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USAID/HONDURAS READING ACTIVITY

Annual Performance Report – Quarterly Report FY 17 Q4

AUGUST 10, 2017 to SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

Submission Date: October 30, 2017

Contract Number: AID-522-C-17-00002

Activity Start Date and End Date: August 10, 2017 to August 9, 2022

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HONDURAS READING ACTIVITY

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Contract No. AID-522-C- 17-00002

Prepared for:

Mariella Ruiz-Rodriguez, COR

United States Agency for International Development/Honduras



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ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Project Name	Reading Activity
Contract Number	AID-522-C- 17-00002
Activity Start Date	August 10, 2017
Activity End Date	August 9, 2022
Budget	US\$ 54,960,103
Prime Implementer	Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)
Sub-Contractor	Florida State University Others proposed, not yet approved
Geographic Coverage	USAID/Honduras DO1 and DO2 geographic zones
Reporting Period	August 10 – September 30, 2017
Contact for Contractor	David Duckworth Assistant Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, EDC.

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Acronyms

APRODE:	Apoyo a los Procesos de Descentralización en el Sector Educativo
BSMP:	Branding Strategy and Marking Plan
CED:	School Development Council
COP:	Chief of Party
CDCS:	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
COR:	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCOP:	Deputy Chief of Party
DGCE:	Dirección General de Currículo y Evaluación
DGDP:	Dirrección General de Desarrollo Profesional
DO:	Development Objective
EDC:	Education Development Center
EF:	Empleando Futuros
EMMP:	Environmental Mitigation & Monitoring Plan
FEREMA:	Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu
FSU:	Florida State University
GOH:	Government of Honduras
HRA:	Honduras Reading Activity
IBTCI:	International Business and Technical Consultants, Inc.
IHER:	Honduran Institute of Radio Education
IPs:	Implementation Partners
IR:	Intermediate Result
JSPR:	Joint Sector Portfolio Review
MEL:	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MIDEH:	Mejorando el Impacto al Desempeño Estudiantil de Honduras
MOE:	Ministry of Education
PPP:	Public-Private Partnerships
R:	Result
RDS:	Red Sostenible de Desarrollo
STTA:	Short Term Technical Assistance
TTI:	Teacher Training Institutions
UNAH:	National Autonomous University of Honduras
UPNFM:	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán
USAID	United State Agency for International Development

Introduction

Project Background

The purpose of the Honduras Reading Activity (HRA) is to support the efforts of the Government of Honduras (GOH), in collaboration with other activities and stakeholders (donors, civil society, and private sector) by providing technical assistance to improve reading instruction and outcomes for Honduran students from first to sixth grade of primary education.

Awarded August 10 2017, the HRA is a five-year project that aligns to USAID’s Education Strategy and the USAID/Honduras Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). HRA will use a national system strengthening approach and respond to the GOH’s priorities. Additionally, the project will bring attention to the enhancement of reading skills while addressing the critical problems of poverty and violence facing Honduras. It is framed under USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), which focuses on key Development Objectives (DO): citizen security increased for vulnerable populations in urban, high crime areas (DO1) and extreme poverty sustainably reduced for vulnerable populations in western Honduras (DO2). At the national level, the HRA will contribute to improved budget transparency and strengthen accountability systems (CDCS DO3). The project’s activities will integrate diverse crosscutting aspects such as gender equality, social inclusion, citizen security, citizenship, transparency, individual responsibility, community cohesion, and positive interpersonal and family relationships.

Building on USAID’s prior national level investments in enhancing curriculum and teaching practices, as well as strengthening the education evaluation system, HRA’s interventions will explicitly target improving instruction at the school and classroom levels. These interventions will increase reading outcomes in primary education by revising the standards and curriculum for Spanish; promoting teacher effectiveness; increasing the quality, availability and use of reading materials; strengthening classroom and school management; as well as student learning assessment; engaging all organizational structures of the Ministry of Education (MOE); and promoting the participation of family and the community.

More specifically, the HRA will be aimed at achieving four key results (R), which include several Intermediate Results (IR):

HRA’s Key Results (2017 – 2022)	
<p>R1. MOE’s capacity to implement evidence-based reading approaches in Basic Education strengthened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide technical assistance to the MOE to update the national reading curriculum for Spanish in grades 1-6 (IR1.1) ▪ Improve capacity at decentralized levels of the MOE to implement early grade reading programs (IR1.2) ▪ Build capacity of the decentralized MOE to assess student reading progress in grades 1-6 in target zones and to use the results for informed decision-making at the local level (IR1.3) 	<p>R2. School and classroom materials to enhance reading instruction improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise existing reading textbooks (IR2.1) ▪ Design a package of supplementary classroom reading materials by grade, for grades 1-6 (IR2.2) ▪ Create school libraries (IR2.3)
<p>R3. Capacity of teachers and key support personnel to provide</p>	<p>R4. Parental and community participation leading to</p>

<p>quality reading instruction to students in grades 1-6 improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train teachers (grades 1-6) and key support personnel in best pedagogical practices for reading (IR3.1) ▪ Adapt in-service teacher training model for pre-service teacher training (IR3.2) ▪ Support supervision and coaching of early grade teachers in best pedagogical practices for effective instruction (IR3.3) ▪ Support the purchase of school equipment and materials (IR3.4) 	<p>improved learning and reading achievement strengthened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase community and parental involvement in municipal and school management (IR4.1) ▪ Increase community and parental involvement in reading improvement (IR4.2) ▪ Increase community and parental involvement in monitoring education activities and reading outcomes (IR4.3)
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HRA is implemented by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), with participation of project partners (Florida State University [FSU], and others proposed, not yet approved), which will coordinate closely with the MOE and relevant public entities at both national and local levels. It will leverage impact by integrating Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and stimulating participation of NGO and civil society organizations. To maximize resources and results, HRA will collaborate with other projects financed by the US Government (USG) and other donors: *Asegurando la Educación* (School-Based Violence Prevention Activity, SBVPA), Honduras Local Governance (HLG), *Empleando Futuros*, EducAcción, *Mejorando el Impacto al Desempeño Estudiantil de Honduras* (MIDEH), Catholic Relief Services (CRS)/USDA’s Food for Education; GIZ Apoyo a los Procesos de Descentralización en el Sector Educativo (APRODE), among others.

HRA will develop a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System and use evidence-based research to inform decision-making and implementation and move towards expected results (see MEL Section below).

Year I Overview

The deliverable date for the first project Quarterly Report corresponds to the deliverable date for the Annual Performance Report (end of FY 2017, September 30, 2017). This report is submitted in lieu of the 4th quarter performance report.

The project contract was awarded on August 10, 2017, and runs through August 9, 2022. At the beginning of September, several EDC Home Office staff traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to lay the operations groundwork for the project. The Deputy Chief of Party was in country for the month of September, and the Senior MEL Specialist made an initial trip from September 11-22, 2017. The Chief of Party (COP) and Senior Reading Specialist posted on September 18, and the Senior Finance Specialist joined the project team on September 18. Temporary and permanent office spaces were identified and leases signed.

Once key personnel was on the ground, a series of meetings, beginning with USAID and meetings with implementing partners set the stage for subsequent coordination and collaboration activities, including participation in the planning for the Joint Sector Portfolio Review.

Summary of Milestones and Achievements

Current Staffing	
Chief of Party	José Luis Guzmán
Deputy Chief of Party	Seidda Mendoza
Senior Reading Specialist	Mónica Sahonero
Senior MEL Specialist	Megan Gavin
Senior Finance Specialist	Sobeyda Alvarez

Summary of Project Activities and Milestones

Two deliverables were submitted this quarter:

- Rapid Mobilization and Start-up Plan
- EMMP

During its first seven weeks of implementation, the main activities included:

- Post award orientation was conducted on August 17, 2017
- Home Office staff traveled to Honduras to support start-up:

Staff Member	Dates	Tasks
Hannah Kuntz, Program Coordinator / Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist	09/04-9/29	Began the planning process for the Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis including the desk review; assisted with startup communications products; attended meetings with USAID and key stakeholders; provided general start up support including the recruitment of non-key personnel; and translation of key project documents, etc.
Tom Chesney, Field Operations Director	08/29- 09/08	Initiated the operational start-up efforts; identified temporary office space for a period of two-three months, as well as potential and permanent office space.
Jessica Miranda, Deputy Director for Operations	09/13 – 9/30	Continued operational start-up efforts; assisted with recruitment of staff; supported procurement of equipment and supplies, etc.
Susan Ross, Project Director	09/20 – 10/14	Provided oversight to start up activities and orientation for key personnel; supported the development of the project Year 1 Work Plan; participated in introductory meetings with USAID, counterparts, USAID IPs.
Amaury Cooper, Director of Global Safety & Security	09/20 – 10/04	Conducted operational and facility reviews and assessments of EDC security, logistics, and training of the organization's project in Tegucigalpa; prepared input for Security Situation Plan; conducted an assessment of the temporary office space at Edificio Metrópolis 2 (floor 24) and the permanent office in Centro Morazán.

Note: Claudia Nino de Guzman, Project Financial Analyst provided support to the project remotely.

- The project team moved into the temporary **office space** on September 18 in Torre Metrópolis 2 (Floor 24). In addition, a permanent office space was selected at Centro Morazán, Tegucigalpa (Floor 7). Both locations are near USAID's offices and the other IPs offices. The permanent office was selected due to the building's security, proximity to USAID and other projects, adequate space to accommodate the project's expected staff, and availability of transportation for staff and parking spaces. EDC Security protocol was followed in the selection of both office spaces.

- **The recruitment of local staff** was initiated during this period. Sixteen job profiles were published in two local newspapers: *El Herald* and *La Tribuna*. The profiles were also published through the Sustainable Development Network (*Red Sostenible de Desarrollo*, RDS) and on EDC's recruitment portal. Priority was given to recruiting several positions including: Human Resources/Office Manager, MEL Assistant, Accountant, Communication Manager, Curriculum and Standards Advisor, Teacher Training Advisor, and Materials Development Advisor (see organizational chart in Annex B).
- Coordination meetings were held with the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), Mariella Ruiz-Rodríguez. Meetings involved participation from key personnel and home office staff. Topics of discussion included project documents and defining priorities for implementation: Rapid Mobilization and Quick Start-Up Plan, MEL Plan and Technical Proposal. Based on discussions with the COR, the team is revising or preparing these documents as appropriate.
- Meetings with USAID Program Office staff included:

Date	USAID Point of Contact	HRA Staff	Theme	Result
09/13	Roger Sanchez, M&E Specialist	Megan Gavin, Hannah Kuntz	MEL	Guidance provided on M&E specifics important to USAID for HRA. Initial contact for future coordination.
09/20	Samantha Croasdaile, Communications Officer and Gender Advisor	Hannah Kuntz, Seidda Mendoza and Susan Ross	Gender and Social Inclusion	Technical coordination on: USAID initiatives, and elaboration of Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis and Strategy. Initial contact for future coordination.
09/27	Hector Medrano, Development Outreach & Communications Specialist	Jose Luis Guzman, Hannah Kuntz, and Susan Ross	Branding Strategy and Marking Plan	Guidance on the development of the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan was provided. Initial contact relevant for future coordination.

Note: Additional meetings with other Program Office contacts will take place in upcoming days.

- On September 21, 2017, a meeting was held to introduce the HRA and its team to COPs from several projects already under implementation: *Asegurando la Educación*, Honduras Local Governance, Empleado Futuros, EducAcción, and MIDEH. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a collaboration framework between the HRA and other IPs. The HRA COR, Mariella Ruiz-Rodríguez, opened the meeting, which followed by a presentation from HRA's COP, Jose Luis Guzman, about the projects results and approach. The IPs shared the goals and scopes of their own projects. Key elements for discussion included: collaboration in approaching local and national entities and the importance of adopting a systematic perspective to maximize impact.
- Meetings were held with potential project partners FEREMA (September 22) and IHER (September 23) to discuss USAID feedback on their roles outlined in the technical proposal and necessary revisions.
- HRA participated in planning of the Joint Sector Portfolio Review (JSPR) – see 3.5 below.

Achievements of the Year

- Key personnel is on board.
- Office temporary space is identified and in use by the team; permanent office space has been selected.

- Non-key local staff recruitment process started.
- Initial coordination established with USAID Program Office Points of Contact.
- Initial coordination established with IPs.
- MEL Plan preparation and communication with key contacts (USAID and IPs) is underway.
- Relevant crosscutting topics are embedded at the start of program implementation: gender and social inclusion, risk and security management.
- Key approaches considered at the start-up of the project: a Systemic perspective; for example: PPP, sustainability and capacity building.

Project Activities

Relevant tasks aligned to project result areas are as follows:

Result 1:

- Support provided for the 2017 End of Year Exam, which is conducted by the MOE in coordination with MIDEH. Items to support include: printing materials, supporting training of examiners, and dissemination of the annual report, which will take place in 2018.
- A STTA is planned for October to provide support to R1 activities (Sylvia Thompson).

Result 2:

- A general review of the MOE's reading textbooks (grades 1 to 6) was conducted by the HRA team. This review indicated that the textbooks have some recommended elements for reading comprehension; however, there is a need to strengthen or improve teachers' ability to use these elements in the classroom. Additionally, there is a need to improve the inclusion of elements that favor decoding in the early grades. The findings of this review are consistent with the SSG findings.

Result 3:

- The team reviewed the Assessment on Reading Curriculum & Materials, elaborated by SSG Consultants. In addition, online communication was facilitated to prepare an upcoming workshop (or meeting) with the MOE's technical team expected to take place in the second week of October. This assessment is a key input for planning and conducting an update of reading curriculum, standards, teacher guides, and textbooks.
- Taking advantage of the meeting with Ms. Iris Martinez (Reading Specialist at the DGDP/MOE), the HRA team discussed and strategized about the following topics: transformation of Normal Schools into Professional Development Centers; teacher training strategies at the district and department levels; links between teacher training and research; and the role of pedagogical advisors.

Result 4:

- No activities are reported.

Cross-Cutting Activities

- HRA supported the planning process for the Joint Sector Portfolio Review (JSPR), which is a joint initiative between USAID and the MOE under a Partnership Framework established to facilitate close coordination between the GOH and IPs. The purpose of the JSPR is to observe activities in the field, exchange directly

with local stakeholders (including departments, municipalities, MOE's regional entities, school networks, schools and communities) and promote synergies between interventions. Three specific activities included:

- Preparation of concept note on the JSPP.
- Participation in a planning meeting with USAID team and IPs¹ on September 18 at *Empleando Futuros* Office.
- A preliminary meeting with Iris Martínez (Reading Specialist at the DGDP/MOE) to start preparing a visit to the Regional Teacher Training Center located in La Paz with coverage of six departments in western Honduras. This visit was included in the proposed agenda for the JSPP.

Several crosscutting activities are under way:

- Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis desk review conducted.
- Preparation of Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.
- Preparation of Security Situation Plan.
- Planning of STTA in reference to: trauma-informed and school violence prevention (Heidi Kar) and PPPs (Kit Yasin), which will take place in October.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

The Senior MEL Specialist participated in two teleconferences with USAID, MIDEH and EducAcción to plan for the End of Year Assessment and the Associated Factors Study. Discussion included strategies to overcome the challenge of insufficient financing for reproduction, packaging, distribution, application and entry of data for the End of Year Assessment, as well as the types of questions to be included in the Associated Factors Study instrument.

In addition, the Senior MEL Specialist participated in a meeting with MIDEH at the MOE. MIDEH explained its current work, discussed the End of Year Assessment and Associated Factors Study. The Senior MEL Specialist also met with the COR and the M&E Specialist from USAID to understand the MEL priorities of the project and revised the Associated Factors Study instrument; changes were submitted to USAID in a PDF.

Following the meeting to introduce the HRA to IPs (mentioned above), the MEL Specialist wrote directly to each COP in order to obtain contact information for each project's M&E Specialist. This request served to schedule a series of information sharing meetings with each M&E Unit from each IP Activity. Exchanges transpired and meetings were planned for October 2017.

The MEL Specialist also travelled to EDC's Home Office to meet with EDC's Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Team in Washington, DC. There, she spoke with the team regarding the MEL Plan, as well as colleagues responsible for social emotional learning, materials and curriculum development and EDC's approach to reading- Read Right Now! Lastly, the MEL Specialist has supported revision of the Rapid Mobilization and Quick Start-up Plan and the technical proposal.

¹ USAID team: Mariella Ruiz-Rodríguez, Ana Carolina Rubí, Grazzia Maria Mendoza, Roger Sanchez and Renán Rápalo. IPs representatives: MIDEH (Russbel Hernández), EducAcción (Ligia Aguilar); HRA (Jose Luis Guzman and Seidda Mendoza), (HLG) María Fernanda Martínez and Asegurando la Educación (Shanna O'Reilly), and Empleando Futuros (Paul Teeple).

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Coordination with IPs: Introductory meetings with IPs have reinforced the importance of collaboration in technical areas, operations, and monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure efficient use of resources (time, technical, material, data, security, etc.) by projects and counterparts.
- Coordination with the MOE: Considering plans to initiate activities in the upcoming school year (starting in February 2018), coordination with the MOE will begin formally early in the next quarter with the meeting with the SSG consultants and with the JSPP activity. A challenge is to move forward into implementation while ensure effective coordination with the MOE.
- Coordination with the MOE and IPs is critical to ensure that the HRA reinforces what works and adds value on the basis of evidence and good practices to improve reading learning outcomes are maintained and improved.

Annex A: Deliverables for This Period Include

Deliverable	Status
Rapid Mobilization and Startup Plan	Draft submitted on August 25, 2017. A revised draft was submitted on September 12, 2017. USAID provided feedback on September 26, 2017; Plan has not been officially approved.
1 Year 1 Work Plan	Due date Thursday, September 21, 2017. Extension received for October 30, 2017.
Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan	Draft submitted on September 25, 2017. Note: Per the guidelines in the template, HRA activities would not have an environmental impact; comments from the Mission's specialists will be considered if needed.

Annex B: Organizational Chart

Honduras Reading Activity Organizational Chart

