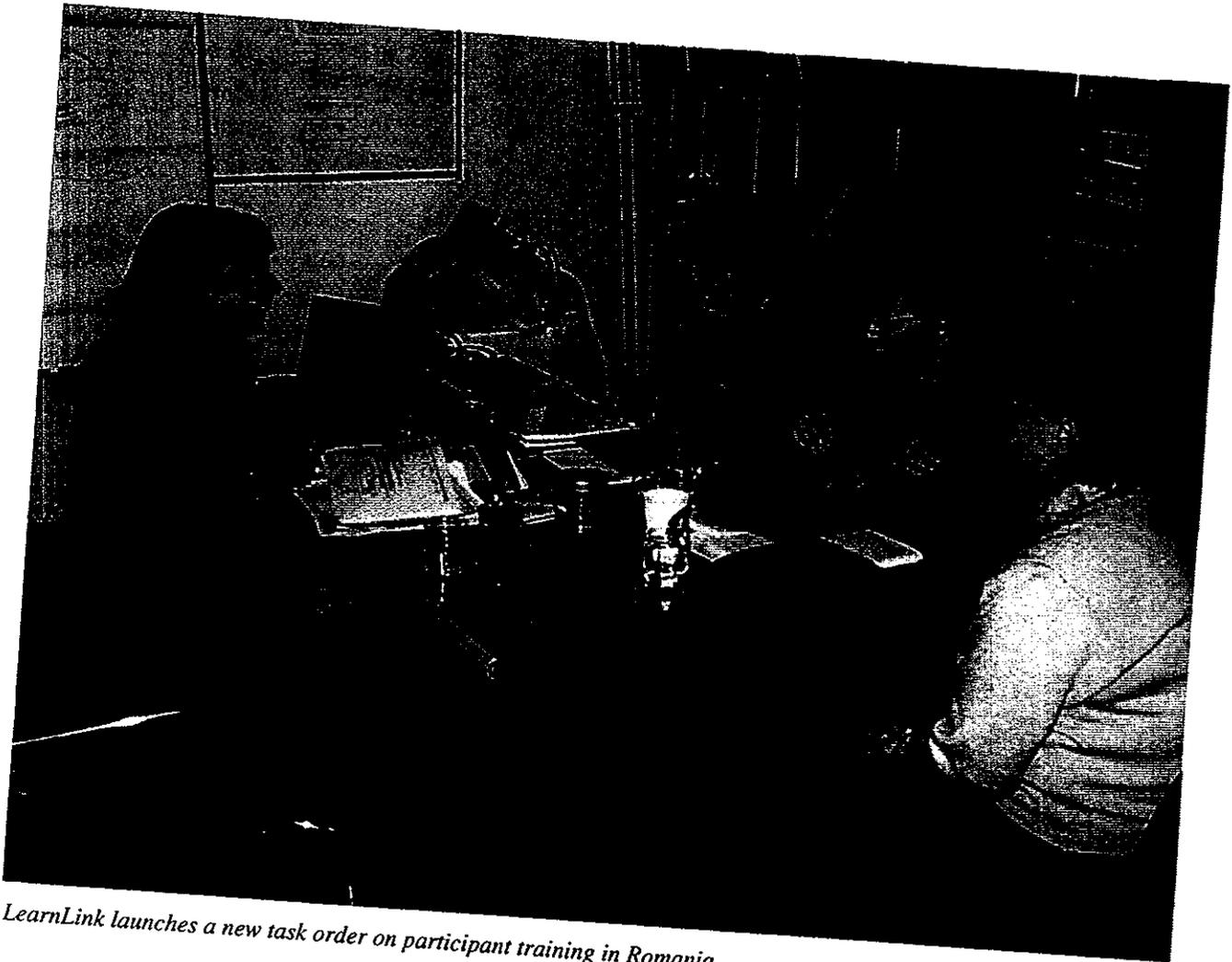


PD-ABY-580

Quarterly Report

October 1 – December 31, 1999



LearnLink launches a new task order on participant training in Romania.



LearnLink

Linking people to learning technologies for sustainable development



LearnLink

Global Communications and Learning Systems

Quarterly Report
October 1 – December 31, 1999

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.

Expected Results of the Project

The results of this contract related 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 technologies within learning systems
- C. Institutionalization strategies and guidelines for establishing the sustainable use of educational and communication technologies within learning systems
- D. Monitoring and evaluation strategies and tools for observing the impact of educational and communication technologies within learning systems
- E. A system for the collection, demonstration and exchange of information and innovations on the use of educational and communication technologies within learning systems

III. Task Order 1

A. Administration of the Core Contract

1. Staff performance reviews were conducted during this quarter.
2. Eric Bourland left LearnLink and transferred to another department within AED in early December. A replacement is being recruited.
3. Gini Wilderson started working with LTNet in late December.
4. Retreat

On November 2, several key LearnLink staff met at Dennis Foote's house for a daylong retreat to discuss matters relating to TO1 obligations. Specific topics of discussion included:

- Resource competition between TO1 and other TOs.
- How to improve communication, collaboration and cooperation between TO1 and other TOs.
- LearnLink's audience

A list of action items was compiled, outlining necessary tasks to complete all TO1 deliverables, including:

- finalize mailing lists;
 - develop listserv services and subscription tools;
 - complete contract modification request;
 - update conference information (i.e. who presented, when, where, topic);
 - update models of use and case study summaries;
 - finalize concept paper topics; and
 - focus on publishing additional papers and articles.
5. Began preparation for the next TAG meeting

B. Operations Support

Planning and technical support visits by core staff during this quarter include:

Dates	Location	Staff
Sep 27 – 30	Val Morin, Quebec, Canada	Eduardo Contreras-Budge
Oct 23 – 28	Quito, Ecuador	Eduardo Contreras-Budge
Nov 14 – 20	Haiti	Steven Dorsey
Nov 29 – Dec 17	Uganda	Steven Dorsey

C. Core Deliverables

1. The Fall 1999 issue of the quarterly newsletter, LearnLink Newline, was issued.
2. "The Gore Mubarak Partnership: Preparing Egypt for the 21st Century," a country paper, was printed and distributed.

3. "Egypt: Improving Girls' Education," a country paper, was printed and distributed.
4. "Ghana: Connecting to the Center of the World," a country paper, was printed and distributed.
5. An article on Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in Asunción, Paraguay was published in the November/December 1999 issue of *TechKnowLogia*, an international online journal of technologies for the advancement of knowledge and learning.
6. LearnLink's web site was updated, with a "What's New" button added on the front page. In addition, new country papers and newsletters were added.
7. A cybersalon was held featuring Dr. Frank Odasz, teacher educator and speaker on building online communities, on "Empowerment through Self-Directed, Web-Based Learning."
8. Models of Use and Case Study Summaries were updated, edited, printed, and submitted to USAID.
9. Assessment Guidelines were revised and selected bibliography was incorporated.
10. Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines were revised.
11. Sustainability Guidelines and Tools were drafted.

D. Conferences

Eduardo Contreras-Budge participated in the following:

- IDRC Workshop on "Telecentre Evaluation – A Global Perspective, September 27 – 30 in Val Morin, Quebec, Canada.
- Latin American Telecentres Network workshop, September 27 – 30
- Ad honorem Advisory Member of TELELAC's project: Latin American Telecentre Networks Evaluation proposal and project, Chasquinet, IDRC.
- infoDev session, World Bank, on evaluation of ICT and development project portfolio, October 5.
- Education Technology Team workshop, World Bank, November 1, review of teacher training and technology project portfolio.
- First Virtual Latin American Conference on Municipalities in the 21st century (*Los Municipios en el Siglo XXI*). RIM-CESEM, Mexico, October – November.
- A closed list e-conference, "Learn to Build a Brighter Future," (Technology Teacher Training), IICD, September – November.

IV. Current Buy-Ins

A. Egypt (Girls' Education Support Activity)

LearnLink Task Order #4

USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 800

1. Summary

LearnLink is assisting the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) to improve girls' education, especially in the governorates of Beni Suef, Behera, and Minya. LearnLink's role is to promote one-room, multi-grade community schools, which are seen as a means of extending education to girls in smaller villages and under-served urban and rural areas. LearnLink's specific responsibilities under this activity include:

 - a. Assisting the MOE in developing strategies and methodologies, as well as teachers' guides and instructional materials, for teaching the Ministry's curriculum in multi-grade classrooms;
 - b. Developing pre-service and in-service teacher training programs for primary level multi-grade education;
 - c. Creating an Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, primarily for 4th and 5th grade students in Egypt's one-room schools; and
 - d. Conducting an assessment of one-room schools.

2. Major Events this Quarter
 - a. Reformulated multi-grade curriculum, teacher guides, and self-directed learning strategies. Teacher resource manual was completed in English and Arabic and submitted to USAID. Editorial recommendations from the MOE were incorporated into a newer version for field trial. All work has shifted to teacher training as a result of the rescoping.
 - b. A training manual that includes content for the training-of-trainers (TOT) and teacher training resources was developed and distributed. A training schedule was developed through stage 5. A general timeframe was established for stages 6 through 8. Supervisor orientation was completed in November, with 51 supervisors participating, including three TOT co-trainers, one from each governorate. Sixteen supervisors had received no previous training about the one-classroom schools (ICSSs). During this training, an observation framework was designed and later finalized by the lead trainers; this will become the observation and feedback instrument used during training follow-up visits. The first round of teacher training using TOT-trained supervisors was successfully completed in December. A final evaluation report was completed and will be submitted to the MOE and USAID. MOE representatives and key

- LearnLink staff visited each governorate to inform key personnel of teacher training, organize a management structure, and identify facilities for training sessions. Teacher training materials have been designed, produced and printed along with the resource manual. A framework for the teacher evaluation handbook has been developed and a team will begin working to produce a prototype. Video footage of all training has been completed, include pre/post shots of trainees doing presentations.
- c. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) field-tested materials, resulting in revision and improvement in the IRI curriculum.
- i. Positive outcomes of the pilot tests:
- Testing materials under conditions that approximate conditions in target schools.
 - Learning about lessons and methods and getting new ideas.
 - Learning about logistics and workload of pilot testing.
 - Students are responding enthusiastically and well. Even students in the lower grades have participated.
 - Positive feedback from teachers and supervisors.
- ii. Some lessons learned:
- Lesson design is generally solid.
 - Students like and respond well to activities during the lesson.
 - A variety of successful follow-up activities have been attempted and some additional ones have been developed.
 - There is no need for “radio students” to prompt classroom students to respond.
 - There is no need to cue the teachers near the end of practice intervals.
 - Long vowels need to be exaggerated when modeling target vocabulary.
 - The degree of difficulty of the song lessons is becoming clear, which will help with their placement in the IRI syllabus.
 - Songs need to be repeated more times for practice, and song lessons should be followed up with a thorough review in the subsequent lesson.
 - Need better-recorded “wrap-up” segments for the students at the end of each lesson.
- iii. Technology
- Schools are acoustically poor (with one exception). Receiver placement is crucial and has to be covered in teacher training.
 - Schools don't always have electricity.
 - Casio players are inadequate.
 - Record CDs at loudest volume.
 - Some songs need to have the tempo slowed.

iv. Miscellaneous

- Teachers in the four pilot schools have made some effort to teach English, although their English is generally weak.
- All schools have MOE EFL texts.
- Not all schools have real 5th graders.

v. Other IRI accomplishments

- A script for the song "Going on a Picnic" was drafted.
- A script for the second "Unit" is in progress.
- Scripts are being retyped.

During December, IRI staff conducted four field tests, bringing this phase of field testing to an end. Two completed Units have been submitted to IELP2 staff for review. Worked with IELP2 staff in developing a market survey for new positions needed for the rescoped IRI activity.

d. Assessment of small schools

A statistical report was written and the Cairo Demographic Center (CDC) produced data tables and helped run reliability statistics on student attitude scales. LearnLink accepted the report.

3. Constraints

In IRI the technical challenge of eliminating or at least reducing the electromagnetic interference that plagues the sound-editing workstation continues. Engineers have been consulted regarding the grounding of equipment, and they suggested running the system on batteries. The interference is somewhat reduced, but still not eliminated. It seems that not only a good "ground" but also shielding will be needed. More backup capability is also needed.

For the small school assessment, CDC produced a report with a great deal of data but did not provide much guidance as to the implications of the data. Moreover, the data across all three governorates are so homogeneous that it is difficult to find much statistical difference between governorates. Writing the report has been problematic as well because of the time constraints resulting from the rescoping activity.

4. Activities Planned for Next Quarter

- a. Complete the transition to the new scope of work
- b. Conduct teacher observation and feedback sessions; develop teacher evaluation handbook; hold training advisory meetings; and schedule next training activities.
- c. Continue communications with IELP2 in order to facilitate a smooth transition to their program. Secure suitable workspace. Try

recording from a place outside of the Dokki area. Revise budget, hire new staff, implement new plans.

**B. Asunción, Paraguay (Pilot Urban Electronic Government Centers/Community Learning Centers)
LearnLink Task Order #6
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 03**

1. Summary

The Municipality of Asunción, Paraguay is seeking to provide basic education, communication and information services to the less advantaged citizens by establishing 12 Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in public buildings and municipal centers throughout the city. The CLCs, known locally as *amic@s* (*aulas municipales de información, comunicación y aprendizaje*), build on the idea of simple business centers that offer a variety of electronic and communication services. The CLCs in Asunción, however, emphasize the educational and civic development benefits of computers and communications technology, specifically their ability to increase access to basic education resources, life-long learning opportunities, and information and services from municipal sources.

2. Major Events this Quarter

- a. By December 31, 10 *amic@s* were formally inaugurated and fully operational, and the 11th was operational but not yet been formally inaugurated. *Amic@s* opened this quarter:
 - *Amic@* – Isla de Capri was opened on December 14 in a municipal park and is maintained by a neighborhood commission.
 - *Amic@* – Barrio Obrero is operational but has not been officially inaugurated.
- b. The first Municipal Facilitators' Training seminar/workshop was held at the *Amic@* – Trinidad site. *Amic@* facilitators attended the training, which was taught by staff from Asunción's Catholic University.
- c. The first Municipal Public Kiosk beta testing was conducted during this quarter.
- d. Pilot testing for a municipal Intranet site was also conducted.
- e. A new operational plan (to end the Task Order), based on current conditions and assumptions, was submitted and discussed with the Mission and the Municipality.
- f. Video opportunity for the *amic@s* was pursued as a result of IDRC's telecenters evaluation workshop.

g. The Amic@ – Chacarita site was moved into Civic Center #7.

3. Constraints

Municipal resources are still limited, which also limits their ability to provide financial support to the project. As a result of funding constraints, the amic@s are unable to correct the Internet access problems experienced at some of the centers.

4. Activities Planned for Next Quarter

- a. The first kiosk will be fully operational; the second will be in the beta testing phase
- b. Amic@ – Biblio Bus will be operational. All 12 amic@s will be officially inaugurated and operational
- c. The first public seminars geared toward amic@s' leaders and management commissions will take place.
- d. First public exhibit of the amic@s will take place in the Manzana de la Rivera gallery (home of the second amic@), featuring history and background and main accomplishments.
- e. A wireless connection will be established in one amic@.
- f. The first Municipal Resources amic@ (the 13th center) will open in March 2000. The Municipality has established an Amic@ Unit to ensure the viability and sustainability of the centers after LearnLink's activities end.
- g. The Amic@s Startup Manual will be available outlining operational guidelines and procedures.
- h. Expatriate STTA will be deployed
- i. Evaluation will be conducted
- j. Luis Rodriguez will visit in early February

C. Ghana (Partnership for Local Development – Community Learning Network)

LearnLink Task Order #7

USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 04

1. Summary

The Ghana Community Learning Network is a partnership between USAID and three NGOs in three different regions of Ghana. These include the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region, the Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM) located in Cape Coast in the Central Region, and Partners for the Internet in Education (PIE) in the Greater Accra Region. While CEDEP and CEDECOM are household names in their respective

regions, PIE is a newly formed association of primary and secondary school teachers whose objective is to promote the Internet in the education sector. All three host organizations share the goal of developing the capacities of less privileged people in their respective communities.

2. Major Events this Quarter
 - a. CLC Joint Quarterly Meeting, November 3 – 4. Jonnie Akakpo and representatives from RTI, USAID, PIE, CEDEP, and CEDECOM were present.
 - b. PIE:
 - Eight library staff members were trained in Windows 98 and word processing.
 - The center had Internet connectivity as of October 11.
 - The center's first clients were trained in word processing and Internet orientation.
 - A seminar was held for PIE members on networking.
 - The center provided 10 free minutes of Internet access to the public.
 - Several schools were invited to the center.
 - c. CEDECOM
 - Held an "open week" in which 170 people attended. Five of them registered for training and 10 of them opened Web Page accounts.
 - Fourteen clients were trained in Internet orientation.
 - A LAN and a proxy server were installed.
 - Fourteen CEDECOM staff members were trained in word processing.
 - Brochures and Internet orientation manuals were developed.
 - Handouts to hotels for tourists were developed and disseminated.
 - Publicity campaign was launched throughout Cape Coast, including posters in all major institutions and radio announcements.
 - d. CEDEP
 - Trained CEDEP staff
 - Conducted three seminars on Y2K issues
 - Held two "open weeks," one of which was specifically geared toward women. Twenty-four women's groups totaling 212 women were represented. The other was for NGOs in and around Kumasi. The objective was to portray the Internet as a tool for development. Twenty-five organizations participated, visiting web sites related to their work (HIV AIDS, poverty, reproductive health, gender issues, development education). For

most of the participants, it was the first time they had heard about the Internet and email.

- Workshop was held for the Association of Ghana Medical and Dental Association, who were trained in word processing, Internet orientation, spreadsheets and databases after a five-day basic computer literacy session.
- Manuals for various applications were developed.
- The CEDEP web site was developed and launched.
- Between 60 and 80 people were trained on software applications.
- Created an online registration system to facilitate monitoring and evaluation activities.
- In collaboration with CEDEP Youth Initiatives Unit, organized and held a half-day Internet Orientation for Youth in Action, a network of youth groups in Kumasi.
- A gender analysis and comparison of numbers of women participating in CLC training sessions indicated an increase this quarter. The number of women using the Internet remains low, however, with three times as many men as women browsing the Web.

3. Constraints

a. PIE

- Need better/more equipment
- Need better outreach
- Need more staff
- Need more fundraising

b. CEDECOM

- Limited space and equipment
- Need better outreach
- Need more staff

c. CEDEP

- Limited space
- Need more staff
- Need more fundraising
- Outreach beyond student population

4. Activities Planned for Next Quarter

- a. A bi-monthly newsletter will be developed to promote the CLCs to the public.
- b. The next quarterly meeting will be held March 2 – 3, 2000 at the PIE CLC in Accra.
- c. PIE
 - Official launching will take place

- Intensify outreach program
 - Acquire more equipment and space
 - Develop work and business plan
 - Prepare the budget
 - Organize seminars for members
 - Recruit and hire staff
- d. CEDECOM
- Will hold a business week for small-scale business association
 - Intensify outreach program
 - Have at least four seminars on the Internet
 - Develop a web site and post small business materials and wares
 - Conduct capacity-building training for center staff
 - Solve connectivity problems
 - Acquire one or more additional rooms
 - Increase fundraising
 - Revise business plan
- e. CEDEP
- "Open week" for health workers in March
 - Feature radio program "Internet and You"
 - Introduce new courses
 - Expand by adding a separate training room
 - Set up a center at Winneba
 - Provide training for private and medical practitioners
 - Conduct capacity-building training for center staff
 - Prepare budget for 2000
 - Solve connectivity problems

D. Ecuador (CEPAR)
LearnLink Task Order #8
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 03

1. Summary

USAID/Quito is working to strengthen key institutional partners for long-term sustainability. One aspect of this effort involves building the electronic communication capacity of important NGO partners to enable them to network with and provide services to other partners in Ecuador and the Andean region. An increased capacity for publicity via the Internet also will increase the NGOs' ability to find alternative means of sustaining their institutions.

LearnLink helps strengthen the electronic communication capacity of the *Centro de Estudios de Población y Paternidad Responsable (CEPAR)*, an NGO partner providing family planning research and related services in Ecuador. LearnLink's technical support to CEPAR includes:

- a. Assisting in the creation and maintenance of a web site for CEPAR to improve existing communication among national and regional population and health organizations;
 - b. Producing an online version of CEPAR's *Correo Poblacional y de la Salud* newsletter;
 - c. Developing CEPAR's electronic networking with health and population NGOs in Ecuador and the Andean region in general;
 - d. Assisting in the creation of other electronic informational products; and
 - e. Developing strategies and models to improve cost recovery.
2. Major Events this Quarter
- a. LearnLink's activity with CEPAR was scheduled to end on October 31, but an extension was requested and granted.
 - b. Eduardo Contreras-Budge traveled to Quito from October 24-28, where he met with his principal counterpart, Lenin Aguinaga, to go over all final task order requirements. He also met with CEPAR's director, CEPAR staff involved in technical or broader aspects of the task order, and with Caton Olmedo, Sustainability Task Leader, on CEPAR's long-term strategies for sustainability. Other meetings with local TAs included:
 - Eduardo Arguello, on progress review and appraisal of accomplishments regarding the CEPAR web site and other electronic enhancements; and
 - Rocio Vivas, on progress review and appraisal of accomplishments regarding communication plans and activities performed for CEPAR's electronic networking and web site, as well as internal evaluation work about organizational communication.
 - c. Closing Workshop, October 26, for all CEPAR technical staff, other NGOs and CSOs, and interested persons from USAID. Task Order accomplishments, relevance, practical and strategic outcomes, and a live online detailed visit to CEPAR's web site were presented. The event was perceived as impressive and highlighted CEPAR's acquired expertise and service availability to staff and relevant outsiders.
 - d. Washington, D.C. staff prepared for the contract closure.
 - e. Other accomplishments during the visit included:
 - Task Order's progress and accomplishments reviewed;
 - Task Order evaluation prepared;

- Lessons for TO1 purposes distilled;
 - Correspondence with subcontractor INCRE regarding their final report; and
 - SOWs for local TAs prepared.
- f. Telecom consultant Jose Maria Barba visited CEPAR to configure, install, program, and set up a new computer and networking hardware and software components procured by LearnLink. He tested new setups, solved emerging problems, trained local staff on daily operations, and recommended next steps.
 - g. INCRE's John Zuman submitted a brief summary report on their role and work with CEPAR. INCRE concludes that all objectives were met, assesses processes and achievements, and suggests several recommendations for CEPAR's immediate future.
3. Activities Planned for Next Quarter
 - a. The Task Order will end in March 2000.
 - b. Evaluation will be conducted.
 - c. Administrative, contractual, and financial closure.
 - d. New field visit may be necessary.
 4. Constraints
 - a. During 1999, the local currency, the sucre, decreased in value by about two-thirds, and about 40 percent just this last quarter. This has made paying local TAs difficult.
 - b. Lenin Aguinaga, head of the Informatics Unit at CEPAR, left for an expert position abroad on November 3. No similar level replacement has been found yet.

Staff Travel

Dates	Location	Staff
September 14 – 19	Quito, Ecuador	J.M. Barba
October 23 – 28	Quito, Ecuador	Eduardo Contreras-Budge

E. U.S./Brazil Learning Technologies Network
LearnLink Task Order #12
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 07

1. Summary

The Governments of the United States and Brazil initiated a series of bilateral activities and projects as part of the U.S./Brazil Education Partnership. The overarching goal of these efforts is to foster greater

cooperation and exchange of ideas and information in the education sector. The U.S. Department of Education is the lead agency of the U.S. side of the partnership. USAID's Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, via the Human Capacity Development Center/Global Bureau, is funding LearnLink to create and manage the U.S./Brazil Learning Technologies Network (LTNet). The Ministry of Education is heading up the Brazilian Partnership activities, and the Ministry's national school computerization effort, ProInfo, is LTNet's collaborating partner in Brazil.

LTNet's program has two parts. One part focuses on supporting study tours and conferences for Brazilian educators visiting the United States. The second part consists of a bilingual web site that provides U.S. and Brazilian educators, researchers, policy makers, and business people access to information, educational technologies and networking support and services.

The LTNet web site offers:

- a. A variety of online tools for communicating and collaborating with other LTNet users.
- b. A "virtual library" of quality resources on educational technologies, many with abstracts.
- c. Five interactive online learning environments focusing on critical educational issues facing Brazil and the United States.
- d. A "What's New" section providing information about new and interesting reports, web sites, activities and events related to learning technologies.
- e. Volunteer and internship opportunities for those interested in contributing to the development of the LTNet web site.
- f. Periodic updates to ListServ members about LTNet and learning technologies and about projects in Brazil and the United States.
- g. Background information about LTNet and the participants in the U.S./Brazil Education Partnership.

2. Major Events this Quarter

- a. Gini Wilderson was hired for the position of information and research specialist.
- b. LTNet hosted a group of five Brazilian professionals for a study tour in Washington, D.C. and New York City on November 13 – 20. The five Brazilians were all from the field of educational television. Four of the study tour participants were from MultiRio, a quasi-governmental organization of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro that focuses on producing and delivering educational television programs for Rio's citizens and schools. The fifth participant was the Head of Acquisitions and Programming with *TV Escola*, the Ministry of

Education's program that produces and delivers educational television programs across the country. The Brazil office of the U.S. Information Agency and the Department of State sponsored this visit and study tour.

The objective of the study tour was to visit organizations in the Washington, D.C. area and New York City that are engaged in producing and delivering educational television programs. Specifically, the tour was designed to enable the Brazilian participants to learn about U.S. experiences with developing successful educational television programs using the Internet and the World Wide Web to extend and enhance their educational TV programs and to develop new educational products.

The organizations visited in NYC were:

- Ford Foundation
- Channel 13
- Global Vision (independent production company)
- Downtown Community TV Center (DCTV)
- Children's TV Workshop
- Center for Children and Technology

Organizations visited in Washington, D.C. included:

- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- Oakton Elementary School, Fairfax, VA
- Teacher Educational Technology Resource and Training Center, Fairfax, VA
- National Geographic
- C-SPAN
- PBS Online

At the end of their stay, the visitors filled out evaluations. Overall, they indicated that they were extremely satisfied with the tour. Of all the organizations visited, they stated that Channel 13, Oakton Elementary School, and the Teacher Educational Technology Resource and Training Center were the most informative.

Several possible future collaborative efforts have arisen from this visit. Specifically, DCTV has already approached LTNet with a potential exchange project involving journalism students in Brazil. During our concluding session, MultiRio pointed out a market interest in hosting a roundtable in Brazil to discuss the issues of media and educational television.

- c. LTNet director Eric Rusten traveled to Brazil and met with ProInfo staff. It was decided that LTNet staff would develop brief concept papers proposing several collaborative activities between LTNet and ProInfo. These include:
 - A workshop with key ProInfo staff and advisors and LearnLink staff to develop an effective strategy for monitoring and evaluating ProInfo's activities.
 - A national conference designed to explore how the U.S. experience with e-rate may enable Brazilian public schools to gain affordable access to the Internet.
 - A pilot activity to establish Cisco Network Academies at a few Brazilian public high schools, NTEs, and post-high school training centers.
- d. Early in the quarter, a new menu system was implemented in the LTNet web site. This involved a consolidation of two menu categories into one, the addition of an "About ProInfo" category, and developing the menu so that menu items would change color as the mouse moved over the item. This has been shown to improve ease of use and make the site faster loading.
- e. At the end of the quarter, staff carried out a review of online discussion forum software for use on the LTNet web site. Several products were selected for testing, and WebCrossing was chosen. This will enable teachers and other educators in Brazil and the United States to engage in on-going discussions of important educational technology themes.
- f. Staff started serious exploration of how online machine translation of English-to-Portuguese and Portuguese-to-English could be implemented. Staff feel that during the next quarter, online translation will be possible.

3. Staff Travel

Dates	Location	Staff
November 6 – 13	Parana, Brazil	Eric Rusten

Purpose: to participate in ProInfo's third annual national conference. At this conference, Multipliers (teacher trainers) from every Brazilian State met in the State of Parana to present outstanding examples of projects demonstrating how computers are being integrated into daily teaching and learning. During the conference, Eric worked with ProInfo staff and

Multipliers to develop web-ready examples of exemplary projects for presentation on LTNet.

4. Visitors

Dates	Purpose	Visitor Name and Title
November 13 – 20	Media and Educational TV Study Tour	Marinete de Almeida d'Angelo, Director for Applied Technology, MultiRio
November 13 – 20	Media and Educational TV Study Tour	Leonardo Guimarães Dobbin, Engineering and General Operations Director, MultiRio
November 13 – 20	Media and Educational TV Study Tour	Marcel Luiz Sá, Advisor to Engineering and Operations Director, MultiRio
November 13 – 20	Media and Educational TV Study Tour	Rogério de Oliveria Soares, head of Acquisitions and Programming, TV Escola
November 13 – 20	Media and Educational TV Study Tour	Cleide A. Ramos, President and Director, MultiRio

**F. U.S. – Egypt Education Secretariat for the Education and Human Resource Development Subcommittee (Subcommittee IV)
LearnLink Task Order #10
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 804**

1. Summary

Subcommittee IV seeks to develop mechanisms for the Egyptian private sector to influence the nation's education system and guide its training providers so that programs and projects for national economic growth, job creation, environmental-sensitive development, and global competitiveness are supported by a flexible, well-educated workforce.

An educated workforce is the foundation for Egypt's future economic development strategy of global competitiveness through private sector-led growth. Subcommittee IV's work program provides broad support for the Partnership. Currently, the Subcommittee is pursuing the following objectives through its Secretariat office in Cairo, Egypt and with support from AED's core staff in Washington, D.C.:

- a. Educating the Future Technical Workforce – SCIV seeks to improve the skills of entry-level technical workers through decentralized public-private partnerships between the Ministry of Education and business associations. For the initial pilot project in the Governorate of Alexandria, the Baltimore, MD – Alexandria Sister City Program

will serve as the vehicle for bringing U.S. school-to-work program experience to Egypt.

- b. Training the Current Workforce – SCIV is supporting initiatives to help define and deliver skills required by private sector employers to enhance their global economic competitiveness. Specific, long-term initiatives include training English language and computer technology teachers and developing Master Teachers in Egypt through an exchange program designed by the U.S. Department of Education and implemented in Egypt by USAID.
- c. Improving Access to Computers for Egyptian Students – The Ministry of Education has made great progress in providing schools with computer equipment. SCIV is working with the Egyptian private sector to enhance the Ministry’s efforts through pilot projects such as the Sharkeya computer club, an innovative approach to allow access to school computers after school, on weekends and during summer vacations.
- d. Empowering Girls – SCIV works closely with USAID educational program specialists to monitor progress on the delivery of girls’ education services, especially in rural areas with the largest gender gaps.
- e. Enriching Environmental Education – SCIV was instrumental in forging linkages between the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs and the Ministry of Education, culminating in an Environmental Education Memorandum of Cooperation that includes doubling the number of GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) schools, integrating Green Corner activities into schools, and enhancing environmental education materials for industrial schools.
- f. Sharing Educational Practices – SCIV conducts high-level policy meetings between U.S. and Egyptian educators, government decision-makers and private businessmen. These meetings, held annually in each country, facilitate the sharing of educational practices and experiences and build the relationships that are necessary for communication and cooperation on mutual interests.

The Subcommittee coordinates with the Presidents’ Council and with each of the other Subcommittees to form linkages that support the overall goals of the Partnership. The Subcommittee seeks out the opinions and perspectives of the private sectors in each country to strengthen education and training policies and practices.

2. Major Events this Quarter

- a. Finalized its subcontract agreement with the Alexandria Business Association (ABA) and formalized the public - private partnership agreement between the ABA and the Ministry of Education in which

the parties "agreed to cooperate toward the objective of developing a system to strengthen technical secondary education and create entry level job opportunities for technical secondary school graduates." A Partnership Memorandum was signed by the parties and witnessed by the Governor of Alexandria and the US Ambassador. The key events to be carried out under the Partnership include:

- informational roundtables;
 - definition of key skills required in competitive sectors of the economy;
 - training for teachers and parents;
 - job fairs;
 - internships, externships and apprenticeships; and,
 - development of a job referral database.
- b. Conducted a job creation roundtable in Cairo for the hotel, restaurant, and service sectors to determine ways to address the demands of the hospitality sector. Under the theme "Qualified Students for Quality Jobs," representatives from major hotels, food franchises and related companies met in Cairo to endorse a job referral process by which the Ministry of Education would assist interested companies to locate entry level workers.
 - c. Developed a strategic alliance with the Alexandria Development Center (ADC) to support the expansion of the GLOBE school program in Alexandria as part of an effort to implement the environmental education commitments of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the Minister of Education and the Minister of State for Environmental Affairs in Washington, DC in March 1999. The ADC conducted surveys of approximately 15 schools to assess their current computer capacity and define their needs to participate in the GLOBE schools program.
 - d. Drafted, and presented to USAID/Cairo, a comprehensive action plan to meet the objectives of the Secretariat and support the goals of the Partnership for job creation, private sector participation and increased economic activity in Egypt.
 - e. Initiated an inventory and assessment of environmental materials on the topics of water pollution and waste disposal. The results of the inventory will be used to determine the best approach for preparing supplementary materials to enrich the technical secondary school curriculum.
3. Activities Planned for Next Quarter
 - a. Conduct a meeting in Cairo of Subcommittee IV to acquaint the new US co-chairs with the objectives of the Partnership and the role of education and training in improving the prospects for economic growth and development in Egypt.

- b. Accompany a delegation from Egypt to Baltimore, MD to see how the "Career Connections" program is being implemented and assess its application for improving technical education under the Alexandria Partnership. One of the objectives of the visit will be to determine how the private sector supports technical education.
- c. Define the requirements for a Job Referral Center in the Ministry of Education and begin to meet the demands of the private sector for entry level workers.
- d. Establish the framework for expanding the GLOBE school program in Alexandria through a combination of private schools, self-sustaining government schools and private support for less-fortunate schools with capacity to implement and sustain the required activities.
- e. Develop an apprenticeship program to be implemented on a test case basis by the Accor Hotel chain. Job placement of 3,500 student/apprentices can be provided if the Ministry adopts the proposals developed by the Secretariat and senior management of Accor Hotels.

4. Staff Travel

Dates	Location	Staff
Nov 29 – Dec 11	Cairo, Egypt	Amy Dickinson
Dec 16 – 31	USA	John Dalton

Purpose of Amy Dickinson's trip: to attend SCIV Roundtable on entry-level skill requirements for hotels, restaurants, and franchises and to attend teacher training sessions in Minya and Beni Suef. Also met with field staff from both projects to discuss project activities, finances, personnel and other administrative matters.

G. Distance Learning – Romania
LearnLink Task Order #11
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 06

1. Summary

Through two pilot efforts (only one in progress at this point), this Task Order explores ways in which distance learning information and telecommunications technologies can increase the quality and impact of two existing USAID Participant Training Programs. The overarching goal of the Romania pilot is to determine whether the use of IECTs and distance learning tools can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of

participant training programs. Can USAID-funded participant training projects maximize their funding by using IECTs and distance learning to provide additional training at a lower marginal cost and bolster existing face-to-face training with follow-on activities such as electronic professional networking and information sharing?

2. Major Events this Quarter

The Mission in Bucharest, Romania approved the pilot's SOW and budget. World Learning's Transit/Romania Project will administer the pilot. CRIPS, a local NGO with previous experience in Distance Learning, which is involved with the Romanian Social Work movement, will be the implementing agent for the pilot. LearnLink will provide technical support and guidance as well as oversight of the evaluation component.

LearnLink staff traveled to Romania on November 27th to December 4th. The overall objective of this visit was to launch the pilot and initiate activities. Specifically, the following objectives were met:

- a. Assisted in recruiting personnel for CRIPS;
- b. Coordinated course conversion process for computer-mediated training component;
- c. Established initial baseline of perceptions for pilot evaluation;
- d. Brought CRIPS up to speed by developing an action plan, establishing responsibilities and creating a timeline for immediate next steps. Provided technical support and guidance in existing hardware and software and future procurement needs;
- e. Conducted a workshop "Launching a Virtual Community;" and
- f. Met with USAID and Ministry representatives.

Subsequent to and based on TDY outcomes, pilot activities have consisted of:

- a. Revising the pilot timeline
- b. Continuing to recruit for the outstanding open position – web site designer and administrator
- c. Coordinating with World Learning and finalizing the contracting of the Multi-Media Instructional Design Specialist
- d. Weekly conference calls with World Learning/Romania and CRIPS in order to ensure a smooth and seamless start-up
- e. Assisting World Learning and CRIPS with RFQs for contracting ISPs and upgrading CRIPS' infrastructure with a LAN

Overall, though the project suffered an unfortunate delay of almost a year due to contracting issues, it is progressing well.

3. Constraints

Regarding the Romania pilot, the constraints that need to be addressed are:

- a. CRIPS' unstable infrastructure. In October, CRIPS' web site was hacked and virtually destroyed. Over the Christmas holiday, a virus infected the CRIPS computers, and they were left with no machines with which to work until early January. To remedy this, World Learning is hiring a technical consultant to diagnose CRIPS' systems, put in security protocols, install anti-virus software, and upgrade everything to a LAN.
- b. CRIPS' need for capacity building. A great deal of training and "hand-holding" will be required on the part of World Learning and AED/LearnLink to bring CRIPS staff up to speed vis-à-vis ICTs and their educational applications. In addition, Romania is coming out of several decades of authoritarian rule and a concomitant lack of rights to communicate freely. This may impact CRIPS and participants' ability to effectively take advantage of the new communications tools that the pilot will be providing. LearnLink is currently exploring ways to overcome this with additional training in online mediation, etc.

Regarding the second pilot site, LearnLink continues to work toward identifying a second Mission that might be interested in participating in this distance learning pilot activity. The possibility of working with Uganda was explored but did not amount to anything significant. The second potential site is Bolivia. This possibility will be explored more fully subsequent to T.O.1 TDY scheduled to take place in February 2000.

4. Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarter

Oversee:

- Installation of CRIPS LAN
- Redefinition of CRIPS' web site architecture and design
- Finalization of recruitment
- Launching of listserv
- Finalization of material for repurposing

5. Staff Travel

Dates	Locations	Staff
Nov 27 – Dec 4	Bucharest, Romania	Sonia Arias
Nov 27 – Dec 4	Bucharest, Romania	Eric Rusten

H. Benin Community Learning Centers
LearnLink Task Order #13
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 805

1. Summary

USAID/Cotonou has funded LearnLink to assist a local NGO in establishing three Community Networking Services Centers (CNS Centers) in different regions of Benin. LearnLink is working with the Songhai Center, an agro-biological research and training center, to establish CNS Centers in each of Songhai's three regional locations: Porto Novo, the nation's capital; Savalou, an important commercial hub in Benin's central region; and Parakou, Benin's third largest city in the northern region.

2. Major Events this Quarter

- a. The Racal Canada system was shipped and received in country. The Racal Canada training team, consisting of four technicians, traveled to Benin for a period of ten days to install radio towers and the supporting equipment. Key Songhai staff accompanied the team to receive maintenance training on the system. By the end of the quarter, the system was still awaiting frequency approval prior to becoming operational.
- b. Two community training sessions were held in Port Novo during this time, for a total of nine training sessions thus far.
- c. Centers in Savalou and Parakou were not yet operational at the time of this writing, though equipment was delivered to both sites and is being installed.
- d. Songhai has not yet provided requested reporting data on the use for the Porto Novo Center or on the prospective distance education courses that were discussed during Dr. Fuchs' visit in the previous quarter. LearnLink is continuing to email requests for this and other reporting information to Songhai.

3. Constraints

There has been some confusion regarding additional procurement needs. Songhai says that additional computer hardware and peripherals are needed, but LearnLink maintains that most, if not all, procurement approved under the task order has been completed. Songhai has submitted an additional procurement list totaling more than \$15,000, while LearnLink shows only roughly \$6,000 remaining for incidental procurements.

**I. Morocco – Computer-Assisted Teacher Training (CATT) Project
LearnLink Task Order #14
USAID #: HNE-I-00-96-00018-00 T.O. 09**

1. Summary

The Computer-Assisted Teacher Training (CATT) Project is to improve the quality of teacher training in primary education through the introduction of educational technology. This is a pilot or demonstration project, which will target the provincial teacher training colleges in five provinces where girls' enrollment and retention rates lag behind the national average. LearnLink will be developing with the Ministry of National Education a program for pre-service and in-service teacher training which effectively integrates educational technology into existing academic programs. The project will also be exploring the possibility of creating a Master Information Teachers (MIT) program, which rewards teaching excellence through educational technology.

2. Major Events this Quarter

- a. The CATT task order began at the beginning of the quarter, on October 1, 1999. Within two weeks of the start date, LearnLink sent Project Director Jeffrey Coupe to the field in order to begin the process of setting up the field office. A Resident Advisor was recruited for the project, conducted counterpart meetings with the Ministry of National Education (MNE) and opened project bank accounts.
- b. After a series of meetings with the Ministry at the national level and at the provincial level (Sidi Kacem), AED and USAID agreed to:
 - launch a Request for Proposals for five computer centers in the provinces; and
 - sign letters of Convention and Partnership at the national and provincial levels, which spelled out the respective responsibilities of the implementing agencies.

These agreements were drafted, and circulated within the Ministry and USAID for comments and revision. The final agreement will be signed in February 2000.

- c. Project Start-Up – The CATT-PILOTE project established arrangements with the Creative Associates MEG project to share office space in Souissi-Rabat. During the months of October and November, LearnLink interviewed prospective candidates for the Resident Advisor position in Morocco, choosing Saida Abouid to head up the CATT field office.
- d. Assessment I and Procurement – Through the Project Director's work with the World Bank and an assessment of the implementation environment, the project was able to put together a Request for

Proposals for the configuration and installation of computer networks, more specifically at the Teacher Training College in Sidi Kacem. USAID and AED decided to structure the RFQ so that we could both glean the lessons learned from Sidi Kacem before proceeding to the other sites, and at the same time, leave the door open to award the entire contract at once. This was deemed important because of the tight implementation schedule and lack of staff resources to procure continuously throughout the life of the project.

- e. Needs Assessment and Procurement Finalization – By the end of November, LearnLink had issued its RFP for the procurement of the five computer centers. In December, the project had received four of eight offers.
 - f. Training Program – LearnLink submitted a Contract Modification in order to acquire the services of Dr. El Houcine Haichour, a recent Georgetown University graduate specializing in computational linguistics. This request was filed on December 21, 1999 and LearnLink has received no word on the modification request at this writing. Consequently, the MEG-CATT coordination, which we planned to assure through the close working relationship between Dr. Ezzaki (of MEG) and Dr. Haichour, has not come into fruition. Moreover, LearnLink has not proceeded in the identification of needs and organizational readiness for the types of interventions the project would like to propose. We are currently working on assessment and training materials, which will be used in February and March to foster participation in the design and implementation of the project. The project will be developing a co-trainer model of teacher training.
 - g. Project WebSite and Communicative Tools – The CATT-PILOTE project developed a demonstration website and researched communicative tools with which to engage the Ministry of National Education on the broad outlines of the project's objectives and activities. Although rudimentary, CATT-PILOTE will be devoting more energy into the completion of the site and final selection of communicative tools, now that the project convention has been agreed upon by the MNE and USAID.
3. Constraints
- The major constraints in December and January were the holidays of Christmas and Ramadan. Work slowed in Morocco, and progress towards the completion of the convention was hampered as well by the Minister's health. Minister Ismail Alaoui and USAID Mission Director James Bednar had hoped to hold an early signing ceremony, but Mr. Alaoui delayed his return to Morocco from France until mid-January.

4. Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarter
 - a. During the first quarter of 2000, CATT-PILOTE hopes to begin work on preparations of the first teacher training college in Sidi Kacem, and will award the contract for the network to a Moroccan firm. The procurement of the equipment will begin with a scheduled phasing of center openings throughout the Spring.
 - b. Formalization of partnership agreements with the delegations in the provinces.
 - c. Training materials developed for group of lead trainers and administrators from the provinces.
 - d. Installation of computer networks will begin with first centers opened near the end of the first quarter.

5. Staff Travel

Dates	Location	Staff
Oct 14 – Nov 8	Rabat, Morocco	Jeffrey Coupe

6. Miscellaneous

The project has learned that it requires quite a bit of time and negotiation to lay the proper groundwork for this type of project. Discussions with the Ministry of National Education took a number of months to finalize. Outlining the responsibilities of the partners and gaining mutual trust and consensus took some time in October and November to work out.

The development issue currently is how best to procure a functioning network of centers capable of communicating and coordinating amongst each other. The project has learned that this type of one-shot procurement is time-consuming. Because the equipment line items are tight, there is no real leeway for errors and all contingencies must be addressed in the original contract. However, the ex ante costs of procurement should be more than made up by the absence of problems ex post, once the contract for the centers is finalized. Nonetheless, this is a very time-consuming process involving the counting of every Moroccan dirham, so that the project is able to complete all the tasks in the task order.

A second lesson to date is that contract modifications in the first month, which are required to accommodate personnel and staffing changes are overly cumbersome, even if straight-forward contract adjustments. Our field technical advisor Dr. Houcine Haichour has been ready to apply his degree to the betterment of Morocco. He is one of the few in Morocco possessing up-to-date information on the field of educational technology. Nonetheless, CATT-PILOTE has faced delays in getting

the assessment of organizational readiness and the training design finalized.

V. Subcontracts

- A. The subcontract between Songhai and Racal Canada was completed. Racal has fulfilled all subcontract requirements, and final billing for both is being prepared for submission to USAID/Cotonou.
- B. INCRE, subcontractor for the CEPAR project, ended work for LearnLink. All objectives were met and a brief summary report was submitted.