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EXCELENCIA Quarterly Report
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With:

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

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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

AED

Academy for Educational Development

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter, the Project team focused on the following two strategic areas:

- a) Supporting achievements obtained during the expansion of the application of the pedagogical proposal, providing the basis for the project's future sustainability.
- b) Conducting operational activities to close the project and gathering information supporting its achievements and the indicators defined in the project agreement.

At the same time, USAID requested a proposal and work plan to extend the project until March 2010 with additional funds, in order to reinforce some of the pedagogical proposal's expansion achievements, and to secure its continued existence within the Ministry of Education.

In order to support all achievements, the EXCELENCIA/USAID technical team has continued its efforts to support those schools that were incorporated into the network last quarter, and it has continued contributing to MINED's policies by participating in commissions created for reviewing and implementing them. A very important aspect of the project has been the facilitators' leadership in the planning and implementation of the Rural Education Regional Forums, which were organized by the Ministry of Education with the support of numerous organizations, and the National Forum on Rural Education, which consolidated the results of these two regional forums.

The National Forum on Rural Education highlighted the general concern for quality multi-grade education through the use of different methodologies such as that proposed by EXCELENCIA/USAID, which has proven to be effective. This activity is part of the MINED's policy on equity in education, in which the project is participating actively.

One of the strategies contributing to the institutionalization and sustainability of the project's pedagogical proposal in the educational system is the work being carried out with the Normal Schools, which train the teachers of the future. During the last quarter, the facilitators carried out an assessment of how the project's pedagogical proposal was being used in the Normal Schools. Based on that assessment, the team developed a knowledge enhancement plan for Normal School directors and professors. During this quarter, the project moved forward and made progress implementing a plan that provides training courses to Normal School directors and professors who request them. Likewise, through Component 4, the Fe y Alegría Normal School in Lechecuagos continues working on developing a subject matter curriculum for a multi-grade specialization for teachers, using the project's pedagogical proposal and lessons learned during its application.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Component has enriched the training databases by identifying all those people who have received training throughout the project years. With this information, the team will choose candidates to be part of the master teachers' educational program to be developed by the project as one of the institutionalization strategies.

In addition, Component 4 has reinforced its work with NGOs and FBOs, has completed all training processes, has inaugurated all pending Resource Centers, and has strengthened trainings on the usage of these. A close-out event has been planned to recognize the achievements of these organizations in the application of the project proposal's pedagogical components. This event, which will be held at the beginning of next quarter, includes a fair where all participating organizations will show their yearly achievements.

The Construction Component delivered the schools of Santa Marta and Kivalaya to their communities, and community members formally committed themselves to their care and maintenance.

In the Caribbean Coast, FADCANIC has continued analyzing the validation results of EIB materials for the 3rd and 4th multi-grade primary education. Likewise, it has finished analyzing materials for 5th and 6th grades, and these materials are now ready for validation. FADCANIC has also arranged for international organizations working in the region to print these materials for use in schools.

EXCELENCIA/USAID has developed a carefully planned strategy for the project close-out and delivery of results. Each component's management has prepared a spreadsheet including results and deliverables based on the commitments made in the project's original proposal and its subsequent modifications. This will be a critical tool during the final submission of deliverables and products to USAID. Likewise, the project has developed a program to prepare and deliver to USAID a proposal for the final disposition of these assets when the project ends.

Institutionalization

During this quarter, EXCELENCIA/USAID has continued applying the institutionalization strategy it developed at the beginning of this year. This strategy is being strengthened now by the project's extension until March 2010. The extension's expected result regarding institutionalization refers to preparing the Ministry's human resources nationwide who will be responsible for ensuring and guiding the project's pedagogical proposal application once the project ends. In this sense, the project has developed together with the Ministry a strategy for training activities. This strategy must be incorporated into the Ministry's procedures, since no training that is parallel to established mechanisms is permitted.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

I. Result No. 1: Expansion of EXCELENCIA Schools Applying APA Methodology

A) Expansion of School Networks:

During this quarter (July-September), EXCELENCIA/USAID did not incorporate any new schools, keeping the total of 3,015 schools participating in the network. With this number the project has already met the goal of the project proposal. This group of schools includes 321 schools assisted through Component IV, and 106 schools from the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions assisted by FADCANIC. From the total of schools assisted by EXCELENCIA/USAID, 391 are base schools (mentor schools) and 2,624 are neighboring schools (satellite schools).

Table No. 1: Schools Assisted by EXCELENCIA/USAID, per Quarter and Category as of September 2009

Table No. 1. Schools Served by EXCELENCIA, per Quarter and Category, as of March 2009

Schools Served by EXCELENCIA per Quarter and Category								
	Feb. 2006	Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007	Jun. 2007	Sep. 2007	Dec. 2007
Public schools								
Mentor Schools	112	184	184	190	232	232	232	232
Satellite Schools	528	526	749	930	899	1,327	1,473	1,530
Sub-Tot. Public								
NGO and FBO managed schools								
Mentor Schools								
Satellite Schools								
Sub-Total Result 4								
Total	640	710	933	1,120	1,131	1,559	1,705	1,762

(cont.)

Schools Served by EXCELENCIA per Quarter and Category											
	Mar. 2008	Jun. 2008	Sep. 2008	Dec. 2008	Mar. 2009	Jun. 2009	Sep. 2009				
Public schools											
Mentor Schools	245	245	250	339	339	343	343				
Satellite Schools	1,795	2,069	2,179	2,212	2,293	2,351	2,351				
Sub-Tot. Public	2,040	2,314	2,429	2,551	2,632	2,694	2,694				
NGO and FBO managed schools											
Mentor Schools	41	45	48	48	48	48	48				
Satellite Schools	226	266	270	270	273	273	273				
Sub-Total Result 4	267	311	318	318	321	321	321				
Total	2,307	2,625	2,747	2,869	2,953	3,015	3,015				

Table No. 1. Schools Served by EXCELENCIA, per Quarter and Category, as of June 2009

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Table No. 2 shows the EXCELENCIA/USAID school network distribution per type and department, as of September 2009.

Table No. 2. EXCELENCIA 'S Network Schools per Type and Department

Department	School Type				Status	
	Multi-grade	Multi-grade Bilingual	Regular	Regular Bilingual	Mentor Schools	Satellite schools
Boaco	104	0	21	0	114	11
Carazo	83	0	38	0	104	17
Chinandega	158	0	95	0	226	27
Chontales	104	0	33	0	122	15
Esteli	102	0	40	0	128	14
Granada	72	0	39	0	94	17
Jinotega	195	0	35	0	200	30
Leon	127	0	64	0	156	35
Madriz	105	0	22	0	109	18
Managua	91	0	191	0	241	41
Masaya	47	0	65	0	95	17
Matagalpa	169	0	57	0	198	28
Nueva Segovia	180	0	31	0	186	25
Raan	65	29	35	20	120	29
Raas	231	10	62	13	281	35
Rio San Juan	98	0	18	0	103	13
Rivas	117	0	49	0	147	19
Total	2,048	39	895	33	2,624	391

Source: Project EXCELENCIA/USAID, September 2009.

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

Table No. 3 Distribution of Schools Managed by NGOs, by Department

Department/NGOs	ALISTAR	FADCANIC	FE Y ALEGRIA	FUND LEON	IGLESIA MORAVA	CENTRO NEHEMIAS	VICAR. BLUEF.	Total
BOACO						1		1
CARAZO						6		6
CHINANDEGA						6		6
CHONTALES						5		5
ESTELI						3		3
JINOTEGA						1		1
LEON			8	16		8		32
MANAGUA						81		81
MASAYA						10		10
MATAGALPA						7		7
NUEVA SEGOVIA						1		1
RAAN	13				13		48	74
RAAS		21			4	5	64	94
Total	13	21	8	16	17	134	112	321

Source: Project EXCELENCIA/USAID. September 2009

The graph below tracks the progress of the expansion of the EXCELENCIA network. As can be observed from the graph EXCELENCIA has already surpassed its expansion target.

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

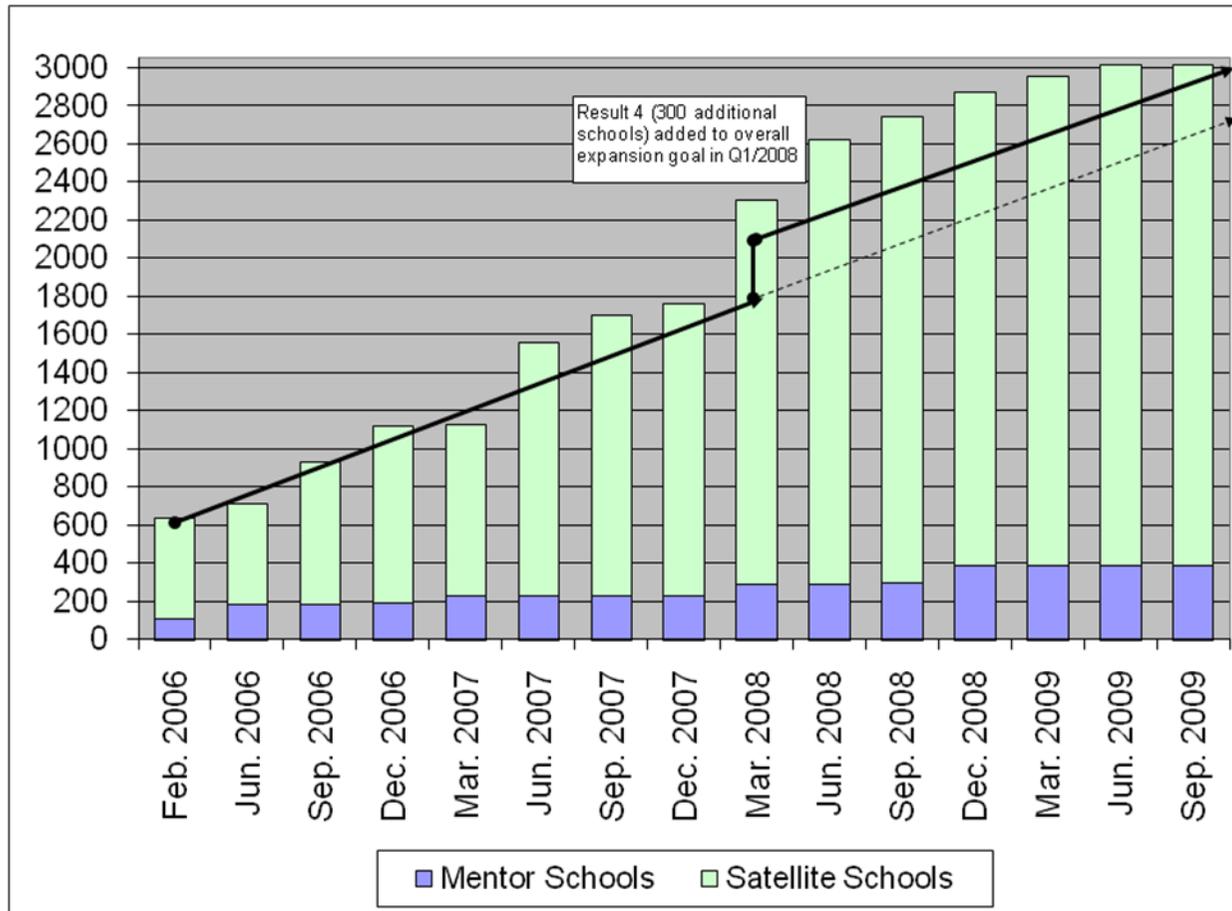


Table No. 4 shows enrollment in NGO- and FBO-managed schools.

Table No.4 Enrollment and schools served by NGOs

NGO	No. of Schools	Girls' enrollment	Total enrollment
ALISTAR	13	1,210	2,494
FADCANIC	21	1,416	2,925
FE Y ALEGRIA	8	334	725
FUNDACION LEON	16	1,413	2,978
IGLESIA MORAVA	17	1,435	2,650
NEHEMIAS	134	7,833	16,496
VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS	112	2,456	5,200
Total	321	16,097	33,468

Source: Project EXCELENCIA/USAID. September 2009

Table No. 5 shows EXCELENCIA/USAID coverage taking the preliminary data reported to date by the MINED's Directorate of Statistics as a reference. According to this data, during this third quarter of 2009 the Project has presence in all 153 municipalities of Nicaragua. Through its network, EXCELENCIA/USAID supports one out of three primary education schools in the country (33.4 %) and almost half (48.7 %) of the students enrolled in primary education. In addition, more than half (53.7 %) of primary education teachers work in EXCELENCIA/USAID network schools.

Table No. 5. EXCELENCIA/USAID Project Coverage as of September 2009

Number of municipalities in the country	153
Number of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA, Sept. 2009	153
% of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA/USAID as of Sept. 2009	100%
Coverage per school	
Number of primary schools (MINED 2008)	9,010
Number of schools assisted by EXCELENCIA/USAID as of Sept. 2009	3,015
% of primary schools assisted by EXCELENCIA/USAID as of Sept. 2009	33.4%
Coverage per enrollment	
Total initial primary school enrollment for 2008 *	943,654
Total enrollment in EXCELENCIA/USAID schools as of Sept. 2009 **	459,916
% of enrollment in EXCELENCIA/USAID schools as of Sept. 2009	48.7%
Coverage per teacher	
Total number of primary school teachers 2008 *	32,211
Number of teachers in EXCELENCIA/USAID schools as of Sept. 2009 **	17,311
% of teachers in EXCELENCIA/USAID schools as of Sept. 2009	53.7%

* Preliminary data, MINED, Statistics Directorate

** data complemented with Excelencia's Statistical System

The MINED has not officially confirmed the 2009 School Year's primary education enrollment yet and for this reason we continue to use as official data the 2008 final performance data.

As of September 2009, a total of 17,311 teachers (14,777 female and 2,534 male) work at the EXCELENCIA/USAID network schools. Table No. 6 shows teachers by department and gender, including teachers working at schools assisted by NGOs and Faith-Based Organizations.

Table No.6 Teachers at Network Schools by Gender and Department

Departments	Female	Male	Total
Boaco	481	67	548
Carazo	505	123	628
Chinandega	1,454	192	1,646
Chontales	535	56	591
Esteli	752	52	804
Granada	716	125	841
Jinotega	870	181	1,051
Leon	965	105	1,070
Madriz	422	95	517
Managua	2,344	352	2,696
Masaya	944	201	1,145
Matagalpa	1,159	206	1,365
Nueva Segovia	804	126	930
Raan	697	249	946
Raas	1,112	221	1,333
Rio San Juan	308	90	398
Rivas	709	93	802
Total	14,777	2,534	17,311

Source: preliminary MINED data. September 2009.

B) Training Activities

During this third quarter of 2009, EXCELENCIA/USAID-sponsored training events reached 8,123 people (5,970 female and 2,153 male). This does not include training data for the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions because the data was not ready during the preparation of this report.

In Component 1, APA Expansion, experience sharing activities with fathers, mothers and students were predominant this quarter, as well as workshops for Normal School students who are doing their professional practices and for teachers serving as their mentors at the teacher school.

EXCELENCIA also continued with workshops with the objective of reinforcing the use of the APA methodology. Workshops were both funded by the project and carried out in partnership with other projects or cooperation agencies.

Project facilitators visited departmental and municipal delegations to coordinate activities to be carried out, and at the same time also provided advice and assistance to teachers.

Table No. 7 shows the distribution of training activities carried out by Component 1 by topic, duration and participant gender.

Table No. 7: Trainings Carried out by Component 1 by Topic, Duration and Participant Gender during the Third Quarter of 2009

EVENTS	Total	Duration: 1 day		Duration: 2 days		Duration: 3 days		Duration > 3 days	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
MULTIGRADE RURAL EDUCATION FORUM	203	2	4	57	140				
EXPERIENCE SHARING BETWEEN FATHERS, MOTHERS AND STUDENTS	392	100	292						
EXPERIENCE SHARING	74	21	53						
SECOND REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING	757	110	274	93	280				
FIRST GRADE WORKSHOP	31	4	27						
LOCAL WORKSHOP ON APA METHODOLOGY BASED ON NEED	304	50	254						
LOCAL WORKSHOP ON READING AND WRITING METHODOLOGY	157	12	145						
WORKSHOP ON MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT	77	8	69						
WORKSHOP ON APA METHODOLOGY WITH TEACHER SCHOOLS	1381	233	641	90	305			30	82
TOTAL	3376	540	1759	240	725	0	0	30	82

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Second Technical Meeting

Technical meetings organized by the project's facilitators are basic tools for evaluation and planning. Even though the Ministry has its own mechanisms for this purpose, TEPCES, these do not allow enough time for participants to evaluate and plan the project's work in their regions. For this reason, the Project organizes technical meetings in order to develop local activities. During July and August of this year, each facilitator conducted a technical meeting in each department in which departmental and municipal pedagogical advisers, mentor school directors, and municipal delegates participated.

The purpose of these Technical Meetings was to assess mentor schools progress in the application of pedagogical components and conduct a rapid evaluation of all activities carried out during this year's first semester. In addition, another main activity for these meetings was to analyze and plan the Excelencia Project Network's activities for the second semester of the 2009 school year.

A total of 17 technical meetings were carried out during the period, as reflected in the below Table No. 8.

Table No. 8 Technical Meetings Carried out by Component 1 by Department, Number of Participants, Gender, and Date Held during this Quarter

Department	Number of Participants.			Dates Held
	Female	Male	Total	
Carazo	19	16	35	July 22nd, 2009
Jinotega	34	7	41	July 17th, 2009
Jinotega	39	8	47	July 22nd, 2009
Matagalpa	37	22	59	July 23rd and 24th, 2009
Granada	22	4	26	July 23rd, 2009
RAAS (ZC)	13	6	19	July 23rd and 24th, 2009
R. San Juan	13	11	24	July 27th and 28th, 2009
León	32	10	42	July 23rd, 2009
Boaco	25	5	30	July 22nd and 23rd, 2009
Estelí	39	10	49	July 22nd, 2009
Chinandega	64	9	73	July 29th, 2009
Rivas	33	13	46	August 11th and 12th, 2009
Masaya	19	9	28	August 13th, 2009
Chontales	31	9	40	August 11th and 12th, 2009
Madriz	41	19	60	August 12th and 24th, 2009
Nueva Segovia	50	20	70	August 10th and 13th, 2009
Managua	45	23	68	August, 2009
TOTAL	556	201	757	

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

In order to evaluate all activities carried out during the first semester, technical meeting participants filled out an individual self-evaluation form regarding the pedagogical components applied at the mentor schools. Pedagogical advisers presented academic performance results at the departmental level and for mentor schools and participants reflected on strengths, weaknesses and solutions. As a result of the self-evaluation, many advances made by these schools were made known, and the role of the visits conducted by pedagogical advisers and mentor school principals was also discussed.

During these same technical meetings, the academic performance of each of the mentor schools and their neighbor schools during the first semester was evaluated. Achievements in early grade performance were found in most of them. School principals and pedagogical advisers believe these good outcomes are the result of applying the first grade projects - Significant Expressions – promoted by the Project.

A good level of participation and interaction between school principals and advisers was achieved during these technical meetings. Reflection on the application of the pedagogical components in their schools has allowed principals to appreciate and value the improvements achieved, and school principals new to the position were able to better understand the importance of applying the pedagogical components in the classroom.

Another important achievement of these technical meetings was the commitment made by delegations and schools to continue applying pedagogical components when the project ends, using funds they themselves will arrange and gather.

Some of the suggestions provided by participants at these technical meetings are as follows:

- Conduct an evaluation in each school to find out the level of progress in the application of pedagogical components.
- Keep close coordination between MINED and EXCELENCIA/USAID.
- Continue to have these technical meetings because they help strengthen teachers' professional level and provide them with tools to improve the quality of the education they offer.
- Support these meeting with workshops on APA Methodology for third through sixth grade.

Work with Normal Schools

Facilitators visited departmental delegations and Normal Schools to coordinate the provision of workshops with senior students and professional practice professors. The purpose of these workshops is to update and enhance their training on the APA method and the Project's pedagogical proposal's components. Proper coordination was set up and decisions regarding the best time for conducting these training activities were made.

During this quarter, the project carried out workshops at the Normal Schools in the departments of Matagalpa, Chinandega, Juigalpa, Managua, Estelí, Carazo, the RAAS Professionalization Nuclei (El Rama), and Río San Juan.

Participants in these workshops totaled 1,237 (899 female and 338 male) between senior students and professors. Workshops were conducted at Normal Schools, except those in Jinotepe where students were already dispersed in the primary schools for their professional practice. Workshops were carried out in four locations: Jinotepe, Rivas, Masaya, and Granada.

Workshops with Normal Schools have the following objectives:

- Contribute to the pedagogical education of students doing their professional practice.
- Share experiences on active methodological strategies.
- Promote APA application in order to improve education quality.

Specific topics addressed during these workshops were the APA pedagogical approach and First Grade Projects. Some of the most important achievements were the following:

- Shared knowledge on how to keep students more active in the classrooms.
- Learned different strategies to carry out teaching practice.
- Clarified some doubts about APA, its pedagogical processes and differences from MINED's sponsored and promoted planning structures.
- Student teachers learned to write activities for each of the APA application phases.
- Students learned to prepare new teaching materials to support their classes and setup their classrooms.
- Good rapport and relationships between facilitators and participants were created and maintained, as well as a good exchange of ideas about the APA approach.

- Participants shared the way they apply APA in their practice during these training events and expressed their appreciation for learning how to prepare teaching materials and highlighted its importance for their students in the classroom.
- Participants gained more and better knowledge on developing classes with their students and developed abilities and skills for planning.
- Participants fully adopted the Significant Expressions Project for learning reading and writing and valued it as a very useful and effective tool.
- School principals said that they strengthened their knowledge about First Grade Projects through the hands-on exercises.
- Participants learned that the guide with the APA methodology is based on the student and that the length of its application depends on the student's learning pace and the context.
- Participants accepted the importance of applying the APA methodology with their students.
- Participants reproduced all teaching materials of interest to use at the schools where they are doing their professional practices.
- Participants agreed that a classroom where one works with the APA methodology must have a nice physical and pedagogical environment, learning resource centers, cooperative work, and teachers who serve as learning facilitators.

The difficulties students mentioned were related to the following:

- Need for more educational materials (programs and textbooks) because many teachers do not have any materials.
- Training time was too short; more time is needed to be able to prepare all materials shown.

Students doing their professional practice made the following commitments:

- Put in practice the methodology proposed by the Project so that their students learn independently and are better prepared for life.
- Be kind and caring with students, be patient and support them as much as needed.
- Put in practice everything they have learned at training courses because it is very important in their students' learning process.
- Share all these experiences with the teachers at the school where they are doing their professional practice.
- Prepare Learning Guides with the APA approach for their students.

Participants at these training sessions provided the following suggestions:

- Participants said they need a specific workshop on how to prepare teaching materials.
- They requested to be given another training course, but longer because they consider that this type of training is precisely what they need.

Workshops on the APA Methodology in Mentor Schools

A total of eight local workshops on the APA Methodology and curriculum for Spanish and Mathematics were carried out in the Departments of Carazo and Managua. Mentor schools teachers and principals participated in these workshops and they were directly assisted by Project's facilitators.

Some of the most important feedback given by participants in these workshops is as follows:

- Teachers said they felt satisfied about these training courses because they clarified the doubts they had about APA and its application in the classroom.
- Teachers showed a lot of interest and actively participated in team work and in presentations of their concerns.
- Participants committed themselves to apply all knowledge acquired and to reproduce these trainings with teachers in their schools.

Table No. 9 shows all workshops carried out by department and gender.

Table No. 9. APA Methodology Workshops at Mentor Schools

Activity	Department	Number of Participants			date Held
		F	M	T	
Workshop Topic					
Workshop on APA Methodology	Managua	28	2	30	Sept 7, 2009
Workshop on APA Methodology		6	5	11	Sept 21, 2009
Workshop on Reading Comprehension		31	10	41	Sept 10, 2009
Workshop on Oral Language and Awareness.		15	0	15	Sept 11, 2009
Workshop on Math Scientific Content and Spanish		51	6	57	Sept 22, 2009
Workshop on Group Work and Material Development.		28	10	39	Sept 22, 2009
Workshop on Mathematics Basket Materials		20	4	24	Sept 11, 2009
Workshop on Reading and Writing		75	13	88	Sept 21, 2009
TOTAL	Carazo	254	50	304	

Source : EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Experience-sharing activities

Sixteen experience-sharing events with fathers, mothers, and students at mentor schools in several departments were carried out this quarter. Three hundred ninety-two people (100 male and 292 female) participated in these experience sharing events. Two experience sharing events for teachers were also carried out in the department of Managua where 74 teachers (21 male and 53 female) participated. In both events, there was a reflection session about the Project's pedagogical proposal components. In addition to reflecting on the pedagogical components, other important aspects related to hygiene, nutrition, and school care were also analyzed with participants. With regard to this, participants gathered and shared different ideas and activities about what they can do in their own schools, for example:

- Students will meet with representatives from student organizations to discuss and address school problems and find different alternative solutions.

- They will promote the idea that school stands sell fruits and healthy foods.
- School cleanliness and beautification will be promoted and important values for students such as participation in class and mutual respect as well as team work will be fostered at schools.
- Participation of parents in learning processes and in preparing teaching materials with teachers as well as the organization and enrichment of learning corners will be promoted.

At schools visited during experience sharing events, we were able to observe that most first grade students know how to read and comprehend what they read.

Table No. 10 shows all experience sharing events held this quarter.

Table No. 10. Experience Sharing Events per Location, Number of Participants, and dates

Activity	Department	Number of Participants			dates Held
		Female	Male	Total	
Experience Sharing between fathers and mothers.	Carazo	13	12	25	Sept 22, 2009
	Rivas	31	6	37	Sept 11, 2009
	Jinotega	23	12	35	Sept 22, 2009
	Matagalpa	14	7	21	Sept 21, 2009
	Granada	18	3	21	Sept 22, 2009
	RAAS (ZC)	37	5	42	Sept 23, 2009
	Río San Juan	24	7	31	Sept 21, 2009
	León	10	1	11	Sept 21, 2009
	Masaya	10	6	16	Sept 22, 2009
	Estelí	20	6	26	Sept 10, 2009
	Chinandega	18	9	27	Sept 04, 2009
	Chontales	15	3	18	Sept 22, 2009
	Boaco	16	6	22	Sept 23, 2009
	Madriz	12	6	18	Sept 21, 2009
	Nueva Segovia	15	6	21	Sept 22, 2009
	Managua	16	5	21	Sept 22, 2009
	TOTAL	292	100	392	

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Professional Improvement Encounters with National Primary Education Directorate Staff

As a part of the sustainability strategies for applying the Project's pedagogical proposal at the Ministry of Education, two experience sharing events between Project facilitators and technicians from the MINED's National Primary Education Directorate were carried out this quarter. During these events, different aspects of the APA methodology and the project's pedagogical proposal components were discussed. Each sharing event was one-day long and the National Directorate expressed its appreciation because they helped unify the educational criteria with technical teams from the Ministry of Education. The second encounter dealt with preparing learning guides for students of multi-grade schools using APA Methodology.

Participants recognized the following achievements for these encounters:

- Integration of primary education teams and EXCELENCIA/USAID teams to discuss APA as a main tool in the learning process.
- A rich exchange of experiences that strengthened participant knowledge to improve education practice.

National Forum on Multigrade Rural Education

The National Primary Education Directorate called on EXCELENCIA/USAID technical staff to lead and facilitate the organization of regional forums and round tables for the National Forum on Rural Education. The Project's technical staff participated in numerous preparation and coordination meetings and its role in the event's success was publicly recognized by MINED authorities.

The Project's technical staff (facilitators) participated in the National Forum as working groups' coordinators and facilitators. The first day, they collected contributions from all participants in the forum on the MINED's Education Quality and Equality Model. The second day, they collected suggestions from all participants on different strategies to solve all problems found, in order to achieve quality education in multi-grade schools located in the country's most isolated rural areas.

Some of the contributions collected from the National Forum participants were the following:

a) Recommendations:

- Revalue the education of multi-grade school teachers.
- Develop a comprehensive policy for recognizing and providing incentives to rural teachers.
- Issue a pronouncement against reducing the education budget.
- Strengthen rural teachers' pedagogical abilities through a recognized specialization in multi-grade education.
- Enhance teachers' education through research strategies on rural education.
- Participation of schools and municipalities in the preparation of educational development plans.
- Eliminate partisan policy approaches to dealing with educational problems and solutions.

b) Difficulties

- Few opportunities for teacher training.
- Scarce follow up and support to the work carried out by teachers in rural areas.
- Base schools from the educational quality management model proposed by the MINED are not equipped with the necessary teaching tools to support the work of neighboring schools, especially in rural areas and in multi-grade schools.
- Lack of teacher professionalization.

c) Strategy proposals to be developed

- Reorganization of the TEPCEs functioning and purpose.

- Ensure on-going teacher training according to needs.
- Teacher enhancement and professionalization.
- Development and actualization of an educational assessment.
- Development of educational projects with the support and collaboration of fathers and mothers, NGOs and community at large.
- Reactivate the mobile normal schools concept.
- Inter-institutional coordination at the local level so that teachers know and support municipal development plans and projects.

First Grade Workshops: Learning Reading and Writing

In the workshops carried out this quarter, a total of 188 teachers (172 female and 16 male) participated. They discussed and analyzed achievements and problems in teaching reading and writing to first grade students, and they also reflected on the methodological strategies facilitating them.

The four first grade projects were studied and participants practiced how to use them with the students so that they can learn how to read and write before the end of the grade. This study produced the following conclusions:

- For the effective teaching of reading and writing the use of concrete material is necessary, not just chalk and a blackboard.
- It is important to use a wide variety of activities including songs, games, drawings, riddles, poems, and other activities which are attractive to students.
- These projects help carry out a creative, attractive and dynamic learning process.

Component 4 Training Activities

Component 4 continued executing its training plan to teachers from participant organizations as shown in the following table.

Table No.11: Participants in Training Events Carried out by Component IV, per Topic, NGO, Gender and Duration, during the Third Quarter of 2009

EVENTS	Total	Duration 1 day		Duration 2 days		Duration 3 days		Duration > 3 days		NGO
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
TRAINING ON PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS	53	13	40							ALISTAR
TRAINING ON APA METHODOLOGY AND PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS	66	12	54							FADCANIC
FIRST GRADE EXPERIENCE SHARING	120	12	108							FADCANIC
WORKING DAYS WITH THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT	47	15	32							FADCANIC
QUALITY CIRCLE ON PHONICS AWARENESS AND TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL	19	1	18							FE Y ALEGRIA
TRAINING FOR 1ST AND 2ND GRADE TEACHERS	38						38			FUNDACION LEON
DEPARTMENTAL MEETING WITH 5TH AND 6TH GRADE TEACHERS -WAYS TO LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM	19						19			FUNDACION LEON

STRENGTHENING WORKSHOP FOR STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND PARENTS COMMITTEE	128	27	101							IGLESIA MORAVA
STRENGTHENING WORKSHOP ON PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS	104	5	23	14	62					IGLESIA MORAVA
TRAINING ON EDUCATION FOR TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL	728	90	638							NEHEMIAS
FIRST GRADE TRAININGS.	1012	148	864							NEHEMIAS
TRAINING ON PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS.	127	17	110							NEHEMIAS
QUALITY CIRCLES.	727	108	619							NEHEMIAS
TRAINING FOR STUDENT COUNCILS.	658			385	230	15	28			VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS
TRAINING ON PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENTS FOR TEACHERS.	295					137	133	20	5	VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS
TRAINING TO STUDENT GOVERNMENT	606			324	282					VICARIATO BLUEFIELDS
TOTAL	4747	448	2607	723	631	152	161	20	5	

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

C) Monitoring and Technical Support Visits to Network Schools

This quarter Project facilitators carried out a total of 117 support visits to schools. During these visits, they took special care with schools having certain problems, which had been identified during the Second Technical Meeting. In this respect, coordination with delegations has been the key which has allowed the development of all activities at the local level.

EXCELENCIA/USAID highlights these visits as support and training tools for departmental and municipal pedagogical advisers and for principals of the Project's network schools.

Table No. 12: Visits Carried out by Project Facilitators During this Quarter

Department	Number of Visits
León	6
Masaya	4
Jinotega	8
Matagalpa	14
Granada	5
Río San Juan	4
RAAS (Zelaya Central)	5
Carazo	6
Rivas	6
Managua	14
Boaco	5
Chontales	7
Chinandega	8

Department	Number of Visits
Estelí	5
Nueva Segovia	8
Madriz	8
RAAS	2
RAAN	2
TOTAL	117

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Exclusive visits to support different EXCELENCIA/USAID events were carried out as well as per demand and MINED's invitation. A total of 62 exclusive visits were made to network schools this quarter, as are shown in the table below.

Table No. 13. Other Follow-up Visits Conducted this Quarter

Department	Number of Visits
León	1
Masaya	2
Jinotega	3
Matagalpa	5
Granada	2
Río San Juan	3
RAAS (Zelaya Central)	4
Carazo	2
Rivas	4
Managua	9
Boaco	1
Chontales	2
Chinandega	6
Estelí	7
Nueva Segovia	2
Madriz	4
RAAS	4
RAAN	1
TOTAL	62

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

D. Expansion Activities in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions

EXCELENCIA/USAID through FADCANIC assists 106 public schools * (64 in the RAAN and 42 in the RAAS), out of which 25 are mentor schools and 81 are satellite schools (*NGO and FBO managed schools are included in the Component 4 report). The table below shows these data by type and mode.

Table 14. Public Schools Assisted by FADCANIC, by Category and Mode

Region	Number of Schools	Mentor	Satellite	Multigrade	Bilingual Multigrade	Standard	Bilingual Standard
RAAN	64	15	49	5	29	10	20
RAAS	42	10	32	11	5	13	13
Totals	106	25	81	16	34	23	33

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

At the schools of the EXCELENCIA/USAID project in the different regions the needs for bilingual intercultural education of the following ethnic groups are addressed:

Table No. 15. Public Schools Assisted in the Caribbean Coast, by Ethnic Group

Schools	Miskitu	Mayangna	Spanish	Creole	TOTAL
RAAN	32	17	15	0	64
RAAS	4	0	24	14	42
TOTAL	36	17	39	14	106

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

As shown in the table below, 23,456 pupils study in and 1,000 teachers work at the project network's public schools in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions.

Table No. 16. Students and Teachers at Assisted Public Schools

Region	No. of Schools	Female Students	Male Students	Total Students	Female Teachers	Male Teachers	Total Teachers
RAAN	64	6,561	6,449	13,010	384	143	527
RAAS	42	4,691	4,908	9,599	399	74	473
	106	11,476	11,357	22,609	783	217	1,000

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID, Project, September 2009

Training

A total of 317 people (168 female and 149 male) participated in different training events developed and carried out by FADCANIC during this quarter, as shown in the table below:

Table No. 17. Training Events per Topic, Municipality and Participant Type

MUNICIPALITY	ACTIVITY	DATE	Fem	Male	TOTAL
Puerto Cabezas	Regional workshop on Spanish as a Second Language for reinforcing EIB for technicians, directors, educational authorities in the municipalities of Bonanza, Rosita, Siuna, Puerto Cabezas, Waspam, and Prinzapolka.	August 19th and 20th, 2009	19	16	35

Bluefields	Regional workshop for strengthening APA and First Grade with teachers from the Normal School and MINED and EXCELENCIA/USAID technical schools	July 2nd	18	6	24
Bluefields	Regional workshop for strengthening APA and First Grade with empirical teachers from the professionalization course at the Normal School.	July 11th	35	23	58
	2 day-long EIB Workshops on Spanish as a Second Language				
Bonanza	At three schools: Fenicia, Suniwas and Federico Taylor	September 3rd, 4th and 5th	7	23	30
Puerto Cabezas	At two schools: Rubén Darío and Llano Verde.	September 4th and 5th	24	11	35
Waspam	At two schools: Miguel Escobar and Escuela Nacional.	August 25th and 26th	11	17	28
Prinzapolka	At one school: Lakiatara.	September 18th and 19th	6	9	15
Puerto Cabezas	First workshop in Sta. Marta and Kisalaya on hygiene practices, identifying different participation mechanisms for taking care and maintaining the school. Second workshop in Santa Marta and in Kisalaya on knowing the building and ways to repair and maintaining it. Monitoring well water quality.	June 18th July 21st and 22nd In Santa Marta	23	23	46
Waspam		June 19th July 23rd and 24th in Kisalaya	25	21	46
	TOTALS		168	149	317

Source: FADCANIC/ EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Important Aspects to Highlight from Trainings:

RAAN

The workshop for strengthening the EIB at the regional level was facilitated by General Coordinator Ethel Martínez. With support from the Project's technical staff she provided participants with the pertinent orientation to use the three modules using a self-study methodology which is appropriate to improve the Spanish language they already speak. Participants owned the contents of the three Spanish L2 self-study modules. Each participant received a set of materials to do the exercises presented in the modules and improve the Spanish language they speak as a second language.

With MINED's technical support, specifically from those who participated in the regional workshop, it was possible to carry out 8 local sessions of the Spanish L2 Workshop. The workshop was multiplied with graduated teachers serving 4th to 5th grade students. These modules have linguistic contents dealing directly with the problems faced by Miskitu and Mayangna language speakers when speaking Spanish.

RAAS

The objective of the training on the First Grade Network was to improve strategies to facilitate the development of reading and writing skills in students. Participants were able to demonstrate, by using different learning techniques, their understanding and mastery of the contents and strategies learned through reading and writing simulated

classes, taking into account the reality of their communities and making more dynamic the processes for facilitating learning.

At the same time, participants confirmed the importance of strengthening the process started during the reading and writing teaching process. FADCANIC's technical team is trying to link the planning structure provided by the MINED and the application of the Project's proposal pedagogically.

Support Visits to Classrooms

During this quarter, the project team observed student performance in the classroom during schools visits, and also collected, processed, and analyzed student academic performance report. These reports were also sent to regional offices for consolidation and recording.

RAAN

Coordination with the Ministry of Education and the support of its technical staff was a decisive factor in the successful execution of the project's support visits during this period. FADCANIC and MINED's technicians visited, based on specific needs, 41 schools (12 monolingual and 29 bilingual). During these visits, technical advice and assistance was provided to 124 teachers (67 male and 57 female). These teachers analyzed, along with multi-grade school principals and teachers, monthly programming to verify the progress of 5th and 6th grade Language and Literature and Mathematics programs.

The resource centers installed in Siuna and Fenicia are currently in favorable conditions and working properly. During this quarter, the Kamla resource center had weak operation due to its distance from the satellite schools.

RAAS:

Support and pedagogical assistance visits to 42 schools from the 5 municipalities assisted by the Project were carried out. During these visits the team provided assistance to 233 teachers (196 females and 37 male) in the application of APA methodology, learning guides for multi-grade 3rd and 4th grade, and organization and use of learning corners. Principals of all schools visited were informed about the results found during the visits.

The table below shows a summary of these visits by school and number of teachers assisted.

Table No. 18. Visits Carried Out and Teachers Assisted During this Period

Municipalities	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers Assisted		
		Female	Male	Total
Siuna	8	9	1	10
Mulukuku	1	1	0	1
Rosita	11	21	18	39
Bonanza	9	8	21	29
Prinzapolka	6	6	17	23
Waspam	2	3	1	4
Puerto Cabezas	4	9	9	18
Sub total	41	57	67	124

Bluefields	12	78	9	87
Kukrahill	8	22	3	25
Learl Lagoon	14	41	9	50
Desembocadura	5	28	16	44
Corn Island	3	27	0	27
Sub total	42	196	37	233
TOTALES	83	253	104	357

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Development of APA Strategy at Schools Visited

Technical assistance visits to classrooms for regular and multi-grade primary teachers improve teacher and student performance, allowing them to progress satisfactorily. Assistance in the classroom also allows the team to observe the teacher and the school's strongest or weakest performance aspects. One factor which has been affecting the performance of some schools is insecurity, which hampers infrastructure repairs and improvements to pedagogical settings in the schools.

The EIB at the regional level in the RAAS workshop was a success and extremely beneficial. One of its achievements was raising the awareness of MINED authorities on the state of the bilingual intercultural education program in the regions through a reflection activity. The workshop allowed monolingual technicians and school principals to understand the problems bilingual students have in assimilating the Spanish language as their second language. In the eight workshop replications carried out in this region, 108 teachers from 15 Mayangna and 27 Miskitu schools were trained, for a total of 42 schools out of the 50 bilingual schools in the network.

Self-evaluation at the RAAS Schools

A total of 281 participants (mothers and fathers, students, teachers, principals, and assistant principals from mentor schools and satellite schools) who are assisted by the EXCELENCIA/USAID Project in the RAAS evaluated the qualitative progress made and took on new challenges to improve the application of the pedagogical components in their centers. The table below shows participation in these self-evaluations.

Table No.19. Participants Self-Evaluation of RAAS Schools

Municipality	Director		Teachers		Students		Fathers/ Mothers		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bluefields	1	11	--	12	15	19	3	13	19	55
Kukra Hill	-	3	5	14	16	14	8	6	29	37
Desembocadura	2	3	3	10	8	8	4	9	17	30
Corn Island	-	3	-	3	1	6	-	3	1	15
Laguna de Perlas	4	12	3	16	6	23	2	13	14	64
SUB TOTAL	7	32	11	55	46	70	17	44	80	201
TOTAL	39		66		116		61		281	

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Some of the aspects evaluated were the following: Infrastructure and basic services; application of pedagogical components; meeting frequency of the parents' council; parental participation in the school; and student government functioning.

During the execution of the self-evaluation sessions carried out in the RAAS, we were able to observe that teachers identified important achievements regarding education quality at their schools and they are committed to improve in a gradual manner. Significant changes with larger impact regarding educational quality are the result of teachers' good disposition towards work in the 42 schools assisted in the RAAS.

Distribution of Expendable Materials in Schools

With the support of MINED authorities, the project delivered educational and expendable materials to all 64 schools assisted by the Project in the RAAN, facilitating the use and development of learning resources for work in the classrooms. The materials delivered were the following: math baskets, markers, bond paper, glue, crayons, rulers, tape, blackboard erasers, and others. In addition, in the region the project has a special supply of materials and kitchen utensils to support 15 schools badly affected by Hurricane Felix.

Systematization, Monitoring and Evaluation Activities in the Autonomous Regions During the Period

FADCANIC distributed the publication of the systematization of the impact of the EXCELENCIA/USAID Project First Year of Implementation in the Autonomous Regions. The systematization of the impact of the Project's Second Year of Implementation is in the design and layout process, and the final report on the Project's third year of implementation in the Autonomous Regions is underway.

FADCANIC hired the services of a consultant for monitoring and evaluation. The Project's Monitoring and Evaluation consultant visited a total of 8 schools this quarter, 2 in the Municipality of Siuna, 5 in Rosita, and 1 in Mulukuku. In addition, the consultant developed focus groups with students, teachers, and parents.

In order to evaluate the Project's implementation in its third year of operations in the regions, a Regional Evaluation Encounter was carried out in the city of Bilwi. A total of 55 people (students, teachers, principals, technicians, delegates, and parents) participated. Educational authorities from the regional government and FADCANIC also participated in this event.

Table No. 20. Participants at the Regional Meeting on the Project's Third Year of Operations.

Participant Characteristics	Participants		TOTAL
	Female	Male	
Delegates	1	3	4
Directors			10
Teachers			11
Pedagogical Advisers			5
Fathers and Mothers			8
Student Government			8
Excelencia – FADCANIC Staff	4	2	6
Support Staff	2	1	3
TOTAL	7	6	55

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID. September 2009

The main objective of this event was for participants to evaluate the development of EXCELENCIA in the RAAN through FADCANIC, emphasizing impact results. Some of the outcomes from that evaluation are as follows:

- MINED authorities recognize that EXCELENCIA/USAID has worked in an excellent manner in the RAAN.
- Teachers value the fact that through trainings they are strengthening their abilities and that they have substantially improved their handling of the APA.
- The material preparation and validation processes are one of the main achievements. These not only contribute to educational materials but they are creating the region's own human resources, which in turn contributes to the Project's sustainability.
- FADCANIC is fulfilling its commitment to contribute to the improvement of educational quality in the RAAN, and, in just three years, the good results in the schools are evident.
- Reconstruction of the Hermana Teresa de Jesús and Teodoro Rivera schools has made them the best schools in the region, both in terms of infrastructure and equipment.

E) Result 1: Main Achievements

- *8,123 people (5,970 women and 2,153 men) were trained during this period.*
- *The institutionalization process continues in close coordination with the MINED.*
- *The Project has been developing an institutionalization strategy with the MINED and it has been actively participating in all commissions created to follow up educational policy implementation.*

II. Outcome No. 2: New Competence-Based Curriculum for Primary Education, including EIB validated and incorporated into the National Educational System

A) EIB Material Production in the Caribbean Autonomous Regions

FADCANIC has continued with the production of EIB educational materials for multi-grade education's 5th and 6th grades. The status of this activity is shown in the table below:

Table No. 21. Status of Production of Learning Guides and Teaching Guides for Multi-grade Education's 5th and 6th Grade

Student Learning Guides and Teaching Guides for Teachers	Prepared	Under Design	Under Layout	Ready for Printing and Validation
AREA: Language and Communication Mother Tongues				
Miskitu Language				2 chapters
Panamahka Language				2 chapters
Twahka Language				2 chapters
AREA: Language and Communication				

Second Languages, 5th and 6th grades				
English L2				2 chapters
Spanish for Creole speakers				2 chapters
Spanish for Panamahka, Twahka and Miskitu language speakers				2 chapters
AREA: Mathematics for 5th and 6th grades				
In the Miskitu language				2 chapters
In the Panamahka language				2 chapters
In the Twahka language				2 chapters
In the English language			2 chapters	
In the Spanish language				2 chapters
				20 chapters

Source: FADCANIC/EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

B) Main Achievements for Result 2

(This quarter, only FADCANIC has carried out curriculum activities in the Caribbean Coast Regions)

Validation of multi-grade education learning guides for 5th and 6th grades has started in 22 schools: 9 in the RAAS and 13 in the RAAN. Learning Guides for 3rd and 4th grade are in the correction process under the supervision of the Project's linguistic technicians in the regions.

III. Result No. 3: Longitudinal Studies and Research for Evaluating Project Impact and Field Studies for Establishing Effective Channels to Improve Transition to Primary Education

A) Studies

1. 2009 Annual Study

Math tests have been updated and adjusted corresponding to updates and adjustments in the competencies in the reformed curriculum itself. After the national consultation process carried out last year, the new curriculum underwent small changes and for that reason it was necessary to adjust the test. However, only the Math test had to be adjusted. In addition, the Project proceeded to translate the Math tests into Miskitu, Mayangna and English languages in light of the decision made by EXCELENCIA/USAID and FADCANIC to administer these tests to students in their own native languages.

The 2009 Annual Study is summarized in the table below:

Table No.22. Sample Distribution per Department and Municipality

DEPARTMENTS	# of Schools.	School per Municipality
BOACO	4	Boaco 2, Camoapa 1, Teustepe 1
CARAZO	8	Diriamba 4, Sta. Teresa 2, El Rosario and San Marcos: 1
CHINANDEGA	10	Chinand. 4, Corinto 2, El Viejo 3, Chichigalpa 1
CHONTALES	4	Juigalpa 3, Sto. Tomas 1

ESTELI	2	Esteli 1, La Trinidad 1
GRANADAY	9	Granada 5, Diria 2, Nandaime 2
JINOTEGA	4	Jinotega 3, Yali 1
LEON	10	León 6, El Sauce 2, Malpaisillo and Sta. Rosa: 1
MANAGUA	30	Urban Hull 20, Cd. Sandino 4, V. El Carmen 2, San Rafael, Mateare, Tipitapa, Ticuantepe: 1
MASAYA	6	Masatepe 3, Masaya, Nindirí, San Juan Oriente: 1
MATAGALPA	7	Matagalpa 3, Sébaco 2/ Cd. darío 1 / San Isidro 1
NUEVA SEGOVIA	6	Ocotal 2, Cd. Antigua, Murra, El Jicaro, San Fernando 1
RAAN	21	Bilwi 8, Bonanza 5/ Waspan 4 / Rosita 3 / Siuna 1
RAAS	10	Bluefields 5, Pearl Lagoon 3, El Rama 1, Nueva Guinea 1
RIVAS	3	Rivas 2, Belén 1
134		

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

The sample includes schools from the following segments:

- Public schools (including both schools in and out of the Project network) which started validation of the new curriculum materials and which have been evaluated since 2007. This year's application will be the third measure to be made in these schools.
- Schools managed by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), which are participating in the Project under Component IV and which participated in the baseline measure in March 2008.
- Bilingual Intercultural Education Schools, assisted by FADCANIC in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions and which are in the mist of validating curricular materials in the English, Miskitu and Mayangna languages.
- Some schools from EXCELENCIA/USAID partner organizations which asked to participate in this study after the dissemination activity carried out last quarter as part of the Information Package recommended by the USAID audit. The organizations which requested to be included are the following: Fundación Pantaleón, with schools in the Department of Chinandega and also are part of EXCELENCIA/USAID network; the CARE-PROGEDES Project, with presence in the Departments of Estelí, Jinotega and Matagalpa and which also are part of the EXCELENCIA/USAID network and the JACOB Foundation, with relationships through the American Nicaragua Foundation (ANF), with one school in the Department of Jinotega.

The training activity for the field work will take place during October 22nd, 23rd, and 24th and it will include MINED technicians and technicians from EXCELENCIA/USAID partner Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

The final versions of the instruments and tools to be applied in the 2009 Study are being reviewed and adjusted in coordination with AIR/Washington.

2. 2008 - 2009 Formative Evaluation

Phase III 2009 Formative Evaluation tests are currently being applied and they will be collected at the end of October 2009 and input at the beginning of November. 2009 Phase I Formative Evaluation tests have already been input and Phase II Formative Evaluation testing is underway.

The Project took advantage of the delivery of Phase III materials to send to each participating school principal and teacher the 2008 formative evaluation publication with the results at the section and classroom level.

B) Monitoring

At the close of this quarter, with assistance from the EXCELENCIA/USAID database management and consultation system, the project advanced in updating all information on the Project's Network's 3,015 schools. This information includes: type, area, status, geographical location, unique code, enrollment and teachers as basic data in addition to date of inception to the EXCELENCIA/USAID Project school network as an additional data requested by the USAID office in Nicaragua. Next quarter, the project will classify the EXCELENCIA / USAID School Network based on the new organizational model implemented by the MINED.

We have also continued –and will continue - the cleaning and finishing process for the EXCELENCIA/USAID school network teachers' database. This data is verified against the Supreme Electoral Council database so as to ensure the truthfulness of all identification IDs. This quarter, records of 8,123 people participating in training events carried out by the project were input with verification of their respective ID cards.

The M&E team has identified a list of candidates to participate in the Master Teacher Training Program requested by USAID as one of the Project's extension's results. The list of candidates is disaggregated by municipality, position, and gender, and candidates are verified through their ID cards. These candidates have been selected from all MINED's human resources which the EXCELENCIA/USAID Project has trained between January 2006 and September 2009.

The Tables below show the number or people trained by EXCELENCIA/USAID from January 2006 through September 2009.

Table No. 23. Total Number of People Trained by EXCELENCIA/USAID to Date, per Department in the Country.

Departments	N	%
BOACO	1,107	3.5%
CARAZO	1,387	4.4%
CHINANDEGA	2,749	8.8%
CHONTALES	1,239	4.0%
ESTELI	1,464	4.7%
GRANADAY	1,234	4.0%

JINOTEGA	1,528	4.9%
LEON	2,024	6.5%
MADRIZ	1,696	5.4%
MANAGUA	4,461	14.3%
MASAYA	1,876	6.0%
MATAGALPA	2,276	7.3%
NUEVA SEGOVIA	1,795	5.7%
RAAN	1,298	4.2%
RAAS	2,424	7.8%
RIO SAN JUAN	883	2.8%
RIVAS	1,780	5.7%
Total	31,221	100%

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

Table No. 24. Positions of all People Trained by EXCELENCIA/USAID from January 2006 to date.

Title	N	%
Departmental or Municipal Pedagogical Adviser	1,113	3.6%
Departmental or Municipal MINED Delegate	415	1.3%
Director / Deputy Director	3,738	12%
Teachers	25,764	83%
NGO Technician	164	0.5%
Curriculum Analyst	27	0.1%
Total	31,221	100%

Source: EXCELENCIA/USAID Project, September 2009

This quarter, the project processed the last set of training books for their respective inputting and data processing for the USAID TraiNet System; the input of this information will take place once the USAID / Nicaragua office has confirmed how it should be carried out.

C) Result No. 3 Main Achievements

Result No. 3 Achievements

- *Two brochures with the 2008 Formative Evaluation results have been published and distributed.* One is a trifold with results at the section level for participating teachers, and one is a booklet including the results at the school level for principals. These brochures were distributed with the materials for the 2009 evaluation at the end of September.

- *The project was able to implement the three Formative Evaluation Application Phases at schools managed by NGOs and Faith-Based Organizations (Component IV). With the information from these results and the results from the 2008 Formative Evaluation, the project will move to preparing comparative reports, which will provide valuable information for improving educational quality in the country.*
- *The project was able to update and adjust the academic performance test for primary 3rd grade in Spanish and Math after modifications to the new reformed curriculum which were the result of the national consultation implemented by the MINED last year.*
- *The project now has available Math tests translated into the Miskitu, Mayangna and English languages to evaluate the academic performance of third grade bilingual schools' students in the RAAN and the RAAS stemming from an agreement with FADCANIC with this purpose.*
- *We prepared and submitted the Evaluation and Monitoring Area Plan and Budget for the project's extension requested by the donor for the October 2009 - March 2010 period.*

IV. Result No. 4: Expanding the number of privately managed schools applying the model school approach throughout Nicaragua.

In this quarter, Component 4 has focused on sustainability. While sustainability has always been the focus throughout the project, specific targeted activities in this last quarter were designed to ensure that this happens. These activities include following up on the recently installed School Resources Centers, providing final project materials and documentation accompanied by quality circles for training on the material, as well as supporting other areas of the project, including the Evaluation Area.

In regard to the School Resource Centers, as was described in the last quarterly report, all resources have been installed throughout Nicaragua with Component 4's seven partner NGOs. During this quarter, all School Resource Centers were inaugurated with representatives from the MINED, EXCELENCIA/USAID, NGOs, parents, students, teachers, and principals.

As was expressed in the inauguration events, the commitment to work with the community to sustain the Resource Centers is essential. While Center staff participated in school exchanges as well as trainings in the previous quarter, it is important that they are accompanied throughout the learning process at the school level. For this reason, Component 4 Coordinators organized their visits for this quarter around supporting the seven resource centers. For the first time, EXCELENCIA has provided a technical manual as a reference for the use and maintenance of technical equipment.

Component 4 also focused on providing the private/subsidized schools with the pending *Modulos Interactivos* and *Material de Apoyo*. Component 4 supported the Component 1 in completing those. The importance of these materials is that although the schools via their NGOs have received trainings on topics include the Pedagogical Components and others, it is important that they have in their own small library these training materials to be able to reference and use in the coming years.

Rather than just providing the materials, the Component 4 team designed training guides to accompany the *Modulos Interactivos/Material de Apoyo*. The guides were used in small training quality circles with NGO staff attending their respective mentor satellite webs. NGO facilitators have and will continue to use these experiences to provide follow-up directly with teachers and principals. A total of 78 visits were completed by Component 4 Coordinators and 381 trainings by NGO partners; for more complete information see Result 3 section of this report. Component 4 supported the *Evaluation team* with pedagogical recommendations for the second and third application of the formative evaluation.

Administratively, a large part of the quarter was dedicating to the pending extension of the project. All NGO partners have reviewed their existing funds and re-budgeted to be able to extend until the end of the next quarter for the most part without costs. This excludes Fe y Alegría which will work with completing the teacher training program experience which incorporates the APA method and EXCELENCIA model school approach. Fe y Alegría continues to advance in the development of the academic programs and support materials as well as the academic professional development of the 15 student teachers in the Normal/Lechecuagos.

V. Construction Component

On August 4th and 5th EXCELENCIA/USAID turned over the Hermana Teresa de Jesus Rosales School to the Santa Marta community, Municipality of Bilwi, and the Teodoro Rivera School to the Kisalaya community, Municipality of Waspam, RAAN, respectively. Attendees included representatives of local government, Regional Delegates of the Ministry of Education, USAID representatives, FISE Representatives, School Directors, and community leaders. The schools were turned over completely furnished with student desks, teacher desks, bookshelves, educational materials, computers, tape recorders, and kitchen tools.

Fixed Assets Program

At the end of September, the project finalized a program to keep good record of the project assets in detail. The program allows project staff to access all details of all the project assets, including acquisition cost, location, and depreciation.

Close-out Planning

The Lead Administrative and Finance Coordinator of EXCELENCIA/USAID has been working on a strategy for the close out of the Project. All the EXCELENCIA/USAID managers have been involved in the planning of the close out, and are the responsible parties for the preparation of the deliverables of their components.

VI. Other Activities

EXCELENCIA/USAID responded to a request for proposals sent by USAID for an extension of project activities until March 2010. The modification extending the project with additional funds was signed September 24, 2009.

VII. Planned Activities for Next Quarter

Result No.1. APA Methodology Expansion:

- The Work Plan for the expansion will be fine-tuned and the Master Teacher training program will be coordinated with the MINED. The next actions to be done are as follows:
 - a) identification of potential candidates to start the master teachers' updating/training plan
 - b) submit candidates list for consideration and approval to MINED
 - c) master teacher training program analysis in a joint effort with the MINED for its agreement and implementation commitment
 - d) master teacher training materials, programs, and teaching aids will be prepared and reproduced
 - e) master teacher training program activities will be started
- The project will continue to suggest strategies to the MINED to ensure institutionalization of project contributions. In this sense, we will continue to participate in all commissions created by the MINED to ensure that project's proposals are taken into account during the implementation of educational policies.
- The project will continue supporting the MINED in its battle for First Grade and the application of the National Forum on Rural Education's conclusions and recommendations.
- The EXCELENCIA/USAID Pedagogical Proposal's manual will be analyzed, and it will serve as a point of reference for the project's methodology general training and institutionalization and the Project's Strategy Systematization in its implementation.

Result No. 2. New Curriculum

The Project will await the MINED's decisions regarding the implementation of the new curriculum, and will continue participating in the related commissions. FADCANIC will validate 5th and 6th grade multi-grade intercultural bilingual educational materials.

Result No. 3. Studies and Evaluation

- Human resources for the 2009 Annual Study's field work will be trained 2009.
- The 2009 Annual Study's field work will be started and completed.
- The 2009 Annual Study information gathered in the field will be entered and databases will be cleaned and sent to AIR/Washington for technical analysis.
- The report with results from the 2008 Annual Study's Academic Performance Evaluation will be prepared and sent to participant schools.
- Inputting the three application times of the 2009 formative evaluation will be completed and databases will be cleaned and sent to AIR in Washington.

Monitoring:

- In a joint effort with the pedagogical area, the M&E team will prepare the list of potential candidates to be trained as Master Teachers at the municipal level for implementing the October 2009-March 2010 Extension Result No. 1.
- The selection of human resources trained by EXCELENCIA/USAID during the 2006-2009 period will be presented to the MINED's central and local authorities as a contribution to strengthening its advisor and trainer network..
- The M&E team will continue developing and delivering to USAID/Nicaragua Mission and AIR and AED's offices in Washington all statistical information requested.
- Inputting data for FADCANIC trainings in the RAAN and the RAAS will be completed.
- The last Self Evaluation Report for schools assisted by the pedagogical area and FADCANIC will be prepared.
- The identification process of BASE Schools and Neighboring Schools for the EXCELENCIA/USAID network based on the Quality Education Management Model implemented by the MINED into the project database management and consultation system will be completed.
- USAID indicators for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year will be updated

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

The priority in the next quarter is completing all pending tasks both pedagogical and administrative. In regard to pedagogy, the project will hold a final fair to share best practices and innovations of the NGOs in reference to the Pedagogical Components. Not only Component 4 NGOs will be invited, but also partners of EXCELENCIA including Alianzas, Care, Save the Children, AMCHAM, ANF, Eduquemos, and the MINED. This will be an ideal opportunity to present the results of EXCELENCIA/USAID Component 4 to the education community in Nicaragua. In regard to administration, efforts will be made to ensure wrap up of the majority of pending financial specifications, as well as NGO reporting requirements as outlined in sub agreements (final report).

Construction Component

- All USAID-required information and documentation for the effective conclusion of all construction activities will be completed.