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**Strengthening Basic Education
EQUIP2, El Salvador
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Academy for Educational Development

With:

Research Triangle Institute
Mariposa Consulting LLC

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
ACE	Community Education Associations (Asociaciones Comunes Educativas)
CDE	National Education Boards (Consejo Directivo Educativo)
COP	Chief of Party (Directora del Proyecto)
COMURES	El Salvador Municipal Corporation
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DIGESTYC	Census and Statistics Department (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos)
DNGD	National Office of Departmental Management
EDUCO	Education with Community Participation Program for Rural Schools (Programa Educación con Participación de la Comunidad)
EQUIP2	Education Quality Improvement Program 2
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FEPADE	Private Sector Foundation for Educational Development
FLACSO	Latin American Department of Social Sciences (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales)
IBB	International Book Bank
IIS	Integrated Information System
INSAFORP	Professional Development Institution of El Salvador (Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional)
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation (Monitoreo y Evaluación)
MINED	Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación)
NEA	National Education Account (Cuenta Nacional de Educación)
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization (Organización no gubernamental)
PEA	Annual Education Project (Proyecto Educativo Anual)
PEI	Institutional Education Project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional)
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan (Plan de Monitoreo)
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development El Salvador
UCA	University of Central America (Universidad Centroamericana)

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EQUIP2 STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM USAID/EL SALVADOR

INTRODUCTION

USAID/El Salvador's Strengthening Basic Education Program is the compilation of an integrated group of activities that assist, in the long and short term, the efforts and priorities of El Salvador's Ministry of Education. The program proposes activities that support the development of educational policies that increase and improve social investment and transparency in the education sector, as well as increase and improve opportunities in basic education at the national level. The program has been extended until December 2010.

The Project has aligned its objectives and strategies with the new Social Education Program 2009-1014, "*Vamos a la Escuela*," which is the document that contains the strategies and programs that are a priority for the new administration and that substitutes the National Education Plan 2021. The 2010 Integrated Plan reflects the agreements between USAID and the MINED to develop activities that support the educational priorities of the Government of El Salvador.

This new report format responds to the objectives of USAID and presents a summary of the main advances of the program from the months of April through June 2010.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE QUARTER

EQUIP2 delivered the final document on the Strategic Review of the EDUCO program

The research team, composed of John Gillies and Ana Florez of AED and Luis Crouch of RTI, made various trips to El Salvador to interview key actors from the MINED and to make several visits to schools to obtain first hand information. The local EQUIP2 team performed consultations to various ACE and CDE schools in the 14 departments to understand the opinions of various EDUCO beneficiaries and rural public schools in the country. The lead research team also met with representatives from ACE and CDE schools, including families, principals, teachers and students, as well as members of the Counterpart and Advising Groups.

At the end of the quarter, the team presented the findings of the EDUCO Strategic Review to leaders of the MINED and USAID. This presentation was shared with the National Board of Education, with members of the Counterpart and Advising Groups that were formed for this activity, and with the implementing team from the MINED (directors, managers, and officials).

In the presentation, the research team explained that the results showed a range of options so that Salvadorans could make the appropriate decision that will affect more than 55% of rural schools in El Salvador, including more than 8,000 teachers, 300,000 students, and 2,200 ACEs. The social investment in EDUCO is significant; citizens have volunteered more than a million work hours each year to improve their schools. EDUCO has achieved what many countries are looking to accomplish: accountability, community participation, and education for the poorest of citizens. The options that were proposed by the research team include the following: Option A- continue EDUCO as is; Option B-maintain EDUCO with changes in the hiring of teachers to augment stability; Option C-maintain EDUCO with changes in the

ACEs, emphasizing governance over administration and management; Option D-unified governance combining the advantages of both methods, ACE and CDE; Option E-eliminate EDUCO and change all of the ACEs to CDEs. Eliminating CDEs and changing all of the CDEs to ACEs is theoretically possible as well, but this option is not considered realistic. The final report was printed and shared in an effort to obtain public opinion.

EQUIP2 began updating information on investments from the public sector through the National Education Accounts

The MINED solicited the Project for assistance with an update to the National Education Accounts. This activity will revise information on indicators relating to the investment of education for use by the Technical Secretariat in an effort to submit the information to international organizations such as UNESCO and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The EQUIP2 team has begun working on this together with the MINED and the Ministry of Finance, and is currently evaluating the need to collect information on the investment from municipalities.

EQUIP2 completed the inventory of processes and organization of the Departmental Directorates

The inventory processes helped to define 4 types of Departmental Directorates according to their organic composition. With this typology, EQUIP2 was able to standardize procedures in the directorates, and completed this activity in the Departmental Directorates of San Salvador and La Libertad. Also during this quarter, the Project finished the description of employee positions in the directorates. There were three surveys implemented in each of the aforementioned departments for the development of procedures corresponding to the organic structure of each specific Departmental Directorate. There were 153 officials from the Departmental Directorates that attended these meetings, 97 of them women and 56 men. There were also 3 training sessions for 186 officials (88 women and 98 men) composed of participants from the Departmental Improvement Teams and the MINED.

For the participants, the organization processes of the Departmental Directorates have reflected the specific reality of each one of the departments. The processes are designed so that administrative management is consistent in supporting student learning, allowing for greater clarity, transparency and efficiency. The processes respond to a real need of implementing what is learned in everyday situations and has contributed to local teams reflecting on new organizational and teamwork styles.

EQUIP2 continued developing the training program for Departmental Directors and the strengthening of the technical team from the MINED's National Directorate for Departmental Management

This quarter, EQUIP2 held two training sessions on management abilities, as they were outlined in the new processes and organization of the Departmental Directorates. Participants included 13 out of the 14 Departmental Directors. These sessions have been valuable in obtaining clarity on the differences between being an administrator, leader, manager, and coach. For the participants, the sessions have been specific to the reality of each Departmental Directorate and the need to strengthen and improve strategies for planning, effective use of time, and organization.

EQUIP2 also implemented four training sessions for 72 members of the technical team from the MINED that included 28 men and 44 women. This workshop outlined all of the new processes that were developed after reviewing the old processes of the Departmental Directorates and after the workshops for the Departmental Directors and the Management Advisors. The training sessions were for high level managers so that the MINED team could strengthen their role in supporting the Departmental Directorates and the schools. For the participants, it was important to reinforce teamwork and relationship management through improving personal attitudes.

EQUIP2 delivered the framework and modules of the training program for MINED's Management Advisors

This quarter, EQUIP2 delivered a proposal to the MINED for the program to train management advisors that included the framework and the corresponding modules. The MINED approved the proposal during three verification sessions with a team of officials from the central and departmental levels. As a result of these sessions, EQUIP2 has developed 5 modules that have been approved. Of these modules, EQUIP2 has completed Module 1 and has begun implementation of Module 2: "Management Based Learning" in which 85 management advisors participated (49 men and 36 women). Also, the Project developed two sessions of Module 3: "Abilities of the Management Advisor to Support School Transformation," in which 96 management advisors participated (52 men and 44 women).

EQUIP2
STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION
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ADVANCES IN ACTIVITIES BY COMPONENT

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
A. Component 1. Increased and improved social sector investments and transparency in education		
A.1. At least one effectiveness study completed in collaboration with the MINED on the impact of basic education interventions.	<p>-The EQUIP2 leadership team visited El Salvador to present the results of the Strategic Review of the EDUCO program to leaders in the MINED, leaders in USAID, Counterpart and Advising Groups, members of the National Board of Education, parents, teachers, and principals.</p> <p>-The results were presented during the second week of May 2010.</p> <p>-EQUIP2 began construction of the work plan, to be approved by the MINED, of the study on effective technical assistance to schools.</p>	<p>-Printing and distribution of 200 copies of the final report of the EDUCO Strategic Review.</p> <p>-The Project will begin field work for the study, approved by the MINED.</p>
A.2 Sources and uses of education finances tracked, resulting in increased and more equitable investment.	-EQUIP2 has begun updating the information on investments to the education system from the public sector.	<p>-During the next quarter, the Project will define the levels of investment and validate the information; it will be presented in an integrated report along with a manual with NEA calculations.</p> <p>-EQUIP2 will work with the MINED to integrate the NEA to the Integrated Information System.</p>
A.3 Strengthening of MINED capabilities to develop and analyze data within the Integrated Information System (IIS) and to develop a strategy for institutionalization,	<p>-EQUIP2 supported the MINED in the integration of information from the Departments for Planning and Human Development to allow for easy consultations through the internet.</p> <p>-EQUIP2 developed the beta version of the “situational room” for the IIS, and is working</p>	-EQUIP2 will conduct activities to improve the “situational room” and to complete a stable version for the MINED authorities which will contain indicators according to the Social Education Plan; there will

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
accountability and transparency.	with the MINED to increase the number of technical experts on the use and manipulation of the Business Object tools.	also be a cleansing of the reports panel to contain only validated and agreed upon reports. - The Project will work on an updated proposal for the new version of the access and security policy which will be validated by MINED authorities.
A.4: Strengthen the continuity of national educational objectives by reinforcing the capacity of the MINED, and other various stakeholders, who support and monitor education sector progress.	-EQUIP2 contributed to the continuation of national education objectives by presenting the results of the EDUCO Strategic Review. The Project performed an analysis on the priorities of the National Education Plan in light of EDUCO. This analysis was shared with groups from civil society, the MINED, and representatives of ACEs and CDEs, among others.	-EQUIP2 will continue supporting the MINED in the distribution of the results from the EDUCO Strategic Review. -EQUIP2, together with the MINED, will develop distribution strategies for decentralization and other activities implemented by the Project.
A.5: Establish international and local private sector alliances to support educational priorities to improve quality.	-EQUIP2 delivered books to 14 schools in one monumental delivery: 210 English books and 1,274 Spanish books. Present at this delivery were officials from the MINED, the Vice Minister of Education, representatives from USAID, and principals from the schools that benefited from the books. -Foundation UNO made a delivery of 700 English books that benefited 12 schools, and the Salvadoran Cultural Center received 510 English books. -The Peace Corps is utilizing its volunteers to deliver 250 English books and 1,050 Spanish books.	-EQUIP2 will deliver the rest of the books to schools selected by the MINED.
B. Component 2: Increased and improved basic education opportunities		
B.1: Improve MINED strategies and tools regarding school management and leadership for school	- EQUIP2 completed 3 surveys on the development of procedures according to the type of Departmental Directorate, in which 153 officials from the Departmental Directorates participated.	- EQUIP2 will complete the development of Module 6 of the training program and will continue with the training sessions.

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
principals to enhance student learning.	<p>-The Project also held 3 training sessions for officials from the Departmental Improvement Teams.</p> <p>-The Project has trained 13 Departmental Directors through two training sessions on management abilities.</p> <p>-EQUIP2 developed a training program for Management Advisors that included a training framework and modules. Three validation sessions were held in which officials from the central and departmental levels participated.</p> <p>-The Project developed 5 training modules and had them validated.</p> <p>- EQUIP2 developed the third session of Module 2: “Management Based Learning,” in which 85 management advisors participated (49 men and 36 women). The Project has also developed the first two sessions of Module 3: “Abilities of Management Advisors to Support School Transformations,” in which 96 Management Advisors participated (52 men and 44 women).</p> <p>-The Project has held 4 training sessions for the DNGD technical team:</p> <p>-April 26-17: 41 participants (27 women and 14 men)</p> <p>-June 14: 6 participants (2 women and 4 men)</p> <p>-June 21: 25 participants (15 women and 10 men)</p> <p>-On June 22, a work session was held with officials from the central and departmental levels, as well as other institutions that work with the MINED. There were 28 participants (17 women and 11 men).</p>	<p>-In July, the Project will begin technical assistance to the MINED on educational decentralization. For this, EQUIP2 will form a local team that will explore the concepts and strategies of the interior of the MINED.</p>
C. Monitoring and Evaluation		
C.1. Collect Information	-EQUIP2 is finishing the collection of some data necessary to update the 2009-2010 PMP	-Mariposa Consulting, an EQUIP2 partner, will travel to El Salvador to finalize the

GOALS	QUARTERLY RESULTS	COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS
		collection of information and work with the EQUIP2 team to prepare the PMP, to be submitted to USAID.

LESSONS LEARNED

Many of the activities that were implemented this quarter were intertwined, illustrating the importance of integration and systems thinking. This is true for the process of training Departmental Directors, Management Advisors, and the DNGD team from the MINED, which was supported by revising and updating the administrative procedures of the Departmental Directorates. The coordination between modules, themes, and training sessions for the aforementioned groups has provided feedback to support other activities. Integration and systematic vision is a lesson to be continued and to use to advance future Project activities that are similarly connected.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

This quarter, the main challenge has been working with the MINED and their different directorates. The MINED does not integrate work teams within their own directorates. Therefore, EQUIP2 proposed and developed processes to facilitate coordination between the teams. This coordination has required intense negotiation processes to support the MINED in reaching basic agreements.

FOLLOW UP VISITS AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

This report does not include areas of intervention or appointments.

INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

CURRENT QUARTER

Area of Technical Assistance	Specialist	Dates
Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	John Gillies	May 9-15, 2010 June 3-8, 2010
Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	Luis Crouch	May 9-15, 2010
Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	Ana Florez	April 5-9, 2010 May 9-15, 2010 June 3-8, 2010
Collection of Final PMP Results	Ray Chesterfield	June 28-July 2, 2010
Integrated Information System	Sergio Somerville	April 11-17, 2010 June 3-27, 2010

PROPOSAL FOR NEXT QUARTER

Area of Technical Assistance	Specialist	Dates
Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	John Gillies	July 6-14

Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	Ana Florez	July 6-14
Strategic Review of EDUCO Program	Luis Crouch	July 6-14
Decentralization	Kristin Rosenkrans	July-August
Integrated Information System	Sergio Somerville	August

SUCCESS STORY

Feedback from the Results of the EDUCO Strategic Review

Early Saturday morning, representatives from the Community Education Association (ACE) from an EDUCO school gathered in the Usulután town square. The group was led by the President of the ACE and by the school principal, who were accompanied by other parents and teachers. Together, they took the bus to San Salvador to attend a day of discussion on the strategic review of the EDUCO program. When they arrived at the meeting, they realized that, like them, there were National Education Board (CDE) representatives from other schools and representatives of other ACEs. In the meeting room, more than 40 people were gathered. This meeting was part of the process of consultation and ideas exchange resulting from the Strategic Review of the EDUCO Program. This was a study performed by the EQUIP2 Project in El Salvador, led by AED for the Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Program for Strengthening Basic Education in El Salvador, which is developed jointly with the Ministry of Education (MINED).

Don Manuel de Jesus, one of the participating parents, opened up conversation. "There are many rumors about the future of EDUCO, and we want to be aware of what is true in order to save our school." Don Pedro, another parent said, "We do not want to be excluded; the MINED can not reach all schools, so they should let us help them." With these comments, the dissemination and feedback meeting began.

The research team from EQUIP2 presented the participants with the range of options resulting from the Strategic Review. The EQUIP2 team explained the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options proposed to the participants. These options ranged from leaving EDUCO as it is currently operating to eliminating it entirely. As intermediate options, the research team proposed to leave EDUCO and simply change the way teachers are hired, or to leave EDUCO and change the relationship between management and governance of the ACEs. This would mean that the principal leads the day-to-day management of the school, while the ACEs play an important role in developing long term decisions, planning, missions and visions of the school. Finally, the research team explained to the participants that all of these options would mainly affect ACE schools, but that the results also included an option which would simplify the relationship between citizens and the State to improve educational quality and will affect all ACE and CDE schools equally.

After the presentation of options, participants formed small working groups to analyze and provide feedback on the proposed options. The group work was participatory and parents and principals were able to share their views. Most importantly, however, many students also expressed their thoughts. Kevin, a ninth-grader, told his group vehemently, "We ask that teachers be local. They know the reality of our communities and can support us. If rural school teachers are in our schools because they have no choice, they do not support us." Doña Ana Maria said, "A bad teacher in EDUCO is a bad teacher in the CDE. For this reason, we can not simply change all of the ACEs to CDEs. MINED would be better off if they clarify the rules for everyone: teachers, parents, and principals." Don Fermin added, "What do we do with good teachers and with the bad ones, then?"

In another group, the President of the ACE said, "The MINED needs to continue trusting that we are doing good work in schools because many of us know how to do our job. You can not punish everyone." A principal from a CDE school commented, "In my opinion, it is a good idea to start with a clean slate, with Option D—a unified system with clear rules to prevent the abuse of power. The MINED has to do more monitoring to ensure compliance." Another CDE principal added, "The MINED does not realize that we have too much administrative work and many of us do the work without being compensated."

After two hours of deliberation, EQUIP2 team members thanked the participants and summarized the results of the meeting, pledging to include their comments in the final report. Doña Rosa commented, "The meeting was valuable. It is wonderful to know what is being presented to the MINED. What matters is that our children learn well. We know that teachers are pushing to end EDUCO, but we now know that there are other options." The research team shared a report from the meeting with the Vice Minister and with USAID. The Vice Minister agreed with USAID and EQUIP2 on a strategy for disseminating the results and printing copies of the final report to share with the public.