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**Strengthening Basic Education  
EQUIP2, El Salvador  
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October – December, 2006**



*1- Quarterly Report*

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With:

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## List of Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AED      | Academy for Educational Development  |
| CERCA    | Civic Engagement for Educational Reform in Central America   |
| COP      | Chief of Party (Director del Proyecto)   |
| CTO      | Cognizant Technical Officer  |
| EQUIP2   | Education Quality Improvement Program 2  |
| FEPADE   | Private Sector Foundation for Educational Development  |
| M & E    | Monitoring and Evaluation (Monitoreo y Evaluación)   |
| MINED    | Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación)  |
| NEA      | National Education Account (Cuenta Nacional de Educación)  |
| ONG      | Nongovernmental Organization (Organización no gubernamental)   |
| PEA      | Annual Educative Project (Proyecto Educativo Annual)   |
| PEI      | Institucional Educative Project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional)   |
| PMC      | Presidential Monitoring Committee (Comisión Presidencial de Monitoreo)   |
| PMP      | Performance Monitoring Plan (Plan de Monitoreo)  |
| RTI      | Research Triangle Institute  |
| SRC      | School Report Card   |
| TBN      | To Be Nominated  |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development /El Salvador  |
| UCA      | Central American University (Universidad Centroamericana)  |
| UTEC     | Technological University (Universidad Tecnológica)   |
| FLACSO   | Social Sciences Latin American Faculty (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales)                         |
| DIGESTYC | Office of Statistics and Censuses (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos)                                  |
| INSAFORP | Salvadorian Institute of Professional Development ( Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional)            |
| FUNDE    | National Foundation for Development ( Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo)                                   |
| ANEP     | Nacional Association of Private Business ( Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada)                          |
| FUNDES   | Development Foundation of Small and medium Enterprises (Fundación desarrollo de Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas ) |
| G10      | Training group of trainers (Grupo formador de formadores) (10 members)   |
| G50      | Training group of trainers (Grupo formador de formadores) (50 members)   |
| CETT     | Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (Centros de Excelencia en capacitación docente)                     |

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**EQUIP2**  
**USAID/EL SALVADOR'S STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

USAID/El Salvador's Strengthening Basic Education Program is an integrated set of activities that support the efforts of the Ministry of Education (MINED) and priorities of the Education National Plan 2021. The program is funded by USAID through three implementers: EQUIP2, Save the Children and FEPADE. The EQUIP 2 project seeks to support the development of education policy to increase and improve social investment and the transparency of the education sector, while increasing basic education opportunities. The project works at both the national and the school level, reaching up to 500 schools in six departments, to impact 500 directors, 3,000 teachers and 100,000 students over four years.

EQUIP2 contributes directly to the goals of the National Plan of Education 2021. In particular, it supports the Plan's Strategic Line #2 "Effectiveness of Basic Education," specifically regarding themes on competent and motivated educators, and a curriculum that lends itself to learning. EQUIP2 also supports the Plan's Strategic Line #4 "Good Management Practices," through institutional development methodologies and social participation at the school level, information systems, follow-up, and evaluation. EQUIP2 helps the MINED reach these goals by developing language materials, supporting teacher professional development and strengthening school management plans called PEI and PEA.

This trimester, like past ones, demanded EQUIP2, along with contractors and international experts to work at an accelerated pace. EQUIP2 has generated the following results: a) Finishing third grade language materials. MINED will validate and print them for the COMPRENDO schools. EQUIP2 continues to work on the first and second grade materials; b) Developing materials for the first two modules for training teacher trainers, module I is the Introduction to the Communication Competencies and module II is Continuous Evaluation; c) Training of teachers trainers based on modules I and II; d) Assisting 123 schools using EQUIP2 facilitators and 125 schools using MINED technical advisors for PEI elaboration using the methodology developed in the self assessment manual.

This report presents a summary of the main activities by component. Finally, there is a statement of the challenges met during the trimester, success histories and lessons learned.

### **Summary of Principle Activities**

#### *Third grade materials delivered to MINED*

In December, EQUIP2 delivered the third grade materials (a text book, the student's workbook and the teachers' guide) to MINED. This has been a collaborative process in conjunction with the *language development technical* team from MINED. MINED is reviewing these materials

and is expected to print and distribute them in the *Comprendo* schools. It is important to mention in terms of USAID branding policies, that MINED will print with government funds the materials including the USAID logo. EQUIP2 will deliver the first grade materials on January 2007.

#### *Teacher training modules developed and teacher trainers trained*

EQUIP2 developed Module I: Introduction to Language Competencies and Module II: Continuous Evaluation. EQUIP2 also trained the 42 teacher trainers that are going to train 800 teachers in December and January.

#### *Induction and diagnosis phase of the PEI process completed in 246 Schools.*

At the end of the 2006 school year, 100% of the 246 schools communities were informed about the program and accepted to participate in the process of strengthening their PEIs. Sixty five percent of the schools analyzed issues such as poor attendance, grade repetition, dropouts' rates and other similar indicators. EQUIP2 facilitators are visiting schools at least twice a month to provide technical assistance to the school committees. The first draft of the PEI self learning manual has been received very positively by the schools. MINED *equipos de seguimiento* are helping schools to implement the PEI strategy.

#### *Institutionalization of the National Education Accounts (CNE)*

During the last quarter of 2006, the NEA Team worked diligently to produce a draft report for review by Ministry officials. In December, the NEA Team presented initial NEA results reviewing existing databases (obtained from MINED, the BCR and DIGESTYC) to high level ministry staff. The presentation was well received, and members of the ministry staff commented that they were very pleased with the advances made by the NEA Team.

With MINED counterparts the EQUIP2 technical team also prepared a strategy for the distribution of NEA information (both within MINED and to outside interested parties). This document is currently under review by the National Directorate for Education (DNE) and will shape the presentations and dissemination strategy for planned working papers and the workshop ("*Taller CNE: Fronteras y Limites de Educación*"), which is expected to take place in January or February 2007, schedules permitting. During the first quarter of 2007 the EQUIP2 team will advance in data analysis, develop draft instruments and strategies for the new survey data to be collected in 2007 and finalize the first NEA report for distribution at the workshop.

#### *Cost-Effectiveness Studies of Selected Programs*

During this fourth quarter, the EQUIP2 Team advanced in reviewing existing documentation on the *Comprendo* program and continued this dialogue with MINED staff. EQUIP2 discussed changes to the proposed study with National Director of Education, Lorena de Varela. She suggested that a suitable comparison program, with similar end goals but different means, as

commonly required by the cost effectiveness methodology, was not available for the *Comprendo* study. No program, other than CETT, has comparable end goals, but different means. CETT, however, would be a difficult program of comparison as many of its development activities are financed by USAID across several countries, making identification of costs specific to the CETT in El Salvador nearly impossible to tease out.

*Strategic Planning workshop held to define activities for 2007*

EQUIP2 Project Director conducted a workshop to contribute in the definition of strategies that impact educational policy that is aligned with the Program objectives. A series of meetings with MINED, USAID and EQUIP2 partners were also held to develop the 2007 Plan Integrado.

The following table presents detailed information on the state of each of the components:

**EQUIP2**  
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**Activities by Component**

| GOALS   | QUARTERLY RESULTS  | COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Component I. To increase social sector investment and transparency</b> |  |  |
| A.1. Cost effective studies of selected programs                          | Met with key members of MINED staff to discuss changes to the <i>Comprendo</i> study to reflect concerns regarding comparable program of comparison and interest in assessing impact on teacher performance and use of materials.  | Continue to review documentation and availability of existing information for use in study; review expectations with MINED staff regarding <i>Comprendo</i> Study; and deliver revised methodology document.   |
| A.2. Methodology and Institutionalization of the NEA                      | Final draft of first working paper for NEA work advanced during this quarter. Initial results were presented to Ministry staff for review. Meeting with director of DIGESTYC was held to assess interest and capacity to conduct data collection in schools and municipalities. MINED counterparts drafted a letter of agreement. A strategy for dissemination was developed and is under review by DNE. | Finalize draft of working paper and obtain approval from MINED to move forward with workshop; continue exploring databases and produce initial database mapping reports for workshop based on prior year data; begin development of instruments and methodology for new surveys. |
| A.3. Integration of the MINED information system                          | Reviewed and revised reports based on MINED comments, delivered and accepted by MINED.   | Continue to provide comments on MINED questionnaires.  |
| A.4. To support the Presidential Monitoring Commission                    | The terms of reference had been drafted by the Commission and EQUIP2 representatives.  | The bidding process for the field research will begin in February.   |
| <b>B. Component 2. To improve the opportunities in Basic Education</b>    |  |  |
| B.1. National Strategy of Language based on Competencies                  | The production of textbooks, workbooks and teacher's guides for the first cycle continues in close collaboration with MINED. The 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade materials   | The 1 <sup>st</sup> grade materials will be delivered to MINED on January 19 <sup>th</sup> , and 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade materials will be delivered in February   |

| GOALS   | QUARTERLY RESULTS   | COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <p>were delivered to MINED on December 11th. These materials will be printed by MINED, and validated in the 125 <i>Comprendo</i> schools.</p> <p>In the 2007 work plan the dates for the delivery of materials have been reprogrammed following MINED requests.</p>   | <p>In January, a planning meeting will be conducted to revise the strategy for continuing the development of second cycle materials. One of the outcomes of this meeting will be the final schedule for the materials production agreed with the ministry as a part of 2007.</p> |
| <p>B.2, 3 and 4. Training of teacher trainers; development of modules for teacher training; and the plan for applied research</p> | <p>A workshop to present Module I was conducted on November 14th and 15th.</p> <p>A workshop to present Module II for teacher trainers was conducted on November 16th and 17th.</p> <p>42 teacher trainers participated in the two modules.</p> <p>The modules were delivered to FEPADE for printing</p>  | <p>Both Modules I and II will be revised after being validated during the teacher training. The EQUIP2 specialist will incorporate the technical recommendations.</p>  |
| <p><b>C. Objective C: Strengthening community participation to improve the quality of education in at least 500 schools</b></p>   |   |  |
| <p>C.1. To design a strategy to strengthen the PEI as a planning and participatory instrument in up to 500 schools.</p>           | <p>A series meetings to define the strategy were conducted with technical teams from the MINED, specially the Office of Institutional Management. Also representatives from <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> and Instructional Management participated.</p> <p>The self-assessment manual that contains the PEI and PEA strategy is being developed.</p> | <p>Technical meetings will continue until the strategy is finalized and ready to deliver it in the schools.</p>  |
| <p>C.2. To make other actors aware of the PEI strategy</p>  | <p>EQUIP2 has been working with MINED in order to facilitate the integration of their different tools within the PEI and PEA</p>  | <p>Continue with Technical assistance.</p>   |

| GOALS  | QUARTERLY RESULTS  | COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS   |
|--|--|---|
|  | strategy. By doing this, EQUIP2 is helping MINED unified its interventions at the school level   |   |
| C.3. To train facilitators that work in the development of the PEI                     | In December, EQUIP2 facilitators met to analyze the lessons learned from the process developed during 2006. Based on these lessons, the 2007 strategy was defined and facilitators were trained.   | Training of EQUIP2 facilitators will continue with bi-monthly meetings.   |
| C.4. To build local capacity in the follow-up teams of MINED                           | EQUIP2 facilitators participate in the monthly meetings organized by Departmental directors and Equipos de Seguimiento to share experiences and solve problems   | EQUIP2 facilitators will continue participating in the monthly meetings of the follow-up teams.   |
| C.5. To build local capacity among the school community members to strengthen the PEI. | <p>The 8 EQUIP2 facilitators provided technical assistance to the 123 schools -assigned to the EQUIP2 project- in an average of 3 visits per month until the third week of November when the school year ended.</p> <p>The EQUIP2 team had several meetings with the MINED team in order to support their work in the 124 schools assigned to the Equipos de Seguimiento</p> | <p>Technical assistance to the schools will start again in January 2007</p> <p>A 2-day workshop will be held for schools management teams (3 members per schools) of 246 schools. This workshops are planned for February 9-10 and 16-17.</p> |
| C.6. To strengthen the schools management tools  | <p>The self-assessment manual that integrates EQUIP2 four phases strategy was reviewed with MINED.</p> <p>In December, a one day meeting was held with representatives from MINED to review the self-assessment manual.</p>  | Finalize and print the self-assessment manual to be distributed in schools working with EQUIP2 project.   |
| <b>D. Objective D: To improve the civil competencies in at least 500 schools</b>       |  |   |
| D.1. To hold meetings with MINED   | A new strategy to link this component with PEI will be discussed with MINED and USAID  | A document with the strategy will be presented to the partners  |
| D.2. To facilitate meetings with   | These meetings are in stand by   | A meeting will be programmed  |

| <b>GOALS</b>   | <b>QUARTERLY RESULTS</b>   | <b>COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| NGOs and other actors in order to review best practices                            | until the strategy is defined and approved by MINED and USAID  | to present the strategy  |
| D.3. To identify alliances   | Potential allies are being identified.   | Follow-up meeting with allies will take place. New alliances will be pursue  |
| <b>E. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>  |  |  |
| E.1 and 2. To develop a monitoring and evaluation plan and its implementation plan | EQUIP2 provided follow-up to the integrated PMP and updated its PMP.   |  |
| E.3. To develop workshops with the MINED <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i>             | EQUIP2 provided technical assistance to MINED <i>estrategia de seguimiento unificada</i><br><br>Meeting with MINED Manager of Analysis and Computer Systems to provide assistance in developing MINED indicators.                          |  |
| E.4. To collect information  | EQUIP2 collected information regarding teachers' knowledge about language competencies for 1 <sup>st</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> grade.<br><br>EQUIP2 analyzed the information of the integrated PMP for the EQUIP2 data collection purposes. | Design the second year plan to collect information<br><br>In February, EQUIP2 will present a follow-up indicator report. This document will be the first report. |
| <b>F. Administrative Management</b>  |  |  |
| F.1 To establish the office and the procedures                                     | EQUIP2 continued daily performing office management responsibilities   |  |
| F.2 To contract local personnel  | Team completed   |  |

## LESSONS LEARNED

Collaboration with MINED to produce high level quality language materials require a realistic timeline. Due to a short timeframe to elaborate high quality language materials, MINED and EQUIP2 teams agreed to review the delivery timeline and the activities to follow-up the materials production process. For this reason, a technical meeting will take place in January to define a reasonable timeline to assure high quality materials.

## **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

### *Timeline for production of language materials*

The timeline to produce the materials has been a continual challenge for the project. EQUIP2 has to evaluate the needs of human resources constantly for this task. In addition, there is a lack of trained human resources in this area in El Salvador. Finally, EQUIP2 had agreed to create a team of seven professionals who continue developing the materials in a sequential form.

### *Delay in finishing the PEI and PEA self-assessment manual*

Finishing this manual has taken more time than expected. This is a process that is being developed in close collaboration with MINED, learning how to develop effective working relationships, create ownership and sustainability and how to be responsive to MINED's needs. This process shows the complexity of the nature of the management process and the difficulties to convene in a strategy that integrate the diverse components of the school management. However, progress has been achieved in a series of meetings with different MINED teams to take decisions on how to integrate the diverse components in a manual that assure a comprehensive and unify strategy to intervene at the school level.

### *Need for additional support in MINED Equipos de Seguimiento schools*

Since the attendance level observed in the schools assisted by MINED equipos de seguimiento is less than the schools that had developed the PEI process with the assistance of EQUIP2, EQUIP2 is proposing to strengthen the technical assistance through additional technical meetings for Equipos de Seguimiento. Moreover, EQUIP2 will propose to the ministry a knowledge sharing strategy thus schools that have made progress share their experiences within the first group of 246 schools. The challenge for the project will be to strengthen the support for *Equipos de Seguimiento* at the same time that continues to support the schools under EQUIP2 assistance.

### *Resignation of TCN competencies specialist*

In December, Aura Gonzalez, EQUIP2 competencies specialist, resigned starting January 19, 2007. EQUIP2 analyzed the need to have a replacement of this position. This analysis indicates that it is not necessary to contract a resident specialist in El Salvador. EQUIP2 has proposed to continue strengthening - in the area of language - MINED staff and local team.

## **FOLLOW-ON VISITS AND THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM**

For this third quarterly report no reports of interventions in this area were received.

## INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### *CURRENT TERM*

| <b>Area of technical assistance</b>             | <b>Specialist</b> | <b>Dates</b>         |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| Continuous Evaluation                           | Abigail Harris    | October and November |
| National Education Accounts                     | Amber Gove        | October              |
| Project Planning and impact on education policy | Ana Florez        | October              |
| Project Planning and impact on education policy | Jonh Guillis      | October              |
| M&E   | Ray Chesterfield  | October              |
| Competencies                                    | Eliana Ramírez    | October- November    |

### *PROPOSAL FOR NEXT TERM*

| <b>Area of Technical Assistance</b> | <b>Specialist</b> | <b>Dates</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| CNE and Cost Benefit Studies        | Amber Gove        | January      |
| Language Competencies               | Eliana Ramirez    | February     |
| Continuous Evaluation               | Abigail Harris    | February     |
| Materials                           | Dayanira Alfonso  | January      |

## SUCCESS STORIES

### CHILDREN RETURN TO THEIR CLASSROOM

Schools with low student attendance rates are a common problem in the rural areas in El Salvador. This situation clearly affects student learning. In most of the cases, parents aren't aware of the importance of the children's attendance to classes. Helping them to acknowledge their role in supporting student learning is a means to improve quality of education.

USAID is supporting the strengthening of Basic Education in up to 500 rural schools, through the implementation of a community participation strategy to support school management and school improvement plans. This strategy has motivated the participation of parents in activities that support childrens' learning. The program trains members of the school community to analyze information regarding the school management and quality.

In a rural school from Caserío El Salitre from Anamoros in the Department of La Unión, group of community members were trained using the strategy implemented by USAID. During the analysis, the group of parents decided to launch an information campaign about the correlation between childrens' school attendance and improved levels of learning . The teachers supported this initiative and offered to monitor the student's attendance. In a short period of time, this campaign motivated parents to send their children back to school and keep them there . Teachers have observed a measurable increase in the return of children who had dropped out from the schools. As the principal said "The USAID program has already demonstrated a positive effect that parental participation curbs low attendance and drop-out rates". Principal Yanira Reyes

