistance from local authorities and schools.

II. Result No. 2. New Curriculum Based on Competencies for Primary Education that includes Bilingual Intercultural Education validated and incorporated into the National Educational System

A) Involvement in the National Curriculum Consultation

EXCELENCIA/USAID has continued supporting MINED in the analysis of the results of the national curriculum consultation, using short-term consultants hired for this purpose. The consultant team has joined the team from the Curriculum Development Department and its different committees and has visited the schools where the preliminary validation was done. These schools are still using the validated materials

and the team has been able to see the students using them. The team developed a series of recommendations for improving the multi-grade materials, which will be included in newer versions.

The consultant team has reworked the framework competencies that serve as a guide for education for students from the different levels of the education system. A profile of graduates from the different levels has been developed, based on these revised competencies. The cross-cutting themes for the new curriculum and their corresponding competencies have also been developed, based on the interests expressed by civil society during the consultation. The team has also been working on a review of the different subjects in the curriculum and of the course content for the different subjects.

Although there is no official position on the educational materials produced and validated by EXCELENCIA/USAID during the 2006 school year, it does appear that the methodological guidelines and Workbooks for the different regular primary grades and the teacher guides for multi-grade primary will continue to be used, incorporating the input from the consultation process. This material will be supplemented by reference texts, which will be developed by a group of authors hired by MINED. MINED has said that it has budgeted its own funds for reproducing the multi-grade primary materials and is taking steps to reproduce the regular primary materials. The implementation of the new curriculum will be integrated with the implementation of the National Integrated Quality Education Model.

EXCELENCIA has continued supporting the goals of MINED to expand the consultation process on the new curriculum and its materials for their application in the classrooms. In response to a request from the new Minister of Education, EXCELENCIA has submitted a proposal for continuing the technical support provided by the project to this activity to USAID.

As a member of the National Curriculum Committee, the Project's Technical Coordinator shares the experiences of the Project in this area. Likewise, the project's Senior Technical Advisor is a member of the National Commission on Teacher Development, and he contributes to the development of strategies for training teachers on the new competency-based approach.

B) Validation of EIB Materials on the Atlantic Coast

In the Atlantic Coast Autonomous Regions, FADCANIC finished production of the materials for native languages, Spanish as a second language, and mathematics, for third and fourth grades of multi-grade primary and has begun their validation at a sample of 50 schools in its network. MINED representatives and instructional advisors, school directors and technical personnel are involved in reviewing the validation instruments.

The following table shows the number of schools and students participating in the validation process.

Table No. 10. Number of Schools and Students Validating EIB Materials

Ethnic Group	No. of Schools	Third-grade Students	Fourth-grade Students	Total
Mayagna	17	201	142	343
Miskito	10	186	142	328
RAAN- Spanish	6	107	73	180
RAAS- Spanish	13	54	78	132
RAAS- English	4	32	28	60
TOTALS	50	580	463	1,043

Source: FADCANIC, June 2008

Table No. 11. EIB Materials for Students

Language	Grade	Subject	# of Units	# of Guides
English L1	Third	Mathematics	6	24
English L1	Fourth	Mathematics	6	17
Spanish L1	Third	Mathematics	6	22
Spanish L1	Fourth	Mathematics	6	21
English L2	Third	English	4	35
English L2	Fourth	English	4	23
Spanish L2	Third	Spanish	4	24
Spanish L2	Fourth	Spanish	4	17
Miskitu L1	Third	Miskitu	4	29
Miskitu L1	Fourth	Miskitu	4	20
Miskitu	Third	Mathematics	6	21
Miskitu	Fourth	Mathematics	6	23
Mayagna	Third	Mathematics	6	23
Mayagna	Fourth	Mathematics	6	22
Mayagna	Third	Mayagna	4	29
Mayagna	Fourth	Mayagna	4	20
English L2	Third	English	1 Didactic Manual	
English L2	Fourth	English	1 Didactic Manual	
		TOTAL	82	370

Source: FADCANIC. June 2008

Table No. 12. EIB Materiales for Teachers

Language	Grade	Subject	# of Guides
Spanish L2	Third	Spanish	1
Spanish L2	Fourth	Spanish	1
English	Third	Mathematics	1
English	Fourth	Mathematics	1
Spanish	Third	Mathematics	1
Spanish	Fourth	Mathematics	1
Miskitu and Mayagna	Third	Language and Communication	1
Miskitu and Mayagna	Fourth	Language and Communication	1

Miskitu and Mayagna	Third	Mathematics	1
Miskitu and Mayagna	Fourth	Mathematics	1
		TOTAL	10

Source: FADCANIC. June 2008

FADCANIC has also hired the “author team” that will produce the EIB materials for fifth and sixth multi-grade primary grades. The team has already begun work in both regions.

C) Achievements under Result 2

- *MINED is taking into consideration the materials produced by EXCELENCIA/USAID, especially those for multi-grade primary.* The Project’s consultant team has joined the MINED team that is in charge of the review of the new curriculum materials, using the results of the national curriculum consultation. It is contributing to ensuring that the materials produced and validated by the Project in the first stage continue to be useful. These materials, enriched by the national consultation, will be bolstered by text books that teachers can use as reference materials when using the “Methodological Guidelines and Teaching Suggestions” proposed by the Project.

- *The validation of the EIB materials is advancing in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions.* FADCANIC has begun the validation, in 50 schools for different ethnic groups, of third- and fourth-grade EIB materials in native languages, Spanish as a second language, and mathematics.

- *Production has begun of fifth and sixth grade EIB materials for native languages, Spanish as a second language, and mathematics.* FADCANIC has hired the consultant team, which has already begun to develop the fifth and sixth grade multi-grade primary EIB materials.

III. Result 3: Longitudinal Studies and Additional Research to Assess Project Impact and Field Studies to Set up Effective Channels to Improve Transition to Primary Education

The evaluation component, in coordination with the Component 4 team, designed a conceptual framework and specifications for formative tests in Spanish reading and mathematics for third-grade students in NGO- and FBO-managed schools.

This formative assessment process is seeking to develop a tool that will contribute to improving academic performance and decreasing grade-repetition and drop-out rates among third-grade children. It also aims to aid teachers in being able to detect learning gaps in their students in a timely fashion, and to then use methods that will help them to overcome these gaps.

Third grade Reading Comprehension and Mathematics items that have been developed in previous workshops but have not been used in summative tests yet have been used for

the formative assessments. The tests will be given three times during the 2008 school year—in June, August and October. The assessment consists of one test on Spanish reading comprehension and one on mathematics. Each test has 21 multiple-choice questions.

The following materials were developed: a testing manual, the Spanish and mathematics tests, and grading procedures for teachers to use in correcting the tests. In addition, the Component 4 team helped in developing a “Pedagogical Recommendations” document, which was given to teachers to help their students once they received their test results.

The third-grade teacher training was held on June 4, in which 29 teachers from 24 schools participated, making up the sub-sample of schools in which the baseline tests were piloted. This sub-sample is composed of 1,570 third-grade students. Teachers will analyze the results, and will then use the recommended educational measures to address the students’ shortcomings uncovered by the formative tests.

This process will be conducted on two more occasions, to complete the cycle of three test sessions during the 2008 school year.

A) Studies

Pilot test (base-line) at the NGO-managed EXCELENCIA Project schools

At the end of the first quarter, the testing process concluded for Spanish and mathematics for students in NGO- and FBO-managed schools. The tests were given to 1,511 third-graders in a sample of 59 schools: 22 in the Caribbean Autonomous Regions and 37 in the rest of the country. During this second quarter, the databases with the results were organized, cleaned and consolidated. The results are currently being analyzed.

2007 Annual Assessment

During this second quarter, a more in-depth analysis has been done of the results of the third-grade reading comprehension and mathematics performance tests that were applied in a sample of the schools that are validating the new curriculum. Three types of reports are being prepared: a technical report describing the process for analyzing the tests and results, which is already finished; a report to be submitted to MINED that shows the results and focuses on teachers’ and directors’ contributions to the curriculum validation process; and a report for each of the participating schools giving them feedback on the performance of their students. These reports will thus provide detailed information on the results from each school and inform the corrective pedagogical measures to be taken.

The results will be analyzed with the pedagogy area at a workshop scheduled for July 21st.

B) Transition to Primary (Save the Children Federation USA)

Save the Children was involved in the following core activities this quarter in the framework of Transition Education (TE):

- Preparation of the final report on the validation of the TE strategy.
- Evaluation of the TE strategy and preparation of the final baseline report.
- Closure and feedback workshop with the experimental schools on the TE strategy.
- Transition Education Strategy Modules.
- Workshop planning with AIR.

1. Preparation of Final Baseline Report

With the support of the national consultant, Gustavo Pineda, the Project prepared a 40-page Final Baseline Report. To this end, it reviewed and analyzed the monitoring forms filled out throughout the year in the four experimental and two control schools. The results were positive, despite the short time that the strategy had been in place. These results were possible due to the experience that the Save the Children team had built up in this field in previous years. Following is a synopsis of the findings.

a) Educational efficiency

Educational efficiency improved in 2007 over 2006, in pre-school, first and second grades in the four experimental schools. Taking as indicators the percentage of initial enrollees who were promoted at the end of the year, the percentage who were held back to repeat the grade in the next year, and those who dropped out during the year, the following trend was seen:

- an increase in students passing (promoted)
- a decrease in students dropping out and failing (not promoted)

Promotion: In 2007, promotion from first grade in the four experimental schools was 15 percentage points higher than in 2006. In 2006, it was 50%, and in 2007, it increased to 65%.

Drop-outs: In 2007, first-grade drop-outs in the four experimental schools decreased by 14 percentage points compared with 2006. In 2006, 31% of first-graders dropped out, while in 2007, the figure was down to 17%.

Not promoted: In 2007, the rate of first-graders who were not promoted decreased by just one percentage point. In 2006, 19% were not promoted, and in 2007, it went down to 18%. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that most of the children who were not promoted had re-entered and were over-age for their grade level, and working with them is more complex and requires more time. This was the educational efficiency indicator that showed the least change. The positive side of this is that even though these children were recurrent grade-repeaters, a good portion of them did not drop out of school, as can be seen in the preceding paragraph.

Comparing the final 2007 results for first grade in the experimental and control schools, the rate of students not promoted is 7% less in the experimental schools and the pass rate is 3% higher, which reflects favorably on the experimental schools.

For second grade, the experimental schools also had an 8% increase in the pass rate (in 2007, compared with 2006), and a 15% decrease in students not promoted; there was also a 17% difference in promotions compared with the control schools. All in all, educational efficiency rates were much better for 2007.

b) Quality of the teaching-learning process

The improvements in educational efficiency can be explained by certain improvements in the quality of the teaching-learning processes, summarized below.

Increased attendance:

During 2007, monitoring was done every month (from March to August) of the number of children with attendance problems, defined as being absent four or more times in the month.

The number of children with attendance problems tended to decrease in pre-schoolers as well as in first- and second-graders in the experimental schools.

In pre-schoolers, the trend was quite sharp. In March, 59% of children had attendance problems, but by August it was down to 35%. However, this percentage is still high, indicating the hard work ahead to transform the culture among parents who undervalue the importance of children going to school every day at this level of schooling.

In the first grade in the experimental schools, 23% of the children had attendance problems at the start of the period; this decreased slightly, though irregularly, during the 2007 school year. Teachers feel that absenteeism is a “common” problem at the beginning of the year in children coming from pre-school. However, it also indicates that this is an aspect of the school culture in first grade that should change and that needs to be worked on harder.

In second grade, however, there were improvements. The year began with 21% of children having attendance problems, which decreased steadily to 10% by August.

In general, the trends in both first and second grades in the control schools have been diametrically opposed to those in the experimental schools. The proportion of children with attendance problems tended to increase during the 2007 school year, and in any case, the proportions of children with attendance problems were higher.

This speaks favorably of the program’s interventions, although absenteeism rates are still high. This is an indication that the issue of school attendance needs more systematic attention from teachers, parents and the students themselves.

c) Academic performance

Two indicators were measured for first grade in the experimental and control schools:

- The percentage of students passing math and Spanish at the end of the school year, comparing 2006 and 2007.
- The average final grades for the group in math and in Spanish.

The results show that in general there was a notable improvement in academic performance in the experimental schools; however, academic performance deteriorated in the control schools.

In mathematics, the pass rate in the experimental group increased 11% from 2006 to 2007, and in the control group it decreased by 8%. The average grade in the experimental group increased from 65.7 to 67.7, and in the control group it dropped from 67.5 to 66.0, showing that both groups still have low grades.

In Spanish, the pass rate increased 8% in the experimental group from 2006 to 2007, while in the control group it decreased by 5%. The average grade in the experimental group increased from 66.3 to 67.6, and decreased in the control group from 67.3 to 65.8. Again, both groups still have low grades.

It is striking that the percentage of girls who failed increased in both the experimental and control groups. This requires greater analysis with teachers and the community.

d) Improvement in the quality of the teacher's facilitation of learning

For these indicators, teachers are scored on a scale from 0 to 100, based on an observation guide that was used three times (twice in 2007 and once in the first quarter of 2008). The guide was used for pre-school, first grade and second grade in the four experimental and two control schools.

Three indicators were scored:

- Quality of the teacher's facilitation of learning in reading and writing.
- Quality of the teacher's facilitation of learning in math.
- The teacher's encouragement of active learning.

In facilitation of learning in reading and writing, teachers in the experimental schools notably increased the quality of educational processes in this subject (a 36-point increase between the first and third observation periods). The control group schools improved but remained far behind the experimental schools.

With regards to the quality of facilitation of learning in math, the progress in scores between the first and third observation periods in the experimental group are just 14 points, lower than for reading and writing, indicating the difficulties that teachers have with this subject from pre-school through second grade. The experimental schools scored 27 points higher than the control schools, where quality actually appeared to deteriorate from 2007 to 2008.

“Promoting an Active Role” has been one of the core areas of the intervention, given that it is being emphasized by the EXCELENCIA/MINED program in the APA methodology. With regards to how well the teacher encourages children to play an active role, the results show that the pre-school to second-grade teachers in the four

experimental schools improved 35 points, from 36 to 71 points. The control schools also showed improvement in this area, as a result of MINED's teacher training efforts; however, the experimental schools surpassed the control schools in increasing students' active role.

Active Role of children:

This refers to the level of activity and student participation in response to teacher initiative. There has been considerable progress in this area, which improved by 32 points over the initial score in the four experimental schools. The children in the control schools also improved, but in all cases to a lesser extent than in the experimental schools.

e) Conditions in learning environments and learning corners

This has been another of the pillars of the intervention to reinforce the APA methodology being advanced by the EXCELENCIA project. There has been a significant improvement of 24 points in learning environments from pre-school to second grade in the experimental schools. The starting score in March 2007 was 25 points and the final score was 49. In comparison with the control schools, the difference is even more significant, given that the experimental schools scored 42 points higher than the control schools.

Conditions in the affective environment

This has been one of the greatest impacts of the intervention, with an advance of 44 points in the experimental schools and a difference of 31 points with respect to the control schools.

2. Evaluation of the Transition Education (TE) Strategy

An evaluation was done with the help of an international consultant Patricia Ames. The Save the Children education team worked for ten days visiting schools, reviewing the final baseline report, and finishing up with the preparation of the final version of the TE Strategy. This Strategy will be presented to MINED at the Early Childhood and Transition Education Forum in October 2008.

The Strategy is currently under review by USAID and AIR, and their comments are expected shortly.

3. Closing workshop with experimental schools

Table No. 13. Attendance at closing workshop

Topic	Participants	Female	Male
Feedback on Final Baseline Report	Municipal education representatives, directors and assistant directors of core group school, parent councils, and community leaders	33	7
TOTAL		40	

The results were shared and the participants were clearly enthusiastic upon seeing evidence that their own capacities to improve educational quality have developed.

In the coming three months, these four schools will be developing internal plans and actions to provide continuity to the work promoted by TE. They will be supported by Save the Children's RICA project through the end of the school year.

4. Training modules accompanying the TE Strategy

The modules "Building Self-Esteem in Children" and "The Active Role of Children" have been printed. These complete the three modules that accompany the Transition Education strategy approach. At the beginning of this year, the first module was printed—"Multi-Grade Schools: An Alternative for Children Making the Transition to First Grade."

5. Workshops with EXCELENCIA/USAID

As of this report, two days of work have been planned with the EXCELENCIA/USAID technical team for July 15-16. A proposed methodology has been presented and approved. The remaining eight days of training will be scheduled later.

C) Follow-up to Data Processing and Consolidation for Project Indicators

Indicator monitoring has continued during this quarter, through the processing and consolidation of data on field activities. The database is continuously being updated as to the number of schools in the network and their enrollment figures, along with data on participation in Project training events. At the same time, work has been done on processing the information submitted by NGO schools, verifying the data provided to ensure it is correctly entered into the Project databases. This process enables building data on the indicators that the Project will report on and the timely presentation of information to the schools involved.

D) Achievements under Result 3

- *Spanish reading and mathematics testing has concluded in the sample of NGO- and FBO-managed schools. This process will provide a baseline for evaluating the impact of the application of APA in these schools in the most sensitive areas in the school curriculum—Spanish and mathematics.*
- *The evaluation component, in coordination with the Result 4 team, designed a conceptual framework and specifications for formative tests in Spanish reading and mathematics for third-grade students in NGO- and FBO-managed schools. This formative assessment process aims to aid teachers to detect learning gaps in their students in a timely fashion, and to then use methods that will help them to overcome these gaps. A third-grade teacher training on formative assessment was held on June 4, in which 29 teachers from 24 schools participated.*
- *An analysis of the results of the performance tests for third-graders in reading comprehension and mathematics, given to the sample of students in schools participating in the validation of the proposed materials for the new curriculum, continues. The results of these tests will provide a baseline for the subsequent evaluation of the effect of the proposed new curriculum on student performance. At the same time, these tests provide a tool for MINED to evaluate student performance in the framework of the new content in the curriculum.*
- *A final report has been prepared with recommendations on improving the strategy for a successful transition from pre-school to primary education. Save the Children finished testing its strategy for a successful transition to primary school and the modules for its practical application, using the results from the experimental schools where it was validated. This strategy is ready to be shared with MINED and for teachers to be trained in using it. A preliminary training will be given to teachers in the NGO- and FBO-managed schools that are already part of the EXCELENCIA/USAID network.*

III. Result 4: Expanding the Number of Privately Managed Schools Applying the Model School Approach throughout Nicaragua

A) Achievements under Result 4

During the second quarter Result 4 reached final agreements with seven NGOs/FBOs. Partner organizations are identified in the table below with the corresponding updated number of schools they attend.

Table No. 14. Number of Schools per NGO/FBO.

NGO/ Faith Based Organization partners in Result 4	Number of schools
Iglesia Morava de Nicaragua	17
Fundación Alistar de Nicaragua	13
Centro Nehemías	133
Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields	104
Fundación León 2000	15
Fe y Alegría- La Asunción	8
FADCANIC	21
Total	311¹

Result 4 in this quarter reports a total of 311 privately managed schools in the EXCELENCIA network. Of the 311 privately managed schools over half (161 schools) are located in the RAAN (Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic) and the RAAS (Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic). In addition to the RAAN and the RAAS, the new privately managed schools are distributed throughout the following departments of Nicaragua:

Table No. 15. Number of Privately-managed schools by department

Departments where privately managed schools are located	Number of schools
RAAN	73
RAAS	88
Subtotal RAAN and RAAS	161
Boaco	1
Carazo	6
Chinandega	6
Chontales	4
Estelí	3
Jinotega	1
León	31
Managua	80
Masaya	10
Matagalpa	7
Nueva Segovia	1
Total	311

¹ 249 single-session schools and 31 double-session schools (morning and afternoon sessions serving different student populations) for a total count of 311 privately managed schools.

Of the 311 privately managed schools, 45 have been identified as mentor schools. Mentor schools have continued to be chosen as defined by the selection criteria of the EXCELENCIA project. They also have continued to serve in a capacity building role for the implementation of EXCELENCIA’s Result 4. The following materials have been purchased for the 311 privately managed schools and are in the process of being disbursed through the mechanism of the mentor schools:

Table No. 16. Materials Distribution for Privately Managed Schools

Materials	Distribution	Notes
School libraries	Mentor schools	To be rotated with satellite schools
Fungible material	Mentor schools	Distributed based on need to satellite schools
Small whiteboards	All first and second grade students	To both mentor and satellite schools
Math baskets	One for each mentor and satellite school	-
First grade projects (total of 4 projects)	Complete set for each mentor and satellite school	-
Support material for the classroom (total 6 modules)	Complete set for each mentor and satellite school	-
School banners with EXCELENCIA/USAID logo	“This is an EXCELENCIA school”– all mentor schools, “Aqui trabaja EXCELENCIA” – all satellite schools	Vicariato and C. Nehemías purchased banners with funds from their own budgets

In addition to in-service training for teachers and directors of privately managed schools Result 4 has also been in the process of providing pre service teacher training. Result 4 has partnered with the NER (Núcleo de Educación Rural)/ La Asuncion in association with Fe y Alegría to provide pre service teacher training to initiating teachers. An agreement has been signed with the national university UCA (Universidad Centroamericana) to provide accreditation to the students in this program. Students have been registered and the program is in the process of systematization. Technical support is provided by Result 4.

Capacity building and training activities in the model school approach have continued to be implemented via NGOs with Result 4 technical support. It is important to note that each NGO has assumed a training schedule that is based on their particular training needs. In some cases larger trainings are a more efficient way to share knowledge (allowing for an exchange of ideas and experiences between schools); while at other times smaller more intimate trainings at the school² level have been more effective in strengthening and deepening APA methods and pedagogical components (as well being more considerate of teachers’, directors’ and parents’ time and ability to move to other locations).

In the training cycle follow-up activities (primarily through school visits) have been focused on the implementation of the first grade project- “My Own Name.” Teachers and directors have been responsive to new methods- but more attention is still required

² Centro Nehemias shows a very high number of trainings in comparison to other NGOs because of many smaller individual trainings and follow-up at the school level (see table 17).

in this important grade level (as well as associated materials required for implementation). In addition, advances have been made in the application of the APA methodology and the elaboration of teacher guides based APA methodology; however gaps still remain (as reflected in NGO reports as well as site visits by Result 4 staff). These findings have been used to inform the design of the second national level capacity building activity for the third quarter (July 14- 18, 2008). In addition, local-level inter-capacity trainings with NGO staff and Result 4 Coordinators on pedagogical components- primarily student governments and parent committees have been held. Parent committees and student governments are in the process of being formed at the school level or strengthened (if one existed previously).



Photograph from a parent committee training with partner NGO Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields (Nueva Guinea).

Table No. 17. Trainings and School Visits for Component 4 Schools

NGO/ FBO	Number of Second Quarter Trainings			Total Trainings and School Visits During the Quarter
	April	May	June	
Centro Nehemías	104	86	100	318
Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields	6 (4 inter-trainings)	4	0	
Fundación León 2000	2 (1 inter-training)	1	2	
Alistar	2	4	0	
Fe y Alegría	(2 inter-trainings)	2	0	
Iglesia Morava	-	-	7	
FADCANIC*	-	-	-	
Total	112	97	109	
School visits by EXCELENCIA Result 4 staff	29	35	49	113

* FADCANIC has many training sessions planned for July.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- A team of auditors visited from the office of the USAID Regional Inspector General, which is in charge of the technical audit of the USAID Human Investment Program. The EXCELENCIA/USAID team held numerous meetings with the auditing team, which also visited a random sample of network schools. The auditors were given numerous documents that illustrate the work of the Project and held many meetings with the technical specialists from each component. They were particularly interested in the Project indicators and in the mechanisms for collecting, processing and verifying Project data.
- During this quarter, the managers of the different Project components continued to actively participate in the different committees set up by MINED both for implementing the curriculum reform and for the other educational policy aspects, including the national Integrated Quality Education Model.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

Result 1. Expansion

- Continued support for MINED in the process of forming educational core groups, the basis for the institutionalization of the Project and its pedagogical approach. The facilitators will support MINED representatives and authorities in the formation and distribution of educational core groups in their regions.
- Continued school site visits and the identification of new schools to be included in the network until the goal is reached. The new schools joining the network will receive training on the pedagogical components.
- The Third Regional Technical Meetings in each department. Local authorities will attend the meetings (departmental and municipal MINED representatives and advisors, and mentor school directors).
- The facilitators will continue participating in and facilitating the TEPCEs each month in their departments, using these evaluation, training and planning opportunities to identify educational difficulties and needs in their regions and to promote the Project approach and offer to train schools in the approach.
- A technical meeting of the entire team to receive and analyze the results of the 2007 Annual Assessment to evaluate student performance. The team will identify areas that continue to be problematic and will analyze the differences between the students in the EXCELENCIA/USAID schools and those in the rest of the schools in the sample. It will analyze the results and develop a strategy for using them to promote necessary political decisions within MINED.
- The technical team will continue to work on a compendium of active schools that documents the process of expansion in Nicaragua. This exercise includes collecting,

revising, and updating of all modules for trainings provided by the EXCELENCIA technical team, as well as other relevant documentation for implementing the active schools model.

Result No. 2: New Competency-based Curriculum

- The consultant team will continue the revision of the curriculum framework, competencies and other aspects of the curriculum, in line with the results of the national curriculum consultation and MINED policies for this activity.
- FADCANIC will continue with the validation of the EIB materials developed for third and fourth grades of multi-grade primary schools and with the production of materials for fifth and sixth grades.

Result No. 3. Studies and Evaluation

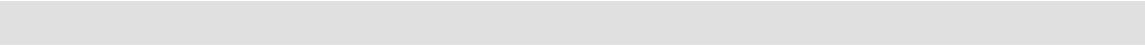
- Analysis of the results of the 2007 Annual Assessment with Project technical specialists and facilitators, to reach conclusions and develop corresponding educational policy recommendations. The results, conclusions and recommendations will be presented to MINED and to the schools that participated in the assessment.
- Continuation of the Formative Assessment in Component 4 schools. In August, the second formative assessment test will be developed and a pilot test will be given.
- Beginning of the adaptation of the tests and instruments used in November 2007, in order to prepare the documentation for the 2008 Annual Assessment and testing in November 2008 that will enable comparison with the 2007 results.
- Quality control tests of the Database Management System. Data entry will continue of information for reports and for monitoring Project indicators.
- Updating of enrollment data with official information to be obtained from MINED.

Future initiatives under Result 4

Future steps include the second national level capacity building activity which will focus on strengthening practical application of the APA methodology. Reports from partner NGOs and school visit evaluations indicate that participating schools (teachers, directors, parents) have a good sense of the conceptual aspects of APA- but struggle in the concrete application of the method. For this reason the training is designed on opportunities for *practice and application*. In addition given the Project's focus on and strength at the first-grade level (as well as the great need at this grade level) one complete day of the training will only focus on the implementation of the first-grade projects.

In addition to the participation of Result 4 NGOs, NGO partners of the EXCELENCIA/USAID Project attending the training include: CARE, ALIANZAS, AMCHAM, and Padre Fabretto. Save the Children will also share their experiences in the transition from pre-school to first grade. With the basis of the second national level capacity training, the focus of NGOs work in the next quarter will be on the

implementation of the remaining first-grade projects as well as refining the implementation of the APA methodology and Pedagogical Components. It is foreseen that more exchanges between schools and quality circles within schools will be utilized for this purpose.



SUCCESS STORIES

The project has made significant progress this quarter toward institutionalizing the project's approach, in particular with regard to its school network management model. Under the national Integrated Quality Education Model the country is broken down into eight educational regions around the eight Normal Schools.

In each region, the project will set up quality modules, made up of one so-called BASE school and several neighboring schools to which the base school will disseminate quality. This is the institutionalization of the management model for the EXCELENCIA/USAID network of schools, with mentor and satellite schools.

Moreover, many of the new BASE schools will be EXCELENCIA mentor schools.

Once this management structure is set up, the following step by MINED will be to train the directors of the BASE schools in the application of the new curriculum and in those aspects from the EXCELENCIA/USAID pedagogical approach that the MINED will incorporate in its model. EXCELENCIA/USAID will support the MINED in these activities.