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EXCELENCIA Quarterly Report
April 1, 2007 – June 30, 2007



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American Institutes for Research

With:

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

**U.S. Agency for International Development
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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

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Associates: Academy for Educational Development (AED)
Save the Children Federation USA

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ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AIR	American Institutes for Research
APA	Learn, Practice, Apply (Aprendo, Practico, Aplico)
BASE	Basic Education and Training Program II
COP	Chief of Party
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
EXCELENCIA	Expansion of the Excellence Centers in Nicaragua with Emphasis on the APA (Learn, Practice and Apply) Methodology
MINED	Ministry of Education
PRONICASS	Nicaraguan Support to the Social Sector Program
SO	Strategic Objective
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
RAAN	Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic
RAAS	Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic
EIB	Bilingual Intercultural Education
FADCANIC	Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this quarter, the Ministry of Education (MINED) has undergone an internal re-organization process. Departmental and municipal educational authorities have been changed and EXCELENCIA has been presenting to and training them on the APA methodology. Also during this period, all new MINED delegates have been informed and trained on the project and its action plan. MINED had a positive response to project objectives.

Also during this quarter, MINED issued instructions to stop all training activities until further notice. EXCELENCIA, with the new regional authorities' agreement, developed and submitted a strategy to continue sending its message through technical meetings so that the execution of its plan can continue at the same pace. In May the project has obtained an official letter from the Minister of Education authorizing the continuation of all of EXCELENCIA's training activities. This allowed for the completion of the first training cycle for all teachers in the network of mentor schools.

Under Result 2, while the official request from the MINED for the Project to continue providing support to the second stage of the National Consultation Process on the New Curriculum is still being resolved, EXCELENCIA joined the recently created National Curriculum Commission. It is expected that through this kind of participation the project can have a significant influence on the permanent inclusion of the new curriculum into the official educational system. In addition, EXCELENCIA also became part of the National Commission for Teacher Development. By means of direct participation in this commission, the project expects to have a positive influence on incorporating the new curriculum into the syllabus of study of the teacher training centers (Normales).

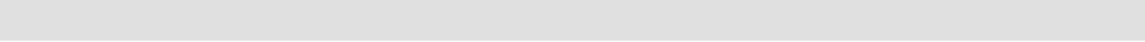
EXCELENCIA inaugurated two of the new Resource Centers which had been set up last quarter, and expects to continue inaugurating the remaining centers in the near future, based on USAID authorities' schedule and convenience.

Under Result 3, the 2006 Annual Study on the mentor schools program was sent to press for its later distribution to schools and the national educational community with the purpose of disseminating the study's results. In this dissemination process, it is important to get feedback from participant schools so that the project can learn the opinions and perceptions of the stakeholders about the program. Preparatory activities related to the 2007 Annual Study have started. The Annual Study will employ performance third grade Language and Mathematics assessments aligned to competencies emphasized in the new curriculum framework. Through this new study, EXCELENCIA will have an objective tool for project evaluation, while the MINED will also have a necessary tools to evaluate students on the new curriculum.

FADCANIC has continued successfully to carry out its activities on the Caribbean Coast, where it is now focusing its attention on 104 schools. FADCANIC has also made progress in the production of Inter-Cultural Bilingual Education (IBE) materials for the first quarter of 3rd and 4th grades of multi-grade schools.

Save the Children has moved to a validation stage for the education for transition strategies and it has now developed a training program on those strategies.

Through the evaluation area, EXCELENCIA has continued implementing an information system to: a) follow-up its indicators based on the progress of outcomes achieved in the expansion to new schools and their contribution to USAID's education indicators, and b) develop studies on variables that influence the education quality in the network schools.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

I. Result Number 1: Expansion of the network of EXCELENCIA schools that apply the APA Methodology

A) School Network Expansion

During the second quarter of 2007, the EXCELENCIA team incorporated 428 new schools into the network with a current total of 1, 559 participating educational centers. This represents 919 additional educational centers above the number of schools received (640) at the beginning of the project. In a similar manner, the project in 2006 had a presence in 144 municipalities, while during this quarter the project has extended its presence to 149 municipalities. This means that the project now covers 97 % of all municipalities (153) in the country.

Table No. 1. Schools Served by EXCELENCIA, per Quarter and Category, as of June 2007

Schools Served by EXCELENCIA per Quarter and Category						
	February 2006	June 2006	September 2006	December 2006	March 2007	June 2007
Mentor Schools	112	184	184	190	232	232
Satellite Schools	528	526	749	930	899	1327
TOTAL	640	710	933	1,120	1,131	1,559

Source: EXCELENCIA Project, June 2007.

Table No. 2 below shows the distribution of current EXCELENCIA network schools by modality and department as of June 2007.

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

Department	School Type				Status		
	Multi-grade	Multi-grade Bilingual	Regular	Regular Bilingual	Mentor Schools	Satellite schools	Total
Department	Multi-grade	Bilingual Multi-grade	Regular	Bilingual Regular	Satellite	Mentor	Total
Boaco	56		18		66	8	74
Carazo	55		22		66	11	77
Chinandega	70		47		98	19	117
Chontales	109		23		120	12	132
Estelí	29		27		48	8	56
Granada	41		25		52	14	66
Jinotega	69		22		81	10	91
León	69		25		71	23	94
Madriz	57		17		63	11	74
Managua	44		70		89	25	114
Masaya	37		44		68	13	81
Matagalpa	90		37		112	15	127
Nueva Segovia	81		24		93	12	105
RAAN	17	29	10	19	62	13	75
RAAS	61	4	31	11	92	15	107
Río San Juan	43		17		52	8	60
Rivas	71		38		94	15	109
TOTAL	999	33	497	30	1,327	232	1,559

Source: EXCELENCIA Project, June 2007.

The graph below tracks the progress of the expansion of the EXCELENCIA network under Result 1. As can be observed from the graph EXCELENCIA is well on target of reaching its expansion goal towards the end of the project.

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

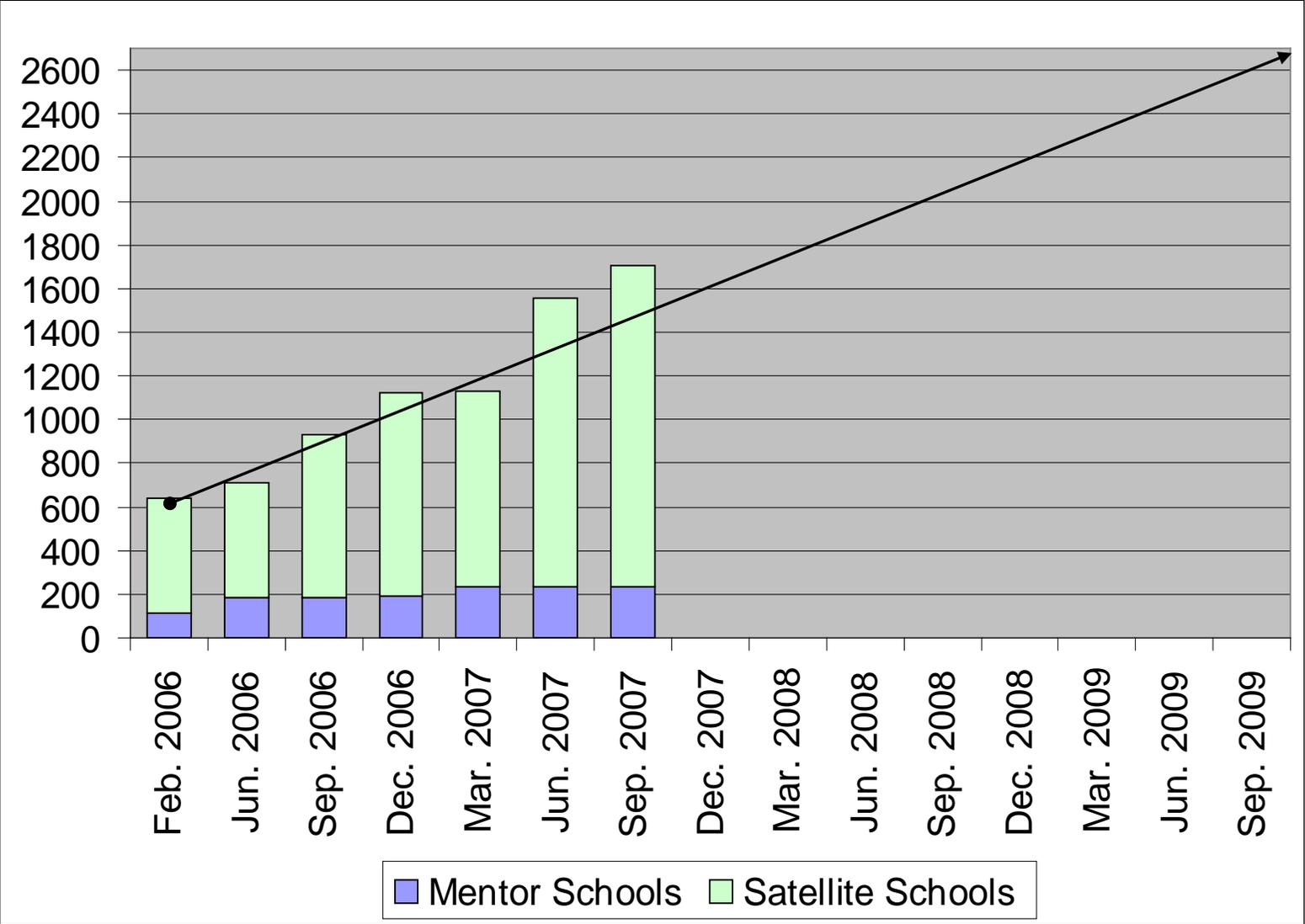


Table No. 3 below shows the progress made in the project's coverage using data which has been updated in collaboration with the MINED's Statistics Directorate. According to this data, at the end of the second quarter of 2007, EXCELENCIA serves 18.3% of schools and 32% of the primary education students enrolled in the country through its network. Likewise, 31% of the primary education teachers work in EXCELENCIA network schools.

Table No. 3. EXCELENCIA Expansion Status as of June 2007

Coverage by Municipality	
Number of municipalities in the country	153
Number of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA in 2006	144
% of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA in 2006	95%
Number of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA as of June 2007	149
% of municipalities covered by EXCELENCIA as of June 2007	97%
Coverage by schools	
Number of primary education schools (MINED 2007)	8,516
Number of schools served by EXCELENCIA as of June 2007	1,559
% of primary schools served by EXCELENCIA as of June 2007	18.3%
Coverage by student enrollment	
Total of initial enrollment in primary education 2007	950,035
Total of enrollment at EXCELENCIA school as of June 2007	303,702
% of enrollment at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2007	32%
Coverage by teacher	
Total number of primary education teachers 2006	29,030
Number of teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2007	9,099
% of Teachers at EXCELENCIA schools as of June 2007	31%

*Source: MINED Statistics Directorate and EXCELENCIA. All records as of June 2007, except National Teacher totals (MINED figures from 2006). *EXCELENCIA updates all data with the MINED Statistics Directorate on a continual basis.*

In order to achieve its scheduled expansion goals, during this quarter EXCELENCIA facilitators completed a total of 2,683 technical assistance and follow-up visits to schools, as shown on the table below.

Table No. 4. Number of Technical Assistance and Follow-up Visits by Department

Department	Number of Visits	Department	Number of Visits
Masaya	184	Madriz	153
Granada	193	Nueva Segovia	214
Rivas	150	Estelí	105
Carazo	180	Chinandega	213
RAAS	88	León	266
Chontales	229	Jinotega	168
Río San Juan	84	Matagalpa	235
Managua	221	TOTAL	2,683

As of June 2007, a total of 9,099 teachers (7,245 female and 1,854 male) work at EXCELENCIA network schools. This represents 31 percent of the total of teachers registered by the MINED in primary schools in the country.

Table No. 5 below shows the distribution of these teachers by gender and department.

Table No. 5. Number of Teachers at EXCELENCIA Schools as of June 2007

Department	FEMALE	MALE	Total
Boaco	325	45	370
Carazo	355	79	434
Chinandega	672	117	789
Chontales	397	54	451
Estelí	356	82	438
Granada	371	79	450
Jinotega	412	83	495
León	411	49	460
Madriz	262	86	348
Managua	847	257	1104
Masaya	592	134	726
Matagalpa	534	175	709
Nueva Segovia	424	65	489
RAAN	248	173	421
RAAS	354	238	592
Rio San Juan	215	55	270
Rivas	470	83	553
TOTAL	7,245	1,854	9,099

B. Training

EXCELENCIA organized a number of training events, both at the national and local levels during the second quarter of 2007 in which a total of 13,705 people (10,468 women and 3,237 men) participated. Out of all the participants in training sessions organized by EXCELENCIA, 11,050 (8,732 women and 2,318 men) participated in trainings held in the Pacific Coast regions and 2,655 (1,736 women and 919 men) participated in trainings carried out in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions.

To date, the total amount of people trained by EXCELENCIA is 47,150.

Tables No. 6, 8, and 9 below show training activities by gender and duration in both geographic areas carried out during this quarter.

Table No. 6. Training Activities April - June 2007 by Gender and Duration on the Pacific Coast

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS April - June 2007 by Event, Gender, and Duration					
Name of Event	1Day		2 Days		Total people
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
National Meeting of Student Governments	80	37			117
National Meeting of Successful Girls and Boys	223	81			304
Lecture by Dr. Ernesto Schiefelbein.	55	38			93
Second Technical Meeting with school principals and pedagogical advisors (16 meetings at departmental and/or regional level)			252	103	355
Initial workshops with new mentor schools 2007.	1,356	317			1,673
Local workshops with 3 rd and 4 th grade teachers, held at mentor schools	3,218	749			3,967
Third Technical Meeting with school principals and pedagogical advisors (12 meetings)			163	65	228
Workshop on Use and Management of Resource Centers			41	9	50
National workshop with First Grade Teachers			203	15	218
11 Experience sharing sessions between Mentor Schools 2006 and new Mentor Schools 2007	236	52			288
Local workshop on significant expression communication strategies with 1st and 2nd grade teachers.	56	12			68
Local workshops with 5 th and 6 th grade teachers	2,849	840			3,689
TOTAL	8,073	2,126	659	192	11,050

C) Resource Centers

Two of the resource centers that were setup during the last quarter of 2006 were inaugurated in the following schools this quarter:

- Padre Antonio Stella School in Granada
- San Miguelito School in Río San Juan

D) Expansion Activities in the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions (FADCANIC)

Expansion Activities:

EXCELENCIA, through FADCANIC, currently serves a total of 104 schools on the Atlantic Coast. Out of these, 47 were already working with the BASE II Project and 57 are new ones that have been incorporated to the Project so far. Table No. 7 below shows the number of schools served by region and type of school.

Table No. 7. Schools served by EXCELENCIA in the North and South Atlantic Autonomous Regions.

Region	School Type		TOTAL
	Mentor	Satellite	
RAAN	12	53	65
RAAS	10	29	39
TOTAL	22	82	104

In the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions, FADCANIC has continued implementing an expansion strategy for the APA methodology in schools under its responsibility. This has been done through training sessions for teachers and students on different components of APA. Likewise, progress has been made on preparing bilingual materials for applying the new curriculum in 3rd and 4th grades of multi-grade primary education schools.

Training Activities:

The tables below show the trainings developed and conducted by FADCANIC during this quarter:

Table No. 8. Training Activities in the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS)

Name of Event	1 Day		2 Days		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
5 training workshops on organization and operation of student governments	182	40			222
23 workshops on expanding APA methodology, adapted to the specific characteristics of the Caribbean Coast, for mentor school principals and teachers	248	51			299
26 workshops on organization and operation of parent councils	532	155			687
Workshop on operation and management of the math basket in the classrooms	67	51			118
Teacher and technical staff exchange on systemizing experiences on the use of the APA methodology			3	5	8
Total	1,029	297	3	5	1,334

Table No. 9. Training Activities in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN)

Name of Event	1 Day		2 Days		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
15 workshops on organization and operation of student governments	181	191			372
15 training sessions on the APA methodology, adapted to the Atlantic Coast context, for mentor school principals and teachers	315	210			525
Workshops on organization and operation of parent councils	208	216			424
Total	704	617			1,321

In both regions, FADCANIC facilitators conducted technical support visits to each of the new schools that have been incorporated into the network. In addition, experience sharing events between schools which had already worked with the BASE project and the new schools being incorporated to the project have been carried out. Training

events continue to be carried out in regional or local languages, which has not only increased the motivation of local teachers and technicians but it has also improved the active participation of all participants.

It is noteworthy to mention that the project continues to receive a decisive support from regional authorities.

Production of Inter-Cultural Bilingual Education Materials

The IBE technical staff has continued with the production of materials for Language and Mathematics for 3rd and 4th grade of multi-grade schools. Annex 1 shows the status of this activity.

E) Other Project Advances

During this quarter, EXCELENCIA initiated negotiations with the CARE, Proyecto Primero Aprendo , and the Office of the Vicariato Apostólico de Bluefields in order to establish a strategic alliance. Through this alliance, EXCELENCIA will train the schools and facilitators supported by these organizations, and in exchange, these schools will become part of the EXCELENCIA network. In this way the project hopes to reach the expansion goals.

F) Achievements under Result 1

The Project has been able to positively influence the new departmental and local authorities. All departmental and municipal delegates and advisors have been replaced and a similar trend is gradually happening with the school principals as well. Obviously, all these changes meant having to make an extra effort not only to present the project, but also to prove and convince new authorities about the project's advantages and merits (which slowly but surely is being accomplished).

EXCELENCIA has incorporated 428 new schools to the network during this quarter. In spite of the difficulties brought about by the change in authorities in the regions and schools, the hard work carried out by facilitators allowed the project to significantly increase the number of schools reached.

EXCELENCIA significantly increased the amount of people trained.

During this second quarter, EXCELENCIA was able to reach 13,746 people (11,091 in the Pacific Coast and 2,655 in the Caribbean Coast) through its training sessions at the national and local levels. On the Pacific Coast the project has reached all first through sixth grade teachers from mentor and satellite schools with at least one training session.

All activities on the Caribbean Coast are progressing as planned.

II. Result No. 2. New Curriculum Based on Competencies for Primary Education that includes Bilingual Intercultural Education validated and incorporated into the National Educational System

A) Follow-up to New Curriculum Validation

EXCELENCIA has continued supporting the goals of MINED to expand the consultation process on the new curriculum and its materials for their application in the classrooms. In response to a request from the new Minister of Education, EXCELENCIA has submitted a proposal for continuing the technical support provided by the project to this activity to USAID.

The project's Technical Coordinator has become a member of the National Curriculum Committee where she represents the project's position and contributes with the experiences the project has developed. Likewise, the project's Senior Technical Advisor is a member of the National Commission on Teacher Development where the strategies for training teachers on the new competency-based approach are being developed.

B) Systemizing the Validation Process of Materials for the New Curriculum.

EXCELENCIA has prepared a document explaining the process followed for preparing and validating the materials for the application of the new competency-based curriculum. The main objective of this paper is to document and systemize the process as well as the role of EXCELENCIA in the process up to the delivery of the materials, which are being modified according to the results of the first stage of their validation.

At the request of the MINED, EXCELENCIA has submitted to USAID a proposal to continue providing technical support to what the MINED has called the "Second Stage" of the National Consultation Process for the New Curriculum. Excelencia has responded to an RFA from USAID and the project hopes to obtain final approval by early August.

C) The MINED Recognizes the Value of the Production of Materials and the First Stage of their Validation.

USAID contracted the services of Dr. Ernesto Schiefelbein, an international consultant, to evaluate the new curriculum development stage and the production and validation of the materials for its application. Dr. Shiefelbein, at the request of the MINED, presented the results and conclusions of his evaluation and during his presentation he highlighted the importance of the process—developed in a very short time frame—and stated that this experience could easily be an example for all Latin America. As a result,

the MINED issued a communiqué emphasizing this statement and officially highlighting the activity as an “example for Latin America”.

D) Production of Materials for Inter-Cultural Bilingual Education

The preparation of curriculum materials for IBE continues according to plan, but with slight changes, which are due to the dynamics of the work itself (See Annex 1).

E) Achievements under Result 2

The MINED has recognized the contribution provided by EXCELENCIA and has requested the project’s participation in the second stage of the National Consultation Process for the New Curriculum and the recently created National Curriculum Commission. In a similar manner, EXCELENCIA is also represented in the Teacher Development Commission—which is where the way to train teachers within the framework of the new competency-based approach is analyzed.

Preparation of materials for IBE has progressed in the Atlantic Coast Autonomous Regions.

III. Result 3: Longitudinal Studies and Additional Research to Assess Project Impact and Field Studies to Set up Effective Channels to Improve Transition to Primary Education

A) 2006 First Annual Study

During this quarter, the 2006 First Annual Study on the Mentor School Program was printed out and it is being distributed to the network schools and among the national educational community.

B) 2007 Annual Study, Student Assessment

It was agreed with the authorities at the MINED that the 2007 Annual Study will focus on establishing a baseline for assessing students' academic performance within the new curriculum framework. The assessment will not only give the project an objective monitoring tool on educational quality, but also provide the MINED with an instrument to evaluate some of the competencies contained in the new curriculum..

It was also agreed that the 2007 Annual Study will assess the academic performance Reading and Mathematics of third grade students from a sample of schools that have participated in the validation process. At the same time, the study will also analyze factors associated with students' academic performance.

In this second quarter EXCELENCIA hired the local staff that participate in the study, and the new hires started to carry out a variety of activities in preparation for the upcoming student assessments. First, the project held a workshop with participation of MINED personnel, educators (both from the Pacific and Atlantic Coast) and international consultants that focused on the identification of competencies in Reading and Mathematics in third grade that are emphasized as learning objectives in the new curriculum and which lend themselves to be assessable in a standardized manner. After that another workshop was held – again with participation of MINED personnel, international consultants, and educators from the Pacific and Atlantic Coast – in which participants learned item writing skills and produced more than 400 items. After final review and test form selection, the items will be piloted in October of this year.

C) Follow-up to Data Processing and Consolidation for Project Indicators

Monitoring of the project's indicators has continued through the processing and consolidation of information from field activities during this quarter. Currently, the project has a database on the number of network schools and their enrollment, as well as data on participation in trainings carried out by the Project. This database is frequently updated.

D) Transition to Secondary Education Experiences Study

EXCELENCIA hired the services of a consultant to start the process of identifying and analyzing experiences on transition to secondary education. A final report has been submitted and is currently being reviewed by project staff. The report sums up the main experiences in the country regarding transition to secondary education and discusses the possibilities that each of these experiences provides for developing a pilot on the application of the APA Methodology at this educational level.

E) Transition to Primary Education Experiences Study (Save the Children)

This quarter, the activities of Save the Children with respect to the Education for Transition to primary education framework have advanced to the application and validation of its previous research findings. The following general activities have been carried out:

- Training workshops for teachers, parents, and the community.
- Classroom pedagogical assistance to pre-school, first grade and second grade teachers.
- Baseline data collection for the validation of the Education for Transition (ET) strategy.

Training workshops for teachers, parents, and the community.

Workshops for teachers:

Eight training workshops for teachers in all four experimental schools were carried out.

Table No. 10. Main Workshops at the Save the Children Office in Chinandega

Main Workshops at the Save the Children Office in Chinandega			
Topic	Participants	#	Facilitators
Education for Transition	Preschool, first and second grade teachers from all four experimental schools; Nucleus Directors; female teachers from the two base schools devoted to providing support on pedagogical advice, parents, as well as community leaders.	31 (8 parents, 4 leaders)	Save the Children - EXCELENCIA Team
Active role of children at School # 1	Same as above	31	Save the Children - EXCELENCIA team
Active role of children at School # 2	Same as above	31	Save the Children - EXCELENCIA team
Multi-grade methodology	First and second grade teachers from all four experimental schools plus 29 teachers send by the MINED	45	Consultant Patricia Ames

The remaining four workshops have been facilitated in all four experimental schools and targeted to teachers for working on reading, writing, and math.

Workshop topics have been positively received by female and male teachers and they have expressed their appreciation for the methodology as very practical. In some classrooms one can already see some effects of these workshops: teachers have changed the setup of their classrooms; they have decorated the classrooms and are using the learning corners; they have encouraged the use of play or game techniques to develop learning; student retention has increased as well as teacher pedagogical skills.

Workshops with mothers and fathers:

Five workshops for fathers and mothers and community leaders (village committee, religious committee, cooperative members, etc.) were carried out. A workshop for each school was conducted, except for the Jiquilillo School where two workshops were carried out to accommodate attendance issues due to work schedules in the fishing industry. The topic of these workshops was “The Importance of School.” During the workshop statistical data on school attendance, grade repetition, student absence and academic achievement at each school was presented.

Ninety percent of mothers and fathers of pre-school through third grade children participated in these workshops. As a result of these workshops, parent councils of each school took on concrete tasks related to recovering enrollment and daily attendance to school. A recovery of 80% of the students with attendance problems was achieved and the teachers of these classrooms are working with multi-grade methodology” to take care and manage the different learning pace of their students.

At the Fe y Alegría School in the community of Villanueva, six groups of volunteer mothers have been formed to care for three to six year-old children. Each mother will care for six children twice a week for two hours each day. The mothers accepted the challenge despite not receiving economic support from the MINED. Training for these volunteer mothers will start in July and currently STC is preparing an activity material for these mothers to utilize with these children in the classroom.

Two meetings were held with community leaders to motivate them to take on the challenge of introducing the topic of “our responsibility on quality education” in their community activity agendas.

2. Pedagogical Advice in the Classroom

Fifty-four pedagogical advice sessions were carried out during the past three months, with an average of two per month for each of the pre-school, first grade and second grade classrooms of the four experimental schools. These visits are conducted with the Director or Sub-Director. The success in the transformation of educational practices within the classroom can be attributed to this activity.

3. Baseline

The tools for collecting baseline data were prepared and applied to four experimental schools and two control schools (See Annex 2 for complete report).

The baseline report which is being used as a guide for the technical work is ready. The four schools with the highest percentage of dropouts, grade repetition and absenteeism from the municipalities of El Viejo and Villanueva plus the ones suggested by the MINED were selected. The table below summarizes the data of the six schools that are part of the research and ET strategy validation.

Table No. 11. Baseline data for Transition study by SAVE

BASELINE Data, 2007												
Schools Validation of Education Strategy for EXCELENCIA Transition												
School	Grade	Initial Enrollment			Over-age Enrollment			Grade Repeating			Not Passing	
		Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Total	Boys
Experimental												
Fe y Alegría	2°	7	6	13	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	1
La Providencia	2°	14	16	30	5	5	10	0	0	0	0	0
Tierra Prometida	2°	14	11	25	6	8	14	1	0	1	1	0
Camilo Zapata	2°	6	10	16	5	6	11	1	0	1	1	0
Totals		41	43	84	17	19	36	4	1	5	4	
Control												
Azarías Pallais	2°	11	14	25	3	12	15	1	2	3	1	1
El Rayzal	2°	10	11	21	4	7	11	1	3	4	s/d	s/d
Totales		21	25	46	7	19	26	2	5	7		

F) Achievements under Result 3

Printing and dissemination of the 2006 Annual Study Report on the Mentor School Program.

Beginning of activities for the Second Annual Research Study on third grade student performance in mathematics and Reading in Spanish.

Initial study on transition to secondary education. The initial study on transition to secondary education experiences has been submitted to the project team.

Validation of educational strategies for transition to primary education
Save the Children has started the validation of its Education for Transition strategy training their teachers and parents.

Updating the database for following-up on project's indicators. The database that allows monitoring the project's indicators and the corresponding USAID Strategic Objective is systematically updated.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

Expansion activities will continue based on what has been programmed, placing special attention on training and motivation of new authorities and directors.

We have submitted to USAID the proposal to address the Minister's request for EXCELENCIA to continue supporting the second validation for the new curriculum materials through the "Great National Consultation with Government Entities, Civil Society and the Population to Change the National Basic Curriculum." USAID has issued an RFA to which the project has responded. Once a decision from USAID is received the project will start working in that area immediately following the plan prepared by the Curriculum Development Directorate.

The 2007 Annual Study on Student Assessment will continue to be developed incorporating the final review of items, assignment of items to test forms and the edition and printing of pilot test forms for third grade Language and Mathematics.

Inauguration of the remaining resource centers that were setup during the last two quarters will be arranged.

SUCCESS STORIES

1) Representatives of Student Governments from all “Departamentos” meet in Managua. 80 students (54 girls and 26 boys) who represent student governments from select mentor schools participated on May 24th in a national meeting in Managua. Apart from showing their artistic talent in song and folkloric dance, the students exchanged experiences about their work in the student governments. The representatives emphasized the importance of their work especially when it comes to supporting students in first grade and student who need additional help to follow the pace in their classrooms. Moreover they talked about their experience with forming student circles and other activities aimed at improving their school environment. The students were accompanied by some teachers and parents from the Parents’ Committees of their schools.

2) Schools in the EXCELENCIA network respond to the expansion process. The majority of schools multiply the trainings provided by EXCELENCIA. Two illustrative examples are mentioned below.

- The Pedro Joaquín Chamorro school from the Departamento de Boaco carried out a workshop with parents to discuss and plan with them the implementation of the APA methodology in their school. 55 fathers and mothers participated in the workshop and came up with a plan for school visits and a community effort to build a school kitchen for students.
- The Alexis Argüello school, also from the Departamento de Boaco, carried out a workshop to inform the educational community about the APA methodology. In the workshop, the participants (parents, teachers, student representatives) discussed how to include the components of the methodology in their educational planning.

3) During the week of 11-15 of June a Meeting of Successful Children from schools from the EXCELENCIA network from all over Nicaragua took place. 272 persons participated in this meeting. The meeting was led by the students that represented all “Departamentos” of the country, and included teachers and parents as well. The latter underlined the importance of their involvement in the schools for the educational performance of their sons and daughters.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1. Status of the Production of Materials for Inter Cultural Bilingual Education

Tables No. 12 a,b,c. Status of the Production of Materials for Inter Cultural Bilingual Education

a) MATHEMATICS			
Third Grade			
Units	English (L2)	Mískitu	Sumu-Mayangna
I	Design and layout	Review of translation	Review of translation
II	Design and layout	Review of translation	Review of translation
III	Design and layout	Being reproduced	
IV	Final review		Reviewed/ Being reproduced
V	Final review		

Fourth Grade			
Units	English (L2)	Mískitu	Sumu-Mayangna
I	Design and layout	Reviewed/ Being reproduced	
II	Design and layout	Reviewed/ Being reproduced	
III	Final review		Reviewed/ Being reproduced
IV	Final review		Reviewed/ Being reproduced

b) SPANISH (L1) NATIVE TONGUES (L2)				
Third Grade				
Units	Spanish	English (L2)	Mískitu	Sumu-Mayanga
I	On review by regional team	Design and layout	Review of translation	Review of translation to the language
II	On review by regional team	Design and layout	Review of translation	Review of translation to the language
III	Suggestions have been incorporated	Design and layout		Reproduction continues
IV				Reproduction continues

c) Fourth Grade				
Unit	Spanish	English (L2)	Miskitu	Sumu-Mayanga
I	Being reviewed by regional team	Design and layout	Being reviewed by regional team	
II	Being reviewed by regional team	Design and layout	Being reviewed by regional team	
III	On first review	Design and layout	Being reviewed by regional team	
IV	Final review			Reproduction continues