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**EXCELENCIA Quarterly Report**  
**October 1, 2008 – December 31, 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)

Main Contractor: American Institutes for Research (AIR)

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

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AED</b>	Academy for Educational Development
<b>AIR</b>	American Institutes for Research
<b>APA</b>	Learn, Practice, Apply ( <i>Aprendo, Practico, Aplico</i> )
<b>BASE</b>	Basic Education and Training Program II
<b>COP</b>	Chief of Party
<b>CTO</b>	Cognizant Technical Officer
<b>EQUIP</b>	Education Quality Improvement Program
<b>EXCELENCIA</b>	Expansion of the Excellence Centers in Nicaragua with Emphasis on the APA (Learn, Practice and Apply) Methodology
<b>MINED</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>PRONICASS</b>	Nicaraguan Support to the Social Sector Program
<b>SO</b>	Strategic Objective
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>RAAN</b>	Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic
<b>RAAS</b>	Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic
<b>EIB</b>	Bilingual Intercultural Education
<b>FADCANIC</b>	Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast
<b>TEPCE</b>	Educational Evaluation, Planning and Training Workshops (Original training method created by MINED)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fourth quarter of 2008, the Project planned actions in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, mindful that 2009 is the last phase for meeting established goals.

Under the expansion objective, the decision was made to add almost all of the targeted schools to the network this quarter. This way, newly added schools would benefit from more months of assistance before the end of the project. The addition of a greater number of schools to the network this quarter made it necessary to also increase the number of mentor schools, surpassing targets slightly. This decision ensured that each mentor school could adequately serve a reasonable number of satellite schools.

In this fourth quarter, EXCELENCIA/USAID has trained 9,821 people. Due to certain limitations in budget and availability of teachers for trainings this quarter, focus was given to experience exchange gatherings as a more appropriate tool for newly added schools to learn the pedagogical components. These experience exchanges also served to reinforce capacity in schools already participating in the network. Through these experience exchanges, teachers, students and parents gathered in the mentor schools to learn from each other's experiences. Participants considered these experience exchanges to be among the most valuable training strategies, as they offered a practical and immediate response to the need to learn how to use APA in classrooms.

Another important expansion strategy this quarter was holding technical meetings in each of the departments. These sessions with MINED authorities and representatives, led by facilitators, served to evaluate the 2008 school year and to set guidelines and priorities for 2009. To conclude this series of technical meetings, facilitators held a workshop in Managua, in which results from meetings in the departments were consolidated, and suggestions from MINED representatives for 2009 were received.

One of the most important activities this quarter was to provide support for MINED's "Battle for the First Grade" initiative. A National Reading Contest was held in conjunction with the Office on Primary Education, in which first grade children from all the primary schools in the country competed, demonstrating their reading aloud skills. The contest was held at the municipal and departmental levels, with winners from each department then competing in a central event in Managua. The national first and second place contest winners were students from two EXCELENCIA/USAID network mentor schools. Teacher representatives from schools in the final round of the contest presented MINED with a document acknowledging the contributions the Project and its strategies had made to their students' achievement in reading and writing.

EXCELENCIA/USAID continued to support MINED's curriculum transformation process by hiring a team of ten consultants, who incorporated results and suggestions from the National Consultation into the new multigrade curriculum materials. Support was also provided by contracting three designers, who worked on document design and developed final products.

In conjunction with other donor institutions, EXCELENCIA/USAID has continued to work in the *Grupo Impulsor* for the Integrated Quality Education Model. Delays from MINED in establishing the quality model and in finalizing new curriculum materials have in turn caused Project delays in the provision of technical assistance and training of principals from the model's BASE schools. EXCELENCIA/USAID has limited resources to fund MINED training events for these teachers in 2009, and is therefore only able to offer its staff as trainers.

Project representatives have continued working on the different national commissions established by MINED for implementation of its policies. The Project's presence in these Commissions has allowed it to have input into national education policy decisions. Project facilitators continue to participate in the monthly TEPCE workshops in the regions, the majority of which are held in the Project's mentor schools.

The 2007 Annual Study report was finished and is ready for printing and distribution. Also in this quarter, a second application of third grade reading and mathematics tests aligned to the new curriculum took place in public schools. For the first time, students in the autonomous

regions of the Caribbean Coast took part in these assessments after the entire item bank has been vetted for cultural appropriateness in workshops the project conducted with representatives from the autonomous regions.

The Project also finalized its new semi-automated easy-access database, which will allow any user to quickly look up information.

Additionally, a self-evaluation was conducted by the Caribbean Coast schools and those served under Project Component 4.

FADCANIC continues to serve the 106 schools under its charge -- 23 mentor schools and 83 satellite schools. Two important processes were completed which contributed to educational quality on the Caribbean Coast: validation of third and fourth grade native language educational materials for multigrade schools, and preparation of fifth and sixth grade language and math textbooks, also multigrade. In the RAAN, mentor school functioning with satellite schools has faced challenges due to satellite school distance and the high cost of transportation for principals and teachers. Additionally, there is a lack of action plans for mentor schools to carry out activities with their satellite schools – a difficulty complicated by the already heavy administrative and instructional workloads of principals. Comprehensive visits continued to be used as an effective method for training teachers in the classroom and for advising and supporting validation and self-evaluation processes. One difficulty identified was the lack of supplies in the schools.

In component 4 dealing with the expansion of APA to NGO - or FBO- managed schools, 318 schools are now part of the network (18 more than the proposed target). As planned, principals and teachers of these schools continue to be trained in using APA methodology, giving priority to activities for the first grade, and materials needed for application of APA components which are currently being distributed.

In the fourth quarter EXCELENCIA's funding from USAID increased by US\$800,000 adding to its scope of work the reconstruction of two schools in the RAAN and the distribution of educational materials to these two as well as other schools in the area affected by Hurricane Felix. The project was mainly engaged in contractual issues, preparing the bid procedure for construction companies and other preparatory activities with local authorities and communities. Construction is slated to start in the next quarter.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

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

#### **A) School Network Expansion**

During the fourth quarter of 2008, EXCELENCIA/USAID added 122 new schools to the network (all public), for a total of 2,869 participating schools. This is 2,229 schools more than the number received at the start of the Project (640). This group of schools includes the 318 schools added through Component 4. It should be noted that in 2008, 1,107 new schools were added to the network, surpassing the initially targeted increase of 500 schools per Project year. This leaves only 141 schools remaining to meet the Project's final goal.

The Project had determined that if possible, it would strive to add as many schools as possible to the network in 2008, so that facilitators could provide assistance to most recently included schools for a certain period of time before the end of the project.

*Table No. 1. Schools Served by EXCELENCIA, per Quarter and Category, as of December 2008*

<b>Schools Served by EXCELENCIA per Quarter and Category</b>												
	Feb. 2006	Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007	Jun. 2007	Sep. 2007	Dec. 2007	Mar. 2008	Jun. 2008	Sep. 2008	Dec. 2008
<b>Public schools</b>												
Mentor Schools	112	184	184	190	232	232	232	232	245	245	250	339
Satellite Schools	528	526	749	930	899	1,327	1,473	1,530	1,795	2,069	2,179	2,212
<b>Sub-Tot. Public</b>									<b>2,040</b>	<b>2,314</b>	<b>2,429</b>	<b>2,551</b>
<b>Result 4 schools</b>												
Mentor Schools									41	45	48	48
Satellite Schools									226	266	270	270
<b>Sub-Total Result 4</b>									<b>267</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>1,559</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>2,307</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,747</b>	<b>2,869</b>

*Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2008.*

Table No. 2 shows the distribution of schools in the EXCELENCIA network, by type and department, as of December 2008.

*Table No.2. EXCELENCIA'S Network Schools by Department, Modality and Status*

<b>Department</b>	<b>School Type</b>				<b>Status</b>	
	<b>Multi-grade</b>	<b>Multi-grade Bilingual</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Regular Bilingual</b>	<b>Mentor Schools</b>	<b>Satellite schools</b>
Boaco	104		21		11	114
Carazo	78		35		17	96
Chinandega	151		83		27	207
Chontales	104		31		15	120
Esteli	83		37		14	106
Granada	70		36		17	89
Jinotega	181		35		30	186
Leon	117		63		35	145
Madriz	105		22		18	109
Managua	86		181		41	226
Masaya	41		62		17	86
Matagalpa	169		57		28	198

Nueva Segovia	166		31		25	172
Raan	64	30	35	20	27	121
Raas	217	10	60	13	33	268
Rio San Juan	98		18		13	103
Rivas	108		47		19	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>1942</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>2482</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA Project, December 2008.

Table No. 3 shows the distribution of schools by department, which were added to the network through NGOs and FBOs.

*Table No.3. EXCELENCIA Schools Attended by NGOs by Department, Modality and Status*

Department	ALISTAR	FADCANIC	FE Y ALEGRIA	FUND LEON	IGLESIA MORAVA	CENTRO NEHEMIAS	VICAR. BLUEF.	Total
BOACO						1		1
CARAZO						\$		6
CHINANDEGA						\$		6
CHONTALES						4		4
ESTELI						3		3
JINOTEGA						1		1
LEON			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	64	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>318</b>

Source: Proyecto EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

Table No. 4 shows the number of schools managed by each of the organizations.

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

Table No. 5 : Distribution of Schools by Department and Organization, September 2008								
	Alistar	Fadcanic	Fe y Alegría	Fund. León	Iglesia Morava	Centro Nehemías	Vicariato Bluefields	Total
BOACO						1		1
CARAZO						6		6
CHINANDEGA						6		6
CHONTALES						4		4
ESTELI						3		3
JINOTEGA						1		1
LEON			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	64	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>318</b>

Source: Project EXCELENCIA. September 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**

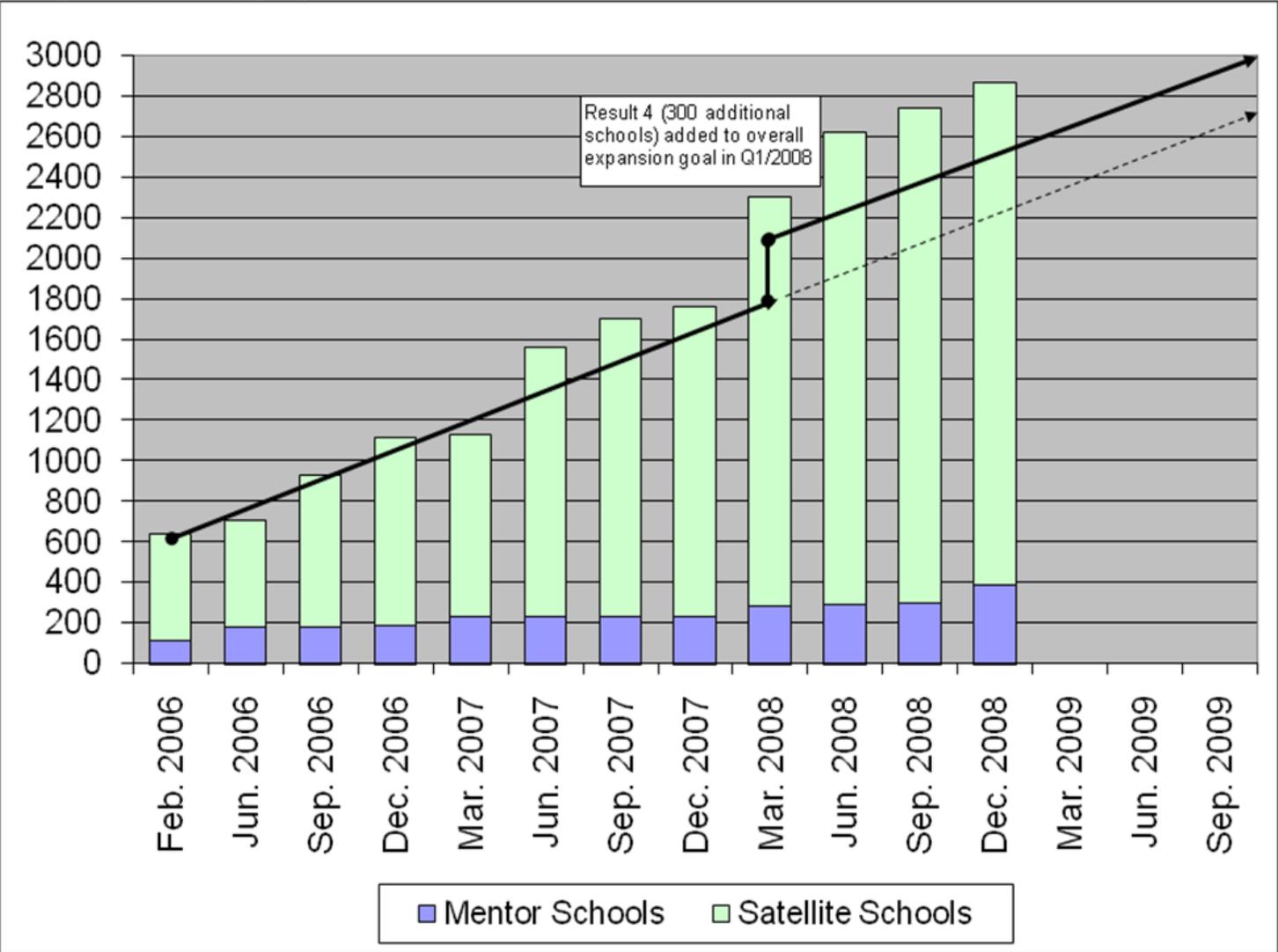


Table No. 5 shows progress in EXCELENCIA/USAID coverage, using updated figures from the MINED Statistics Office. According to its data, in the third quarter of 2008, the Project was serving, through its network, 32% of the country's primary schools and 47% of students enrolled in primary education. Furthermore, 53% of primary school teachers work in the EXCELENCIA/USAID school network. While the Project began in 2007 in 144 municipalities, it has now extended to 151 municipalities, covering 99% of the total number of municipalities in the country (153).

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

<b>Coverage by Municipality</b>	
Number of municipalities in the country	153
Number of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA in 2008	151
<b>% of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA in 2008</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>Coverage by schools</b>	
Number of primary education schools (MINED 2008)	9,010
Number of schools served by EXCELENCIA as of December 2008	2,869
<b>% of primary schools served by EXCELENCIA as of December 2008</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Coverage by student enrollment</b>	
Total of initial enrollment in primary education 2008	943,654
Total of enrollment at EXCELENCIA school as of December 2008	444,761
<b>% of enrollment at EXCELENCIA schools as of December 2008</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Coverage by teacher</b>	
Total number of primary education teachers 2008	30,192
Number of teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of December 2008	16,114
<b>% of Teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of December 2008</b>	<b>53%</b>

Source: MINED Statistics Directorate and EXCELENCIA. All records as of June 2007, except National Teacher totals (MINED figures from 2006). \* EXCELENCIA updates all data with the MINED Statistics Directorate on a continual basis.

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

Table No.6 Enrollment and schools served by NGOs

<b>NGO</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>Girls' enrollment</b>	<b>Total enrollment</b>
ALISTAR	13	1,177	2,449
FADCANIC	21	1,416	2,925
FE Y ALEGRIA	8	334	725
FUNDACION LEON	15	1,342	2,849
IGLESIA MORAVA	17	1,435	2,650
NEHEMIAS	133	7,811	16,484
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	111	2,432	5,155
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>15,947</b>	<b>33,237</b>

Source: Proyecto EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

As of December 2008, there were a total of 16,114 teachers (13, 698 women and 2,416 men) working in EXCELENCIA/USAID network schools. Table No. 6 shows teachers, by department and gender, including teachers working in NGO- and FBO-managed schools.

Table No.7 Teachers at network schools by gender and department

Departments	Female	Male	Total
Boaco	473	69	542
Carazo	449	107	556
Chinandega	1,204	152	1,356
Chontales	495	54	549
Esteli	626	40	666
Granada	679	115	794
Jinotega	827	170	997
Leon	848	110	958
Madriz	351	79	430
Managua	2,208	330	2,538
Masaya	898	196	1,094
Matagalpa	1,143	207	1,350
Nueva Segovia	755	117	872
Raan	720	272	992
Raas	1,043	218	1,261
Rio San Juan	310	92	402
Rivas	669	88	757
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,698</b>	<b>2,416</b>	<b>16,114</b>

Source: preliminary MINED data. December 2008.

## B. Training

EXCELENCIA organized a number of training events at the national and local levels during the fourth quarter of 2008 in which a total of 9,821 people participated.

Tables No. 8 - 14 below show training activities by gender and duration in both geographic areas carried out during this quarter.

Table No. 8. Training in the Pedagogical Area, Component 1

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS Oct. – Dec. 2008 by Event, Gender, and Duration			
Name of Event	1Day		Total people
	Female	Male	
FIRST READING ALOUD CONTEST, "ALSO TEACH THEM TO READ."	32	106	138
FIRST GRADE WORKSHOPS (RAAS)	15	40	55
EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS WITH PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, STUDENT GOVERNMENTS, AND PARENTS.	1067	3494	4561
LOCAL WORKSHOPS WITH FIRST GRADE TEACHERS.	18	112	130
2008 END-OF-YEAR TECHNICAL MEETING	195	362	557
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>4,114</b>	<b>5,441</b>

Source: Proyecto EXCELENCIA/USAID., December 2008

Table No. 9 shows training activities carried out during the quarter by Component 4 for schools managed by NGOs or FBOs.

Table No. 9 Training participants by number of days and gender

Days		Number of		1 Day		2 Days		3 Days		More than 3 days		Total
NGO	Name of the Event	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
FADCANIC	Training on the Active Role	8	92									100
FE Y ALEGRIA	Evaluation session on pedagogical components, APA implementation, and first grade projects.	7	31									38
FE Y ALEGRIA	Workshop with multigrade teachers on pedagogical concepts and practices.				13							13
NEHEMIAS	"Classroom environment and learning corners."	160	923									1083
NEHEMIAS	"Servant leadership."	278	1408									1686
NEHEMIAS	Reinforcement and feedback in APA, learning resource centers and pedagogical components.	116	680									796
NEHEMIAS	Reinforcement in student government organization	5	22									27
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	Level II training for school committees.			132	99							231
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	Level II training for student governments.			90	74							164
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	APA methodology, pedagogical components and <i>My Own Name</i> .					127	91					218
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	National workshop with coordinators and technical specialists from the VAB Educational Pastoral area.							18	6			24
<b>Total</b>		<b>574</b>	<b>3156</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>			<b>4380</b>

Source: Component 4 EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

### Technical Meetings

An expansion strategy this quarter was to hold 16 technical meetings in the different departments, in full coordination with local MINED authorities. These meetings were designed to evaluate 2008 activities, share experiences and lessons learned with MINED authorities, and receive feedback on the proposed approach for activities in 2009 -- the final Project phase in which progress to date must be consolidated. The departmental and municipal MINED delegates recognized that the Project has always worked in close coordination with them.

Some conclusions from participants in the 16 technical meetings are as follows:

- The experience exchange as a training strategy yields positive results.
- Delegates considered what they learned in 2008 through participation in project activities to be highly valuable for their own tasks and responsibilities.
- Implementation of first grade project strategies for helping children to learn to read and write produced good results. By the end of the school year, a high percentage of students had learned to read. These projects have now been extended to other schools not part of the EXCELENCIA/USAID network.

Participants also mentioned some aspects needing improvement:

- Resistance from certain new teachers in accepting change in methodology.
- It is necessary to increase the percentage of parents who become involved in school activities in an ongoing way.

Additionally, a series of recommendations emerged from the technical meetings which will be applied in 2009:

- Hold different kinds of contests with students.
- Institute incentive policies for both teachers and students.
- Strengthen weakest pedagogical areas and components.
- Continue trainings with teachers.
- Designate certain places in the schools as reading rooms.
- Raise awareness among teachers about the importance of the resource centers.

Table No. 10 shows 16 technical meetings held throughout the country and participants.

*Table No. 10. Technical Meetings Held this Quarter and Participants*

Department	Municipality	Place	Date	# of participants		
				F	M	T
1. RAAS	Nueva Guinea	Rest. El Ranchón	November 21	9	7	16
2. León	León	Rest. Caña Brava	November 24	40	13	53
3. Carazo	Jinotepe	Esc. Elías Serrano	November 24	19	16	35
4. Estelí	Estelí	Rest. Flan Boyán	November 25	25	7	32
5. Managua	Managua	IPADE	November 25	26	8	34
6. Jinotega	Jinotega	La Cuculmeca	November 25	10	6	16
7. Chinandega	Chinandega	Rest. Anto Ché	November 27	50	17	67
8. Madriz	Somoto	Rest. Don Chú	November 27	17	19	36
9. Matagalpa	Matagalpa	Rest. La Antorcha	December 3	20	19	39
10. Granada	Granada	Delegación Dptal.	December 2	12	3	15
11. Masaya	Masaya	Rest. La Llamarada	December 2	26	8	34
12. Rivas	Rivas	Rest. Mariscos	December 3	31	8	39
13. Nueva Segovia	Ocotol	Rest. La Fortaleza	December 4	17	25	42
14. Río San Juan	El Castillo	Esc. Rafaela Herrera	December 4	15	9	24
15. Boaco	Boaco	Rest. El Bosque	December 5	20	21	41
16. Chontales	Juigalpa	Rest. La Quinta	December 9	25	9	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	-	<b>362</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>557</b>

*Source. Proyecto EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008*

### **Experience Exchanges**

Experience exchanges were one of the most useful tools for the expansion process this quarter, and were evaluated positively by participants. Through these exchange sessions, schools learn from other schools that have more experience or success in applying the Project's pedagogical components. Some results from these experience exchanges follow:

- APA concepts, teaching plans, and understanding of the importance of pedagogical components in improving student learning were all strengthened.
- Teachers were highly satisfied with work observed in classrooms of the schools visited, as they were able to observe new strategies for student learning. Each school shared the kinds of instructional materials that had produced good results.
- In their experience exchanges, multigrade teachers liked the physical and pedagogical environment of the schools, the active participation of students in the classrooms, the use of varied study techniques, student discipline, promotion of values, the use of recycled materials, and the role of the library in improving learning.
- Visiting teachers committed to following up on the following aspects: environment and organization of library resource centers; creating teaching aids from recycled materials; support from student monitors in strengthening reading clubs; and the organization and use of resource center materials in the classrooms.

- Many of the school where the exchanges were held also enjoyed participation from municipal delegates, who demonstrated enthusiasm, active participation and, above all, commitment to continuing to promote and support these types of activities.
- Other noteworthy aspects included: participation from student monitors; good pedagogical environments; resource centers with different instructional materials; and parent support for student learning through cooperative work.
- A series of projects were presented, such as: school tree-planting, garbage management, preparation of materials, food preparation, and construction of more first grade classrooms. These are some of the activities being carried out in the schools - with participation from students and parents - observed during the exchange visits.
- One school visit in particular demonstrated the importance of reading and chess clubs, organized by the student government.

Participants in the exchanges said that they had collected many ideas and learned things that they would put in practice in their own schools. The following tables describe the different exchanges carried out, with number and gender of participants.

*Table No 11. Exchanges with First through Sixth Grade Teachers*

Department	Municipality		School	Date	# of participants		
					F	M	T
León	1	La Paz Centro	Rafaela HerreraN° 2	October 13	106	13	119
	2	Jicaral	Salomón de la Selva	October 15			
Masaya	3	Catarina	Humberto Pavón	October 17	90	27	117
Managua	4	Managua	Santa Clara	October 7	389	69	458
Granada	5	Granada	Padre Antonio Stella	October 17	93	12	105
Matagalpa	6	Matagalpa	-	-	89	12	101
Madriz	7	Somoto	-	-	284	69	353
Nueva Segovia	8	Ocotral	-	-	191	24	215
Rivas	9	Rivas	-	-	477	183	660
Carazo	10	Jinotepe	-	-	365	217	582
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>2084</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>2710</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

*Table No 12. Exchanges with Mentor School Teachers and Principals*

Department	Municipality		School	Date	# of participants		
					F	M	T
Chinandega	1	Santo Tomás	Rafaela Herrera	October 11	452	186	638
	2	Chichigalpa	Villa Dolores	October 13			
	3	El Viejo	Remigio Salazar	October 14			
	4	Chichigalpa	Villa Dolores	October 14			
	5	Corinto	Gral. Tomás Martínez	October 15			
	6	Pto. Morazán	María del Pilar	October 16			
	7	Posoltega	José Dolores Toruño	October 20			
	8	Villa Nueva	Jerusalén	October 21			

Estelí	9	San Nicolás	Flor de Sacuanjoche	October 24	184	45	229
	10	Condega	Julio C. Castillo	October 27			
	11	Pueblo Nuevo	Rubén Darío	October 28			
	12	La Trinidad	Divino Niño	October 29			
<b>Total</b>					<b>636</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>867</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

Table No. 13. Experience Exchanges with Students and Parents

Department	Nº	Municipality	School	Date	# of participants		
					F	M	T
Jinotega	14	Yalí	Emmanuel Mongalo	October 15	15	16	31
Matagalpa	15	Matagalpa	El Progreso	October 22	28	39	67
	16	Sébaco	Cándida Miranda	October 23			
	17	San Ramón	Fray Bartolomé	October 24			
Chontales	18	Santo Tomás	Rigoberto Cabezas	October 10	37	27	64
Boaco	19	Boaco	Club Social	October 17	30	10	40
RAAS (Zelaya Central)	20	-	-		51	18	69
<b>Total</b>					<b>161</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>271</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

Table No. 14. Experience Exchanges with Teachers, Advisors and Vice-Principals

Department	Nº	Municipality	School	Date	# of participants		
					F	M	T
RAAS	20	Rama	Nuestra Sra. De Fátima	17 de octubre	291	68	359
Río San Juan	21	San Carlos	Rafaela Herrera	21 de octubre	280	65	345
	22	San Miguelito	San Cristóbal	23 de octubre			
<b>Total</b>					<b>571</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>704</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

### National Reading Aloud Contest for First Grade Children

As a way of promoting the “Battle for the First Grade” activities, and in particular those related to learning to read and write at an early age, a National Reading-Aloud Contest was conducted jointly with MINED in all municipalities and departments of the country. Project facilitators worked with departmental delegations on the different preparation activities involved, such as:

- Training teachers in the “My Own Name” project.
- Motivational activities, exercises for improving reading-aloud techniques, reading games, etc.
- Various exercises with selected readings, including children’s stories.

On November 6<sup>th</sup> in Managua, the final round of the contest was held with 29 children who had won in their departments. Also in attendance were 29 successful first grade teachers, who expressed satisfaction at the recognition of their work. 80 more participants, including parents, principals, advisors and departmental delegates, joined the event, proud of their children's success. Most of the participants in this final stage of the contest came from mentor and satellite schools in the Project network. The first and second place national contest winners were students of EXCELENCIA/USAID schools.

National MINED authorities were very pleased with results of work being done in the lower grades, evidenced by this contest.

### Local Workshops

Local workshops were held in two departments this quarter, on specific technical topics requested by teachers in the network schools:

#### RAAS (Zelaya Central)

- First grade teachers were trained in the "My Own Name" project, in resource center organization and operations, and in the preparation of learning guides. The 55 teachers (15 women and 40 men) who participated in these workshops demonstrated considerable involvement and motivation.

#### Managua

- Principals and teachers participated in local workshops on the subjects of cooperative learning and of APA methodology use in the classrooms. 130 participants (112 women and 18 men) participated in these workshops.

## C) Monitoring and Technical Support Visits to Network Schools

Departmental advisors, municipal advisors and mentor school principals were able to provide direct technical support through these visits. In the same way that the Project trains these technical specialists, they then share new knowledge on these school visits. Due to the limited number of Project facilitators, these monitoring and technical support visits from mentor school principals and advisors play an important role in the expansion process. Not only do they serve to track and ensure network school quality, but also to transfer skills to local MINED personnel, who can then continue monitoring and supporting this quality. The departmental advisors, municipal advisors and principals are very familiar with the environment in which their students, teachers and community members function, making their assistance more appropriate and relevant to those who receive it.

In this last quarter of 2008, advisors and directors made visits primarily to satellite schools, while the Project facilitators visited mentor schools. This way, by the end of the quarter a significant sample of schools had been visited.

Technical assistance on visits, during this quarter, focused mainly on the lower grades, supporting teachers in reading and writing instruction and in using tests to determine student progress in this area. Assistance was also provided in teaching mathematics.

Table No. 15 shows the number of visits made by departmental advisors, municipal advisors, and principals during the fourth quarter.

*Table No. 15. Technical Assistance Visits in the Pacific by Mentor School Principals and Departmental and Municipal Advisors, by Department*

Department	Number of Visits
León	170
Masaya	110

Jinotega	89
Matagalpa	125
Granada	105
Río San Juan	70
Zelaya Central	55
Carazo	125
Rivas	200
Managua	20
Boaco	93
Chontales	141
Chinandega	332
Estelí	253
Nueva Segovia	175
Madriz	114
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2,177</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

The facilitators, at the same time, visited schools this quarter for different purposes, such as: technical assistance; monitoring of training activities (local workshops) and application of training material; coordination in activity planning with authorities and technical specialists working with the schools; monitoring of experience exchanges; administrative and financial matters; support for local activities, etc. Some results from these visits are listed below:

- Awareness was raised with communities regarding the importance of using the APA methodology.
- Feedback on classroom processes was provided.
- Certain changes could be observed among teachers and students in network schools, such as strengthened self-esteem among teachers and increased leadership from students participating in student governments.
- First grade projects are being successfully implemented.
- The majority of schools have created an excellent teaching environment -- both 2007 as well as 2008 mentor schools.
- Teachers are using APA methodology and requesting regular reinforcement in it.
- The Learning Resource Centers (*CRA, Centros de Recursos de Aprendizaje*) were observed; reinforcement is recommended.
- There is a great deal of material out on display in the schools, prepared mainly by teachers and students, although it is necessary to promote more parent support in creating materials.
- There is much evidence of student work, which in general has been reviewed and corrected by teachers.

Table 16 displays the number of visits made by Project facilitators this quarter, by department and objective.

Table No. 16. Number of School Visits by Facilitators of Component 1

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS VISITS BY FACILITATORS							
Department	Monitoring and Assistance in Pedagogical Components	Coordination Visits for Local Workshops	Monitoring of Local Workshops	Monitoring of Experience Exchanges	Disbursement of Funds and Receipt of Accounting	Support for Evaluation	Total Visits
León	4	1	1	2	1	6	15
Masaya	6	1	1	1	1	0	10
Jinotega	1	3	2	1	2	1	10
Matagalpa	2	4	2	3	3	3	17
Granada	14	7	2	4	0	0	27
Río San Juan	3	5	1	2	1	0	12
Zelaya Central	3	8	1	1	2	0	15
Carazo	1	5	1	1	2	0	10
Rivas	1	2	1	1	0	0	5
Managua	2	6	10	6	0	0	24
Boaco	4	9	1	1	0	5	20
Chontales	2	2	1	1	0	0	6
Chinandega	12	7	1	8	2	0	30
Estelí	2	8	2	4	3	1	20
Nueva Segovia	6	3	1	1	0	0	11
Madriz	5	1	1	1	1	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>241</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID. December 2008

## D) Expansion Activities in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions (FADCANIC)

### Final Summary of Mentor and Satellite Schools

Visits this quarter were also used to update statistical data for the 2008 school year pertaining to the 106 schools served by the Project in both regions. The following shows information collected during these visits:

Table No. 17. Final Statistical Summary 2008, Both Regions

No	Municipality	No. Of Schools	Teachers		Students		
			AS	F	AS	F	% RET
1.	Bluefields	12	216	177	4 586	2 268	86
2.	Kukra Hill	8	46	40	1 025	521	79
3.	Pearl Lagoon	14	111	96	1905	930	88
4.	Desembocadura	5	46	29	988	499	84

5.	Corn Island	3	37	32	789	383	84
	<b>Subtotal RAAS</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>9 293</b>	<b>4 601</b>	<b>85 %</b>
1	Puerto Cabezas	15	200	167	4,385	2,240	94
2	Waspam	9	125	72	2,876	1,478	87
3	Prinzapolka	9	77	50	1,818	895	87
4	Siuna	8	81	50	2,023	1,043	94
5	Bonanza	10	67	44	540	268	84
6	Rosita	11	67	44	1,506	724	86
7	Mulukuku	1	8	6	342	166	96
	<b>Subtotal RAAN</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>13,490</b>	<b>6,814</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>1081</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>22,783</b>	<b>11,415</b>	<b>87.5%</b>

*Note: The Rigoberto Cabezas School in Corn Island is counted as one school with two programs, one monolingual and one bilingual.*

*Source. FADCANIC. December 2008*

### School Self-Evaluations

A total of **284** participants, including parents, students, teachers, principals and vice-principals from mentor and satellite schools, evaluated qualitative progress in the schools, according to criteria provided by MINED. The self-evaluation was designed to ascertain the performance and participation of the educational community in promoting educational quality. For each school, the extent to which the Project's pedagogical components had been developed was evaluated.

The qualitative evaluations were conducted in a participatory format, through focus groups comprised of parents, student government representatives, and teachers. These evaluations reaffirmed that outcomes for indicators had been very positive, and that this was the direct result of changes made in planning, leadership, learning assessment, classroom environment, and use of APA strategies by 85% of teaching staff, with support from the rest of the educational community.

It was also indicated that members of the student governments are willing to work and run the council, but in the majority of schools they need more guidance and support from teachers.

There was significant parent attendance in the different focus groups. There, they recognized that their participation over the year had not been optimal, but they accepted the challenge of working more closely with the schools and taking the family's role in education more seriously in the upcoming 2009 school year.

Eighty five percent of teachers explained that weaknesses in applying pedagogical components are due in part to lack of technical assistance from principals. Technical assistance received from specialists in Project Component 1 had been very effective and timely, but technical leadership in the schools from principals should be strengthened. They requested periodic technical assistance and support in 2009 for teachers in the classrooms, and more time allotted for each school visit. This would strengthen teacher performance and guarantee educational quality -- especially in community multigrade schools that have no principal.

Table No. 18. Summary of Self-Evaluation Participants in the RAAS

Municipality	Schools Visited	Parents			Students			Teacher and Principals who participated		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Bluefields	12	3	14	17	5	14	19	4	30	34
Kukra Hill	8	2	4	6	11	15	26	3	16	19
Pearl Lagoon	14	1	23	24	7	23	30	3	26	29
Desembocadura	5	5	10	15	7	9	16	13	9	22
Corn Island	3	0	7	7	2	8	10	0	10	10
<b>Gran total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>114</b>

Source: FADCANIC. December 2008

Table No. 19. Summary of Self-Evaluation Participants in the RAAN

Municipality	Schools Visited	No. of visits by ethno linguistic sector				Nº of teachers visited		
		Mayagna	Mestizo	Mískitu	Total	M	F	Total
Siuna	8	0	11	0	11	4	23	27
Mulukukú	1	0	3	0	3	2	2	4
Rosita	12	19	8	0	27	19	15	34
Bonanza	10	27	2	0	29	15	8	23
Prinzapolka	2	0	0	2	2	1	5	6
Waspam	5	0	0	5	5	6	20	26
Bilwi	12	0	0	12	12	1	37	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>158</b>

Source: FADCANIC. December 2008

### Training Activities

Local training was provided through technical assistance and support visits to the schools by the regional FADCANIC-EXCELENCIA teams, who were also joined by pedagogical advisors from the MINED regional delegations and educational authorities from the regional governments. Assistance was mainly offered in pedagogical components, third and fourth grade validation, school self-evaluation workshops, and strengthening school organizational structures.

Also of note has been the creation of training plans involving final year normal school students in support of EXCELENCIA/USAID schools. In January 2009, the EXCELENCIA/USAID regional technical team will present "The Active Role of the Child" in the Bluefields Normal School, in keeping with 2009 APA strategies for teachers in professionalization courses. Another important task has been preparation of reinforcement plans for principals and teachers in the Project's mentor and satellite schools.

### Technical Assistance Visits to Teachers in their Classrooms

Technical assistance visits to teachers in the classrooms continue to be a key factor in good teacher and student classroom performance, as both students and teachers are involved in the process, and needed technical support is provided. The main difficulty identified has been limited supply of materials in the schools. Both MINED and the Project offer some materials, but the demand is very high because the APA methodology requires availability of materials for strengthening and developing ways of learning in the classroom.

Through these visits, technical assistance and support were provided to 272 teachers of regular and multigrade primary education, particularly in APA methodology use and in strengthening the schools' organizational structures. In the RAAS, there are 42 student governments organized and trained in their functions, 80% of which are employing strategies for leadership promotion within the student community.

Stronger monitoring of student government work is needed in schools where the greatest difficulties in student government functioning have been identified. The visits were also used to

work with principals to assess the tests given to primary school students as part of the 2008 Study through Project Component 3.

*Table No. 20. Visits Made to Schools in the Two Regions this Quarter*

Region	N° of Visits	Teachers visited		
		M	V	Total
RAAS	42	91	23	114
RAAN	89	48	110	158
<b>Total Both Regions</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>272</b>

Source: FADCANIC. December 2008

### **Resource Centers**

The resource centers that have been set up are currently in optimal condition. Most of the materials and equipment have been well cared for, but many centers have been unable to provide the support desired by interested users, mainly in the RAAN, due to lack of management staff (Niño Jesús in Siuna and Krabu Tangni in Puerto Cabezas). Another difficulty has been that the satellite or neighboring schools seldom visit the resource centers, mainly due to the long distances involved.

### **Installation of Mini-Libraries**

This quarter, delivery of a batch of books was completed in 26 schools (17 multigrade and nine regular) of the 64 total schools served in the RAAN. This delivery was a complement to last quarter's delivery. Along with delivery of books to the libraries, recommendations were provided to principals and teachers concerning library use, organization, and care.

### **Coordination with Other Organizations**

EXCELENCIA/USAID/FADCANIC has received strong support from regional authorities in both regions. Project coordinators in both regions visited departmental and municipal MINED delegates in order to coordinate actions, share outcomes from the quarter, and find solutions to certain weaknesses in network school functioning. The delegates were provided with copies of work plans and reports, in order to keep them abreast of Project progress. Agreements made with delegates included:

- Appoint resource center coordinators, to ensure ongoing service to users of these centers.
- Monitor distribution and use of teaching materials delivered to centers that received mini-libraries. A copy of the list of materials delivered to each school will be given to MINED.
- Share reports on school visits with MINED authorities.
- In addition to the quarterly reports, MINED will be given monthly reports describing teacher and school administrator performance, as well as suggestions for improving and strengthening educational quality in the schools.

### **Presentation of the Project's Annual Operational Plan to MINED and to Regional Secretariats of RAAS and RAAN Governments**

The Annual Operational Plan (October 2008 through September 2009) was submitted to the Education Secretariats of the regional governments and to the Ministry of Education, in order to facilitate coordination of activities in the schools of municipalities served by the Project.

### **Coordination with Normal Schools**

Coordination with normal schools of both regions resulted in preparation of a joint work plan. In the RAAS, the plan focused on training teacher participants in the upcoming January 2009

professional development gathering on “The Active Role of the Child within the Framework of the APA Strategy.”

### **Other Important Activities**

Component 3 of the Project administered standardized tests in Spanish and Mathematics to children from eight multigrade schools in the municipalities of Kukra Hill and Laguna de Perlas (RAAS).

A visit was received from Dr. Richard Kraft, who went to some mentor and satellite schools in Bluefields, Kukra Hill, Haulover and Laguna de Perlas to observe progress and impact of APA methodology use. During the visits, he interviewed students, teachers and principals.

## **E) Achievements under Result 1**

- *122 new schools added to the Project network.* The remaining schools needed to reach the goal will be added next quarter as new satellites of the most experienced mentor schools. This way, they will have time and support for incorporation of pedagogical components.
- *9,821 people trained this quarter.* Of these participants, 5,441 were trained by Component 1 and 4,380 by Component 4. Out of the total participants, 9,171 were trained in one-day workshops, 408 in two-day workshops, and 242 in workshops of three or more days.
- *The institutionalization process has continued in close coordination with MINED.* The Project has continued to play a fundamental role in supporting regional authorities in organizing the educational core groups of the regions, ensuring that as many mentor schools as possible are BASE schools for educational models in the regions.
- *New mini-libraries delivered to the Caribbean Coast.* FADCANIC has delivered 26 mini-libraries to RAAN schools, in full coordination with local educational authorities and with a high degree of community participation.

## **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) Support for MINED in the Final Production Phase of the New Curriculum**

Work was completed on final review and editing of the new curriculum and corresponding materials for primary multigrade teachers and students. MINED formally requested an extension of consultant contracts in order to include them in new curriculum training for BASE school teachers. The Project, however, was unable to grant this request due to limited funds.

Work has continued in the different MINED commissions to ensure planning for new curriculum use. In these commissions, strategies are suggested and support provided for the MINED.

### **B) Production of Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) materials in the Caribbean Autonomous Regions**

## Production of (EIB) Multigrade Materials for Fifth and Sixth Grades

In the RAAN this quarter, the team of consultants in Mískitu, Mayangna and Spanish as a second language have completed translation and final review of the Fifth and Sixth Grade Learning Guides for Multigrade Schools. These guides are being reviewed at the FADCANIC central office.

In the RAAS, the Fifth and Sixth Grade Learning Guides in Mathematics for Multigrade Schools were received and sent for review to the FADCANIC central office.

## Validation of Third and Fourth Grade Materials

This quarter, validation of third and fourth grade materials was completed, with coordination and support from MINED.

In the RAAS, third and fourth grade teachers of the 17 multigrade schools where validation was conducted described the educational materials as very significant, easy to use, and relevant to the multicultural reality of the region and the country.

In the RAAN, 272 instruments were used in 30 schools, involving a total of 486 people in the process. The following table details this activity:

*Table No. 21. Participants in Validation of Materials in the RAAN*

Municipality	School	Application of Instruments					Total Inst.	Participants
		Principal (1)	Aut. (4)	Teacher (2)	Student (5)	Parents (3)		
Siuna	Asunción	1		1	1	1	4	13
Siuna	Corazón de Jesús	1		1	1	1	4	13
Rosita	Luis Delgadillo	1		1	1	1	3	8
Rosita	Ibu	1		1	1	1	4	12
Rosita	Fletan Stiven	1		1	1	1	4	12
Rosita	Fenicia	1		2	1	1	5	12
Rosita	Fruta de Pan	1		2	1	1	5	13
Rosita	Dibajil	1		1	1	1	4	12
Rosita	Arenaloso	1		1	1	1	4	12
Rosita	Santa Maria	1		1	1	1	4	12
Bonanza	Virgen de Fátima	1		1	1	1	4	9
Bonanza	Federico Taylor	1		1	5	5	4	12
Bonanza	Cirilo Miguel	1		2	5	5	5	13
Bonanza	Sakalwas	1		1	5	5	4	12
Bonanza	Suniwas	1		1	5	5	4	12
Bonanza	Musawas II	1		2	5	5	4	13
Bonanza	Panyawas	1		2	5	5	4	13
Bonanza	Tuybangkana	1		1	5	5	4	12
Bonanza	Wingpulu	1		2	5	5	4	13
Bonanza	Andres Castro	1		1	1	1	4	12
Puerto C.	Krabu	1		1	6	5	13	13

	Tangni							
Puerto C	Nueva Jerusalen	1		2	12	5	20	20
Waspam	Miguel Escobar	1		2	10	7	20	20
Waspam	Rafaela Herrera	1		1	23	7	32	32
Waspam	Miguel Angel L	1		2	10	4	17	17
Waspam	Alcides Tapia	1		1	12	12	26	26
Prinzap	Waring Francis	1		2	17	8	5	28
Prinzap	Brisas Marinas	1		2	13	12	5	28
Prinzap	William Cristóbal	1		1	2	6	4	14
Prinzap	Tasba Pauni	1		2	24	21	48	48
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>486</b>

**Source: FADCANIC. December 2008**

The teachers considered the materials to be very important and to have assisted them in teaching, especially with Spanish as a second language. By using the guides, they have managed to overcome some of the difficulties in teaching this subject. They confirmed that the new curricula and educational materials reflect the reality of both regions very appropriately. The learning guides are easy to use, creative, and support APA methodology use.

With parents' participation and support in education, every student and teacher will have his or her own learning guide to facilitate studies, reading skills development, and family participation in student learning.

### **C) Achievements under Result 2**

- Preparation of the new multigrade curriculum was completed; MINED is now responsible for printing and for beginning teacher training in its implementation.
- On the Caribbean Coast, validation was completed for third and fourth grade multigrade materials in indigenous languages and Spanish as a second language. Additionally, production of fifth and sixth grade materials was completed; these materials are currently under review.
- Close coordination has been established with MINED on all levels, both centrally and in the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast, in order to ensure that educational materials created for the new curriculum -- for the Pacific and for EIB -- have been completely accepted and evaluated by educational authorities. Authorities of both MINED as well as the Autonomous Regions have been very pleased with products delivered to date.

### **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**

#### **A) Studies**

##### **Formative Assessment**

Component 3, in coordination with the Component 4 team, continued to work to conclude testing for the formative assessment in NGO- and FBO-managed schools. This formative assessment process seeks to develop a tool that will contribute to improving academic performance and to decreasing grade-repetition and drop-out rates among students, particularly of the third grade. This process was conducted three times over the course of the year.

In the fourth quarter, the third and final phase of formative assessment testing was conducted, which included the following activities:

- a) Collection of Spanish and mathematics tests previously given to third grade students of participating schools. The following table displays the number of schools and participants:

*Table No. 22. Schools and Participants in Assessment Tests*

NGO	# of Schools	Students who participated		
		F	M	Total
ALISTAR	2	32	20	52
FADCANIC	1	38	58	96
FE Y ALEGRIA	2	32	38	70
FUNDACION LEON	3	43	59	102
IGLESIA MORAVA	2	48	46	94
NEHEMIAS	12	118	115	233
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	2	16	18	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>681</b>

**Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID December 2008**

- b) Receipt of complementary documents for the formative assessment test: student list, results table, application report.
- c) Contracting of data processing company for Spanish and mathematics test results from the second and third phases.
- d) Quality control and supervision of data processing for second and third phase test results. Tests turned in and returned to Project warehouse for storage.

The third round of testing in October 2008 concluded the three-phase testing cycle for the 2008 school year. The database with student results was sent to AIR for analysis.

##### **2007 Annual Study**

Editing of the 2007 Annual Study report was completed in the fourth quarter. The report has been sent to USAID for review, after which it will proceed to printing and distribution.

## 2008 Annual Study

In the fourth quarter, field work was done for the 2008 Annual Study. This study is designed to assess third grade student academic performance in Spanish and mathematics, and to understand the educational environment of those students assessed. Tests were given to students, while teachers and principals of those schools were interviewed.

For the first time, students in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast took part in these assessments after the entire item bank has been vetted for cultural appropriateness in workshops the project conducted with representatives from the autonomous regions. The participating schools in the RAAN are currently validating materials in native languages, Spanish and English, in alignment with the new curriculum.

*Table No.23 Schools and Students Participating in the 2008 Annual Study*

<b>REGION</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Sections</b>	<b>Spanish Tests</b>	<b>Math Tests</b>
Pacífico –Norte-Centro	59	109	2,843	2,871
RAAN -RAAS	26	26	304	308
<b>TOTAL COUNTRY</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>3,147</b>	<b>3,179</b>

*Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID December 2008*

The following activities were carried out as field work for the Study:

1. Review and printing of instruments to be used in the Study:
  - Spanish and mathematics tests
  - Principal and teacher questionnaires
  - Level of development in Spanish and mathematics
2. Review and printing of complementary documents for the Study:
  - Field Manual and Supervisor's Manual
  - List of students
  - Sample test items
  - Field maps
3. Review and printing of logistical documents:
  - Training agenda
  - Introductory letter and statement of commitment for participants
  - Personnel and vehicle control records
4. Coordination with contracted printing company; packing of documents to be used in field work.
5. Staff training in gathering information at schools participating in the Study.

The following table shows staff involved in the Study:

Table No. 24. Staff in the 2008 Annual Study

DESCRIPTION	PACIFIC, CENTER & NORTH	INDEPENDENT REGIONS (RAAN-RAAS)	TOTAL NATIONWIDE
Technicians	27	9	36
Supervisors	7	2	9
Drivers	7	2	9
Coordinators	1	1	2
Logistic Support – Finance			2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>58</b>

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID December 2008

6. Review and adjustment of the Terms of Reference for the Study's field, logistical and finance staff.
7. Logistical and financial management of field work, including preparation of salary, per diem and travel expense sheets, as well as accounting for expenses.
8. Preparation of code chart for Study sample.
9. Preparation of information collection forms.
10. Logistical support for delivery and receipt of instruments for interviewers and supervisors.
11. Visits to the different schools participating in the Study in order to properly supervise use of instruments.

Table No. 25 Other Instruments Used

Other applied instruments	Pacific-Center-North	Atlantic Coast	Total
Cuestionarios de Directores	59	26	85
Cuestionarios Docentes	109	26	135
Niveles de Desarrollo de Español	109	26	135
Niveles de Desarrollo de Matemáticas	109	26	135

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID December 2008

12. Preparation and assessment of the instrument for field staff evaluation.
13. Quality control of data processing from instruments used. Delivery, return, and proper storage of instruments.
14. Preparation of final databases and submission to AIR for analysis.

## B) Monitoring

Monitoring is designed to provide information on each of the 2,869 EXCELENCIA/USAID schools, including their characteristics and the Project Component through which they are served. The monitoring system is based on a process of data collection, review, entry, and processing, with rigorous control systems for each.

Information is first collected in the schools, and is made available to the different Component managers through Project facilitators. Through these channels, data is successively reviewed, first by facilitators and then by managers. The Assessment Area then enters the data and establishes new controls for all information received, confirming school enrollment information and characteristics with MINED databases, as well as national ID numbers of all training participants with electoral registries. This process is repeated each quarter with new schools and with training workshops reported by the different Components. In this fourth quarter, data was entered using the Database Management System:

- Description forms were entered: 472 enrollment records and 1,071 teacher records.
- 278 self-evaluation forms were entered.
- Training: information corresponding to 44 accounting reports and 162 attendance sheets, with a total 8,374 records for training participants.

The Database Management System was piloted to allow for appropriate adjustments. Once the piloting was concluded, a presentation was made to Project directors and managers, to familiarize them with the scope and potential uses of the system. The main users of the system were then trained in how to work with it.

Self-evaluation reports from Component 4 schools and FADCANIC schools were submitted to their respective Components. These reports offer a consolidated description of the status of the schools' infrastructure, as well as progress in the pedagogical components and in leadership and participatory bodies. These reports are annexed.

### **C) Achievements Under 3**

*- An edited and layout version of results from the 2007 Annual Study on student academic performance has been finalized. Printing and dissemination will enable sharing of these results.*

*- A complete set of summative third grade assessment tests in reading and mathematics, aligned with the new curriculum, has been developed. Validation of these tests concluded with their application in October 2008. The project has a bank of items in mathematics and reading comprehension, most of which have already been fielded and validated. This item bank will prove to be a useful tool in future assessment efforts by the MINED.*

*- A complete set of formative third grade assessment tests in reading and mathematics has also been prepared, along with pedagogical recommendations for teachers. Piloting of the formative assessment in component 4 schools concluded at the end of 2008, creating important material that can be used later on also in public schools and will be part of a package of assessment materials that will be offered to the MINED at the end of the project.*

*- Databases have been created for the three formative assessment testing phases, which will reveal student progress and response to the instructional recommendations that teachers have put into practice.*

*- Databases have been created for tests given to third grade students of schools in the 2008 Annual Study. These results will indicate student progress since 2007 testing, and will also serve as a baseline for Atlantic region schools participating in the Study.*

*- A Database Management and Consultation System for the EXCELENCIA Project has been created. This system will significantly reduce the time required to look up any indicator or data concerning schools, teachers, or training. Likewise, it will minimize time needed to prepare reports on project performance.*

#### **IV. Result 4: Expanding the number of privately managed schools applying the model school approach throughout Nicaragua.**

##### **Achievements under Result 4**

**In less than one year<sup>1</sup> Result 4 has incorporated 318 privately managed schools into the EXCELENCIA/ USAID network.** This exceeds the 300 school target previously defined. Currently seven partner NGOs and Faith Based Organization (FBOs) are working with Result 4 to implement the model school approach and achieve shared results (see table below with identified organization and the number of schools they attend).

*Table 26. NGO/ Faith Based Organization partners in Result 4*

<b>NGO/ Faith Based Organization partners in Result 4</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>
Iglesia Morava de Nicaragua	17
Fundación Alistar de Nicaragua	13
Centro Nehemías	133
Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields	111
Fundación León 2000	15
Fe y Alegría- La Asunción	8
FADCANIC	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>318<sup>2</sup></b>

**An important part of Result 4's work is done the RAAN and the RAAS, regions which are characterized by high poverty rates.** Of the 318 identified schools over half are located in the RAAN and the RAAS<sup>3</sup>. The majority of these schools are multigrade schools in remote rural areas of Nicaragua.

**As described in previous quarterly reports pedagogical materials have been provided to all participating schools below Result 4.** Teachers and school directors have participated in capacity building activities, in order to utilize these materials in the most effective way for student learning. Technical staff in coordination with Result 4 Coordinators continue to design activities based on needs identified at the school level, particularly focusing on the Pedagogical Components of the EXCELENCIA/ USAID model (see table below with Q4 trainings).

<sup>1</sup> Less than one calendar year as well as less than one academic year (based on Nicaraguan school calendar).

<sup>2</sup> 256 single-session schools and 31 double-session schools (morning and afternoon sessions serving different student populations) for a total count of 318 privately managed schools.

<sup>3</sup> RAAN- Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic, RAAS- Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic.

Table 27. Training activities / NGO partners

NGO/ Faith Based Organization partners in Result 4	Number of training activities in Q4		
	October	November	December
Alistar	-	-	-
Centro Nehemías <sup>4</sup>	107	99	-
FADCANIC	1	1	-
Fe y Alegría- La Asunción	-	3	-
Fundación León 2000	-	-	-
Iglesia Morava de Nicaragua	-	-	-
Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields	8	9	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>

**In addition to trainings, school exchanges between teachers, directors, and parents were fostered during the quarter.** NGO staff and Result 4 Coordinators continued to make school visits to support teachers with the implementation of Pedagogical Components. Please see table below.

Table 28. Visits by Result 4 Coordinators

Q4 visits by Result 4 Coordinators	# of school visits
October	35
November	20
December	0
<b>Total Q4</b>	<b>55</b>

**Result 4 Coordinators together with NGOs completed an analysis of the schools served by each NGO based on Pedagogical Components and criteria defined by the Pedagogical Area of the EXCELENCIA/ USAID project.** It is a great achievement to have individualized results for the schools under Result 4. The information will also serve for planning purposes regarding the design of the regional trainings in the next quarter (see section on future activities).

**The pre service teacher training program with the NER (Nucleo de Educación Rural)/ La Asuncion in association with Fe y Alegría has retained 100 percent of students in the program.** Three important aspects of the program are as follows:

- it is based on competencies,
- it has a focus on the APA<sup>5</sup> methodology, and
- it offers a change in the paradigm of Normal Schools in Nicaragua, where traditionally student teachers learn information to “know it” rather than learn how to teach and share this knowledge with their students.

In addition, another very important quality of the program is its focus on multi grade schools and the rural context of education, which have often been neglected by the Normal school system.

<sup>4</sup> Note because C. Nehemias utilizes a school level training approach rather than large trainings with many schools, as well as the fact that they attend the largest number of schools and these schools are located in more accessible locations (peri-urban) below C.4 the quantities of trainings are considerably larger.

<sup>5</sup> Aprendo- I learn, Practico- I practice, Aplico- I apply active methodology.

## ***V. Activities Planned for Next Quarter***

### **Result 1: Expansion of APA Methodology**

- The number of schools proposed by the end of the project is expected to be completed next semester. To this end, a number of excellent and very good mentor schools will be encouraged to add a new satellite school to its network. Facilitators will support initiation of the new schools as they are added, and will organize experience exchanges in the regions among recently added schools and the network's older mentor schools.
- The Project will continue to await a decision from MINED concerning the implementation process for the Quality Education Model of school organization. EXCELENCIA/USAID will analyze how it can support MINED in the regions to train principals and teachers. Support will be provided by facilitators serving as trainers, as much as their other responsibilities permit.
- Support will continue to be provided to MINED in the Battle for the First Grade. The Project will participate in a National Gathering of Successful First Grade Students, in order to demonstrate progress from the reading and writing methods it has provided to MINED.
- Completion of the EXCELENCIA/USAID Pedagogical Proposal Manual is expected. The manual will serve as a reference for training and overall institutionalization of the Project's method.

#### **Caribbean Coast:**

- Prepare APA reinforcement plans for principals and teachers of network schools, and begin implementation.
- Prepare reinforcement plan for the 42 student governments in the RAAS and the 64 in the RAAN, and begin implementation.
- Begin promoting community assemblies for reinforcement of Parents' Committees.
- Continue technical assistance and support visits to the 106 schools served.
- Install a resource center in the Fenicia school in Rosita – RAAN, proposed for January 23, 2009.
- Continue to coordinate activities with the normal schools of both regions.

### **Result 2: New Curriculum**

On the central level, the project will await indications from MINED, and will continue to participate in commissions to ensure the institutionalization process as well as curriculum application.

#### **Caribbean Coast:**

- Prepare and implement workshops on methodology and use of third and fourth grade multigrade Learning Guides for Spanish, Miskitu, Mayangna and Mathematics.
- Begin validation plan for fifth and sixth grade instructional materials for multigrade schools.

### **Result 3: Studies and Assessment**

- Organize and train the technical specialists who will do 2009 Post Test field work with schools served under Component 4, including student performance tests in Spanish and mathematics. Questionnaires will also be given to teachers and principals.
- Review EXCELENCIA indicators to be submitted to USAID, including projections for the Primary Completion Rates indicator for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, to ensure that realistic goals are set.
- Organize and carry out Post Test field work in Component 4 schools.
- Train users in the Database Management and Consultation System.
- Enter data for the monitoring system.
- Workshop with Component 4 team to analyze the self-evaluation report of the schools it serves.
- Prepare the third and final self-evaluation report from schools served by the Pedagogical Area.

### **Result 4: Expanding the number of privately managed schools applying the model school approach throughout Nicaragua.**

***As mentioned above Result 4 will begin the academic year with a series of regional trainings.*** The trainings will be based on the analysis of schools' needs in reference to the Pedagogical Components of the EXCELENCIA/USAID project (mentioned above). For this reason- trainings will be varied in each of the regions where Result 4 works. This is a great opportunity to strengthen not only technical staff of NGOs, but also school directors, and invite MINED representatives at the department level to participate.

***Materials will also need to be provided to partner NGOs within the first months of the next quarter.*** Materials include fungible material and small libraries. In addition seven mentor schools (one from each NGO) will be selected based on defined criteria from the Pedagogical Area of the EXCELENCIA/ USAID project to have Resource Centers. Training on the use and maintenance of these centers will also need to be provided.

***Finally, Result 4 will cooperate with the Area of Evaluation to provide monitoring and evaluating data.*** This includes assisting where needed in the coordination with NGO partners for the application of the academic achievement test and the timely provision of all evaluation and monitoring data (school self evaluations and characterizations).

### **Construction component**

The project will select a winning bidder for the construction component, sign contracts, take preparatory action for the commencement of construction activities and finally start construction activities by March 2009.