

Quarterly Report

October 1 - December 31, 1998



Learn Link
*Linking people to learning technologies for
sustainable development*



Global Communications and Learning Systems (LearnLink)
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I. Project Background

The Global Communications and Learning Systems Project (LearnLink) is funded by the Human Capacity Development Center in USAID's Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, the Africa Bureau, and other USAID Bureaus, Offices and Missions. LearnLink was initiated in 1996 to develop strategies, guidelines, models and tools for strengthening learning systems in developing countries through the application of communication and educational technologies. A sub-goal is to create sustainable communication and educational technology programs in developing country institutions.

II. Expected Results of Project

The results of this contract relate directly to the implementation of field services performed under Task Orders. These results include:

- A. Assessment tools for defining the appropriate application of educational and communication technologies within learning systems;
- B. Intervention models and tools based on state-of-the-art strategies to increase the impact of educational and communication technology within learning systems;
- C. Institutionalization strategies and guidelines for establishing the sustainable use of educational and communication technology within learning systems;
- D. Monitoring and evaluation strategies and tools for observing the impact of educational and communication technology within learning systems;
- E. System for the collection, demonstration and exchange of information and innovations on the use of educational and communication technology within learning systems.

III. Task Order I

- A. Administration
Recruitment continued during this period for the Communications and Information Dissemination Specialist and the Intervention Specialist, with a candidate for the former identified.
- B. Operations Support
Country planning and technical support visits by core staff during this quarter include:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Oct 25 - Oct 29	Cairo, Egypt	Dennis Foote
Oct 27 - Nov 14	Cairo, Egypt	Linda Leonard
Nov 14-21	Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Rio	Eric Rusten
Dec. 2 - 4	San Francisco	Dennis Foote, Eric Rusten
Dec. 13 - 19	Quito, Ecuador	Eduardo Contreras-Budge

C. Research and Writing

1. LearnLink's newsletter, *Newsline*, was distributed to USAID project officers.
2. The Second Annual LearnLink Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting was held November 12-13 at AED's National Demonstration Laboratory in Washington, D.C. The TAG sessions were facilitated by LearnLink staff and arranged to allow TAG team members to contribute expert advice to LearnLink. At the meeting, LearnLink presented drafts of three of its six Intervention Models. A great deal of research and preparation went into these models, which will serve as building blocks for future projects in educational technology around the world.
 - a. TAG members in attendance included:
 - i. Alfred Bork, Professor Emeritus of Information and Computer Science and Physics and founder and Director of the Educational Technology Center, a project for research and development of technology-based learning material at the University of California, Irvine.
 - ii. David Chapman, Professor of Education and Director of the Educational Administration Program in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota.
 - iii. Steve Cisler, current advisor to Tachyon, Inc., a satellite Internet services carrier which provides low-cost Internet access in global markets.
 - iv. Kathleen Fulton, Associate Director of the University of Maryland's Center for Learning and Educational Technology.
 - v. Maurice Imhoof, an independent consultant for the Education Development Center, Voice of America, and AED in radio-assisted education, English language instruction, and teacher training.
 - vi. Errol Miller, Professor of Teacher Education and Head of the Institute of Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus.

- vii. Habib Sy, Coordinator of Partners for African Development, a Dakar-based NGO with special emphasis on African communications policies, systems and connectivity.
- b. Session topics included:
 - i. Strengthening Basic Education in Egypt and Brazil
 - ii. Community Networking and Learning Centers in Paraguay, Ghana and Benin
 - iii. Institutional Networking Capacity Building in Jamaica, Ecuador and the LAC Region
 - iv. Intervention Models and Support Tools
 - a. Computers in Schools Model
 - b. Mediated Professional Development Model
 - c. Community Learning Center Model
 - d. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies and Tools
 - e. Institutionalization and Sustainability Strategies

IV. Current Buy-Ins

- A. Egypt (Girls' Education Support Activity)

During this quarter, significant progress was made in (1) interactive radio instruction (IRI), (2) supervisor training and (3) assessment. The instructional materials development slowed while the Ministry of Education and USAID negotiated the levels of collaboration between the CCIMD and the LearnLink project.

- 1. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)

LearnLink worked with the CCIMD to develop test scripts in English language instruction. Two prototype scripts were developed following the same integrated and spiral formats. The studio sessions were undertaken at the Manshid al-Bakri recording facility utilizing children's music arranged and composed by a local artist under AID contract. CCIMD staff, including Dr. Kawsar Kouchok, provided the voices for the radio characters and critiqued the lesson formats and the diction of the actors. The scripts are now ready for field-testing. Also in December, LearnLink purchased a digital audio workstation, and the Washington information technologies project staff began training on it. Digital audio technology will be used by the CCIMD and LearnLink to finalize the post-production of the recorded scripts. In October and November, Dr. Klaus Galda visited the field and conducted a preliminary planning exercise with LearnLink's field staff to plot the issues and choices that lay ahead in the

implementation schedule. Galda concluded that production would have to intensify to remain on target, voicing concerns about the absence of AID schools in which to test and refine IRI materials.

2. **Teacher Training**

Activities included follow-up site visits to the five Plan International schools located in the poorer sections of urban Cairo. In support of the Small Schools Directorate of the Ministry of Education (MOE), LearnLink conducted training courses for the supervisors/inspectors working in the governorates of Beni Suef, Minya and Beheira. These trainings were a week long, involving more than thirty MOE staff. The objective was to provide supervisors with information on multigrade, community schools and to introduce the ideas that are associated with the planned transition in roles from inspector of teachers to coordinator/supporter for teachers. Dr. Ragab Sharabi, the Undersecretary of Education, opened the training sessions by calling on his staff to rethink education and to participate actively in its reshaping. The Cairo-based Career Development Center provided consultants to assist LearnLink in the workshops and collected participant data that will be published next quarter.

3. **Assessment**

Steps were taken to finalize a letter of agreement with UNICEF and to present the assessment instruments to the working groups for their final review. In addition, new contacts were forged with CIDA, their implementing agency (the Foundation for International Training (FIT), the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and other NGOs. Plans were made for further instrument simplification, and a planning retreat set for the end of January in Egypt.

4. **Administration**

Egypt field staff changed this quarter with the departure of COP Dean Nielsen at the end of October and the arrival of his replacement, Bruce Miller, in early November. Dr. Miller had worked as a consultant with LearnLink only months before.

5. **Travel**

*LearnLink-Egypt Girls' Education Support Activity Travel:
October-December 1998*

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Oct. 17 - Nov. 14	Cairo, Egypt	Jeffrey Coupe
Oct. 23 - Nov. 13	Cairo, Egypt	Linda Leonard
Oct. 25 - 29	Cairo, Egypt	Dennis Foote
Oct 31-Nov 11	Cairo Egypt	Klaus Galda
Dec 21-Jan 9	Washington, DC	Bruce Miller

- B. Jamaica (Computerization of the Jamaica National Family Planning Board)
Completed last quarter.
- C. G/HCD (Pilot Urban Electronic Government Center and Public Kiosks in Asuncion, Paraguay)
During this period, work focused on following up on recommendations, particularly regarding preparation, outreach and community involvement, from Silvana Rubino and Steve Cisler, both of whom visited Paraguay during the previous quarter. Sergio Aranda, LearnLink Resident Advisor, visited Washington, D.C. and worked with core staff on these and TAG-related matters, including developing a short- and medium-term work plan. In Asuncion, steps were taken to promote community involvement in existing and upcoming *amic@s*. In exchange for the design and production of web pages for several municipal offices, for example, high school students were trained on using the Internet in the second *amic@*.

Other progress in Asuncion included production of a demo version of a CD-ROM database of community organizations based on municipal print information.

The municipality expressed its pleasure with Sergio's performance, dedication and results, which contributed to the Council's approval of the first budgetary line item for the *amic@s*'s operational expenses, a total of \$100,000 for 1999.

LearnLink also submitted Sergio's name as a candidate for AED's Technical Award, which he subsequently won.

- D. G/HCD (Partnership for Local Development - Community Learning Network in Ghana)
Although the Community Learning Center (CLC) in Kumasi was not yet open to the public, the number of interested individuals and organizations inquiring about it during this quarter led LearnLink's Resident Advisor (RA) to determine that two or three Internet access points would not be adequate to meet clients' demands. He was also concerned about the high telephone charges the centers were likely to incur in addition to Internet service charges. For these reasons, he persuaded the Regional Manager of Africaonline to reduce the service charge for the CLC, and he commissioned the ISP to network the CLC. A multi-user mail account system was also installed that enables the CLC run by the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) to set up individualized e-mail accounts for clients.

During this quarter, the CLC manager also established pricing, usage and management policies, adopting a four-tier pricing policy in increasing

order of cost for students and teachers, NGOs and CBOs, public and civil servants, and the business community.

Once the Central Region Economic Development Commission (CEDECOM) selected a site for its CLC in Cape Coast, the RA conducted a site inspection, using the same criteria he applied in the case of the CEDEP site. These included space suitability, security of area, voltage readings to ensure an adequate supply of electrical power, telephone installation, provision of furniture, air conditioning, and so on. Satisfied that the facility was sound and adequately prepared, he moved the equipment from the USAID warehouse in Accra to the CEDECOM CLC. By October 17, six networked computers were installed at the CLC.

On October 30, CEDEP's CLC was formally launched. The ceremony, organized by a planning committee, featured posters, banners, radio announcements and interviews, and speakers, including Gregg Wiitala, Program Officer from USAID, and representatives from the Ghanaian Ministries of Education and Communication. Over 150 people attended the event, including dignitaries, academics, students, business people and representatives from NGOs. Special guests included Dr. Asmah Executive Director of CEDECOM, host of CLC in Cape Coast, plus four members of CEDECOM CLC Steering Committee. Nana Ponko II Tafohene represented the Asantehene of Asante King as Chairman for the occasion. Gregg Wiitala mentioned USAID's plans to help Ghanaians and Africans in general gain access to the Internet through the establishment of CLC, and the Minister of Communication pledged his ministry's support both financially and otherwise for the running of the CLC. The guest of honor urged students in and around Kumasi to make good use of the new CLC to enhance their performance and learn about the computer and Internet. The Queen mother of Mampong Kronko, Nana Aboagyewaa Kente did the tape cutting. Jonnie Akakpo, LearnLink's RA, stressed that the CLC is for the entire community and that everybody stood to benefit directly or indirectly from it. He extended an arm of welcome to the community and said they should be comfortable to make inquiries if in doubt of programs or services at the CLC.

Other activities during this quarter included a week-long computer literacy training program for eight teachers from the University College of Winneba and four other clients. Thirty clients, including students, recent high school graduates and professionals, undertook three-week self-tutoring, intensive typing programs to upgrade their skills, and fifty-nine people registered for computer training at the CLC. Thirty-four of CEDEP's forty member staff also received training in basic computer skills and Internet usage.

Approximately 90 e-mail messages were sent/month through the CEDEP CLC, and twenty free, personal e-mail accounts were opened for clients. About seventy people browsed the Net during the reporting period, the majority from the University.

Visitors during the quarter included Mr. Kwabena Anakwah, a journalist at the Kapital Radio Station, to follow up after the launch with an interview about on-going programs and public patronage.

In November, the RA participated in LearnLink's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting in Washington, where he discussed expectations for the CLCs with technical experts and LearnLink staff and exchanged information and ideas with Sergio Amanda, RA of CLCs in Asuncion.

Issues to be addressed during the coming quarter include ongoing efforts to identify an appropriate CLC Manager and other staff for the CEDECOM site, replacing faulty equipment, and preparing to launch the CEDECOM and PIE CLC centers. Partners for Internet in Education (PIE) has completed its site and is ready for a site inspection and delivery of the computers, though the group does not yet have a secretariat.

E. Ecuador (CEPAR)

During this period, communication continued among LearnLink, CEPAR and INCRE, the technical assistance subcontractor, focused particularly on clarifying and completing procurement documents for equipment and connectivity services. In addition, Ed Fierros from INCRE visited CEPAR during this period for actual webpage preparation, document scanning, HTML and hands-on training on webbed design, page preparations, links, document migration and use of web authoring software. The Website is now ready for CEPAR internal review. LearnLink staff Eduardo Contreras-Budge visited CEPAR to conduct a joint assessment of progress with Luis Rodriguez and undertake additional work with CEPAR on analysis of web site pages to date and on overall status, next steps and missing links. Eduardo also met with USAID/Quito SO2 team for a debriefing and to make requested suggestions on specific uses of TO accomplishments for sustainability purposes. LearnLink initiated the procurement process during this period for hiring the local ISP, including full Internet access, email accounts and web hosting, and prepared RFQs for equipment to be procured in the United States.

F. G/HCD (Municipal Networking and Distance Learning within the Latin American Region, FEMICA/LACUM)

During this quarter, field activities continued for the FEMICA portion of the task, and negotiations were started with the best candidate for the LACUM activity Coordinator. Meetings with USAID officials and

partners helped clarify and coordinate several USAID complementary activities in support of local governments, FEMICA, LACUM and IULA.

Regarding assistance to local government associations, notably FEMICA in Central America and IULA in Latin America (IULA is a major member of the LACUM network), meetings focusing on potential joint activities continued with USAID/G officials from ENV/UP and HCD/BELS, and also with Paul Fritz for G/LAC, his partner ICMA and Quito-based organizations RHUDO and LACUM. As a result, an initial strategy and a series of complementary actions were developed to assist local governance and address their training and TA needs, particularly electronic networking.

Concurrently, the purpose and scope of the activity with LACUM was agreed upon and substantially refined in Quito between RUDO, LACUM, HCD/BELS and LearnLink. An immediate plan of action and a narrower focus on a few key topics and organization of the network was devised, as per RUDO's intentions for LACUM and LearnLink's expected contribution.

Both for FEMICA and LACUM purposes, and as requested by USAID, Eduardo Contreras-Budge visited MUNITEL, the Chilean Association of Municipalities' Intranet, and a three housing, habitat and urban development organizations active in LACUM.

Field activities for FEMICA this quarter involved an initial tour by the activity coordinator through all six countries. Daniel Navas met with local municipal associations, assessed their needs and status on communication technologies, and provided initial training to local authorities and staff on using computers for networking and creating databases. He also explored potential lead municipal sites for pilot training. LearnLink's plans for assisting FEMICA were incorporated into FEMICA's 1999 planning. Navas also attended LearnLink's TAG meeting, his plans and strategies were discussed with TO1 members Dorsey and Contreras, and he received additional orientation and directives.

For LACUM, LearnLink analyzed over 40 CVs received for the Coordinator position in Quito and then interviewed a dozen selected individuals. A decision on the top five was made by mid-December, and negotiations started according to the order of precedence of the best candidates. Office facilities for the Coordinator also were secured in Quito through an agreement with IULA.

- G. Egypt (Secretariat of the US-Egyptian Partnership for Economic Growth, Sub-Committee IV: Education and Human Resource Capacity Development)

During October, John Dalton of the SCIV Secretariat prepared materials for and helped facilitate the SCIV Cairo meeting. Co-chaired by USAID Assistant Administrator, Sally Shelton-Colby, U.S. Department of Education Deputy Secretary (A) Dr. Marshall S. Smith and Egypt's Minister of Education Dr. Hussein Kamel Bahaa El Din, the meeting focused on education projects and policies, workforce development, technology and environmental education. A special highlight of the meeting included the signing of the Master Teacher Program Exchange Program Memorandum of Intent that provides the framework for cooperation among professors, teachers, supervisors and administrators from both countries.

Since the October meeting, the Secretariat prepared a concept paper and drafted a work plan for the Alexandria Business Association-Ministry of Education (ABA-MOE) Partnership. The Alexandria Partnership is intended to help improve secondary technical education for the purpose of developing a skilled workforce that will contribute to regional economic growth. To re-launch the Alexandria Partnership, John Dalton made six site visits to Alexandria to explain the purpose of the partnership and to obtain the cooperation and support of the public and private sector partners. Meetings were held with the ABA Chairman, Mr. Mohamed Ragab, Secretary General, Dr. Ahmed Ragab, Community Service committee members and the Education and Training committee members as well as with ABA staff and Ministry of Education officials in Alexandria Governorate. Several technical secondary schools were visited to assess their capacity to provide workers capable of supporting regional economic development.

AED resident staff also met with Hank van den Beukel and Robin van de Poll of the EU's Private Sector Development Project to discuss how their efforts could be coordinated with the proposed ABA-MOE partnership.

Preliminary meetings were held with the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs to develop a joint environmental education action plan for Subcommittees III and IV. Dr. Deena el Naggar, Technical Office of the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs and Madiha Nasr, the Secretariat's Education Programs Specialist held several meetings to determine the scope of the joint effort.

Consultants Doug Adkins and David Carroll visited Cairo from November 30 through December 17 for the pre-appraisal of the Secondary Education Enhancement Program in collaboration with the World Bank. The consultants revised the strategic framework for the SEEP and revised workplans for curriculum and assessment areas. The consultants also drafted the Project Appraisal Document, the Project Design Summary and Risk Analysis and an economic analysis.

Important SCIV Meetings and Dates:

AED Operations Manager Jeff Coupe and Vice President Dennis Foote traveled to Cairo to help the resident staff coordinate the SCIV Cairo meeting.

The Secretariat worked closely with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education on matters related to girls education. The Secretariat staff met with Dr. Ghada Gholam, Program Specialist in Education at UNESCO about the proposed technology project of UNESCO. As a result, Secretariat staff will participate on a Steering Committee to develop proposals for improving the use of technology in schools. In addition, several meetings were held with Mr. Moataz Al Alfi, representing the Human Resources committee of the U.S. - Egypt Presidents' Council, and senior staff of the Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) to develop standards for the introduction of advanced technology into schools in Sharekya Governorate.

A progress report on the New Schools program was presented at a SCIV meeting in October, with the intent to report back to the Subcommittee after the tender documents had been finalized. A clarifying protocol was signed in October for the Master Teacher Exchange Program (MTEP) to set out actions that would take place once USAID and the Ministry of Education (MOE) decided on issues of staging (how the exchanges should be initiated) and timing (when they should begin so as not to conflict with the regular school year) and then selected a contractual mechanism to fund the program.

- H. G/HCD/HETS (Distance Learning in Support of Participant Training)
This activity consists of exploring ways in which to use information and telecommunications technology in a distance learning format in order to increase the quality and impact of existing Participant Training Programs. In October, Dr. Dennis Foote traveled to the USAID Human Capacity Development Center's 1998 Regional Conference on Education and Training in Warsaw, Poland. There two USAID Missions, Romania and Jordan, expressed interest in being the pilot sites for this Distance Learning activity. Specifically, the pilot in Romania would consist of using ICT's to enhance their Child Welfare reform program and the pilot in Jordan would consist of delivering microfinance courses on-line throughout Jordan and the Middle East.

During the months of November and December LearnLink's Distance Learning Specialist, Sonia Arias de Torres, planned and coordinated the upcoming visits to the Romanian and Jordanian Missions in January, 1999.

I. LAC/RSD-HER (Establishment of the U.S. Clearinghouse for a US-Brazil Initiative in Educational Technology)

Eric Rusten, Director of the U.S./Brazil Learning Technologies (LTNet) project, traveled to Brazil from November 14 – 21 to meet with Brazilian counterparts in the Ministry of Education, several Brazilian universities, and U.S. government officials involved in the U.S./Brazil Education Partnership initiative. The primary purpose of this trip was to be introduced to Brazilians involved in different aspects of educational technology and to learn how the LTNet project can best support Brazilian efforts to promote the use of computers in education and share their learning to professionals in the United States.

After a brief meeting with staff of the U.S. Information Agency in Brasilia, Eric met with Pedro Paulo Poppovic, Secretary for Distance Education at the Ministry of Education. He also met with Claudio Salles, Director of Informatics and Distance Education at the Ministry. Mr. Salles is also in charge of implementing the Ministry's national school computerization project, Proinfo and the Center for Experimentation in Educational Technology (CETE). Discussions focused on learning about the Ministry's various educational technology projects and how LTNet would collaborate with the Ministry efforts to enhance their effectiveness. In addition to meeting staff from the Ministry, Eric visited the University of Brasilia to learn about an on-line education program in environmental science designed to meet the professional development needs of Brazilian teachers. Eric also visited one CETE "mini-center" in Brasilia where teachers receive training in the use of computers for education.

From Brasilia he traveled to Sao Paulo to attend a presentation on Internet-based distance education for teacher professional development. He also met with staff at the University of Sao Paulo who are coordinating efforts at the University to increase the use of computers in education. From Sao Paulo Eric traveled to Rio de Janeiro to participate in the final day of a conference to train teachers to effectively evaluate educational software for use in the Proinfo project. He met with teachers, teacher trainers, and State Coordinators of education from four Brazilian States to learn more about how computers are being use and will be used to enhance learning.

Dennis Foote, LearnLink's Director, and Eric Rusten, Director of the U.S./Brazil Learning Technologies Network, participated in the Second Binational Dialogue of the US/Brazil Education Partnership in Menlo Park, California. About 45 people from Brazil and the U.S. attended. The Brazil delegation was headed by the Minister of Education, the Honorable Paulo Renato Souza, and the U.S. delegation was headed by Marshall Smith, Deputy Secretary for the US Department of Education (A). The conference discussions, presentations, and site visits focused on three key

issues, assessing the impact of technology on learning, engaging and empowering teachers, and enabling public-private partnerships to further the use of technology in schools.

Dennis Foote and Eric Rusten made a joint presentation on the final day of the conference, describing the different activities that LearnLink is engaged in around the world, summarizing developments in the US/Brazil Learning Technologies Network (LTNet) project and introducing the skeleton of the LTNet web site (www.ltnet.org). Both presentations were well received and LTNet generated good interest among participants. The conference ended with commitments to pursue a variety of partnership initiatives over the next year. The LTNet will actively participate in several of these will efforts as part of on-going project activities.

- J. Benin (Support to the Songhai Center for the Establishment of a Community Learning Center Network)
During this quarter, LearnLink engaged in early discussions with both Songhai and Racal, a Canadian supplier of high frequency microwave systems, to develop subcontracts and determine staffing patterns. In addition, an early 1999 TDY was planned for core LearnLink staff to visit the existing Center and the two proposed sites, to finalize a work plan and agreement, and to meet with USAID staff in Benin.

- V. Current Subcontracting Activities
INCRE (to provide all STTA and technical assistance to CEPAR in Ecuador)