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HONDURAS PROYECTO MIDEH

MIDEH PROJECT
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ACRONYMS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
DCNB	National Basic Curriculum Design
DGCE	Dirección General de Currículo y Evaluación
EFA	Education for All /Educación Para Todos
EOG	End of grade test
GOH	Government of Honduras
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIDEH	Proyecto Mejorando el Impacto al Desempeño Estudiantil de Honduras
SDGEE	Sub-Dirección General de Evaluación Educativa
SE	Ministry of Education/Secretaría de Educación
UNAH	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras
UPNFM	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

During this fourth quarter of FY 2017, MIDEH has made significant progress in training national staff so that they can continue the technical implementation of standardized assessments of student learning. However, despite its initiatives, MIDEH staff have not yet been able to obtain ministerial approval to create the General Sub-Directorate for Education Evaluation (SDGEE).

I. PROJECT SUMMARY UPDATE

Since its inception, the MIDEH Project, implemented by American Institutes for Research (AIR) and financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided strong technical support to the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Honduras to create, develop, and promote a standards-based educational assessment system.

During its implementation, the project has strengthened the Honduran education system by building a culture of standards-based assessment. In the last few years (2011-2016), the MIDEH Project worked within the framework of four results:

Result 1: Technical Capacity to Reach EFA Goals under MOE Leadership Strengthened

Result 2: Institutionalizing Educational Quality Inputs

Result 3: Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Supporting Education

Result 4: Research and Monitoring

For the extension period (November 2016 through May 2018), MIDEH activities will focus on the first two results. This report focuses on activities carried out under these results during the third quarter of 2017.

Result 1: Technical Capacity to Reach EFA Goals under SE Leadership Strengthened

Result 1 activities include adapting and improving the content standards for Spanish and mathematics, and ensuring alignment of the monthly formative tests and guidelines for using formative assessments with the National Basic Curriculum Design (DCNB). MIDEH provided the MOE with technical support to develop standardized tests for assessing student academic achievement in Spanish and mathematics (1st through 9th grades). In addition, MIDEH helped monitor national educational progress, supported accountability of the education sector, and provided information to decision makers and policy makers.

MIDEH has also encouraged educational authorities' participation in central, departmental, district, and school level activities by inviting them to attend various workshops on the standards-based assessment system. In these workshops, the participants developed competencies that they used to carry out training and disseminate knowledge in their respective areas of influence. The local educational authorities also used the end-of-grade test results to develop and implement interventions that can lead

to improving education quality.

Result 2: Educational Quality Inputs Institutionalized

Result 2 involves building technical capacity in national institutions linked to education evaluation work, particularly the General Directorate of Curriculum and Evaluation (DGCE) in the MOE, staff from other departments in the MOE, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH), Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán (UPNFM) and educational projects.

The MIDEH project staff has encouraged the Government of Honduras (GOH) to be more involved in planning and institutionalizing academic assessment activities by creating an independent institute for assessment. In 2012, several key decision-makers within the MOE, the National Congress, the Presidential Commission for Educational Reform, the Secretariat of the Presidency, and Secretariat of General Government Coordination agreed that creating this institute was a necessity.

After analyzing its options, the GOH, through the MOE, agreed that creating an independent institute was not feasible, and determined that the most viable strategy for ensuring sustainability of the assessment system is to strengthen the national capacity in assessment, especially within the MOE. To achieve this, the MOE agreed to create a General Sub-Directorate for Education Evaluation (SDGEE) housed within the General Directorate of Curriculum and Evaluation (DGCE/SE). MIDEH will train SDGEE technical staff for 18 months to enable them to lead the country in the standards based assessment process.

II. EDUCATION SECTOR CONTEXT

When the new Minister of Education, Dr. Rutilia Calderón, assumed office in February of this year, there were certain expectations within the education sector. The media reported on possible policy changes from those previously implemented by the previous minister, Dr. Marlon Escoto, particularly with respect to the new educational assessment model, the extended school day, and maximum working hours for teachers, among others. However, over the past several months, these changes have not yet taken place, and the expectations of change have decreased significantly.

An important education sector development this quarter has been a call for a competitive selection process for teaching positions, both at the primary and middle school levels. For the first time in the education sector in Honduras, there is a requirement for teachers entering the field to hold a university bachelor's degree becoming a teacher within the Honduran education system teacher is a bachelor's degree at the university level.

During this period, the MIDEH team presented the Report on Education Progress in Honduras from 2010 to 2015, as well as a book on research in education and public policy. This research will provide education authorities at the central and department level with information on the Honduras education system and will allow them make decisions based on evidence.

III. MAJOR ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AND PROGRESS TOWARD RESULTS

The primary aim of the MIDEH Project during its final year is to hand over technical capacities of the MIDEH project to the MOE and to achieve sustainability in the standards-based educational assessment system. To that end, the MIDEH Project focuses on planning and implementing activities as outlined in Results 1 and 2.

Result 1: Technical Capacity to Reach EFA/EPT goal under SE leadership strengthened

The MIDEH Project continues to work toward promoting a culture of assessment and achieving educational goals through a greater use of the end of grade assessment. This includes both national and international assessments. Based on assessment results, education policies and improvement plans can be designed at the national, departmental, district, municipal, school and grade level and/or section levels.

1.1 Strengthen the capacity of the MOE and the General Sub-Directorate for Educational Evaluation (SDGEE) to analyze and interpret data obtained from student performance assessments (sample, census and international) in order to promote evidence based decision making that will help Honduras achieve post-EFA learning goals

Even though the SDGEE has not yet been established by the end of this quarter, MIDEH has continued training MOE staff, particularly staff from the DGCE, as well as staff who have been hired in the short term before incorporated to become part of the SDGEE. To this end, MIDEH staff have developed 3-5 day training workshops for groups of 30 to 60 people, as well as providing daily coaching to staff who remain in the MIDEH project office.

The main training events for Result 1.1 are described below.

1. During the first week of August and the final week of September, project staff developed three modules for the training on “Systematization of successful, innovative education experiences designed to improve academic performance in Spanish and mathematics.” The training was provided to 34 participants from the Sub-Directorate of Curriculum and Evaluation of 18 Department Directorates of Education in Honduras. The Minister of Education was present for the kick-off of the training, and promised to attend the closing to receive the final outputs of the training. Throughout the three modules, participants received 56 hours of training, in addition to the hours of work the participants have invested in systematizing an education experience in their region in order to present their findings as final workshop product.
2. During the second week of July, MIDEH developed a course on “Statistical Inference” for MOE technical staff at the central and local levels. This 40-hour workshop was attended by 31 participants from the DGCE, Department Directorates of Education, and the SDGEE.

3. At the end of July, MIDEH staff conducted a training on the “Basic Principles of Programming,” which also targeted MOE staff at central and local levels. This 40-hour workshop was attended by 29 people.
4. On August 23 (in Tegucigalpa) and 25 (San Pedro Sula), MIDEH staff presented the book on Education and Public Policy Research, which comprises seven studies that contributes to the existing body of knowledge on primary education in Honduras . The book also contains an epilogue that systematizes the lessons learned and recommended changes to policy that would improve the quality of education in Honduras. The research findings are an important input that can help education authorities make decisions based on evidence.

The book release event included a panel of experts, such as Julio Raudales, the Vice-Chancellor of International Relations at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH); Marlon Brevé Reyes, the Chancellor of the Universidad Tecnológico Centroamericana (UNITEC); and Rolando Sierra, professor and researcher at UNAH. Dr. Sierra is also the coordinator of FLACSO Honduras, which promotes the use of research to make decisions and design education policy.

294 people attended the event in Tegucigalpa, while 245 people attended the event in San Pedro Sula. Participants included authorities from the central MOE office, directors of different departments within the MOE, civil society organizations, university administrators and professors, postgraduate students in the education sector, and the media.

1.2 Accompany the SDGEE / SE in the socialization of the results of the 2016 and 2017 end-of-grade assessments, with the central MOE staff (DGCE, UPEG, DGDGP) decentralized level staff (Departmental and District Departments of Education), and civil society

MIDEH staff provide training to the technical and managerial staff in SDGEE/SE so that they can plan and implement the above-mentioned socialization events for the 2016 EOG test results, and later for 2017 EOG test results. The MIDEH Project has developed different *polimedias* (digital videos) as a tool to train SDGEE and other MOE department staff (both central and deconcentrated) to replicate the EOG evaluation training workshops. MIDEH will also train SDGEE/SE staff so that they learn to design and use their own *polimedias* to disseminate student performance assessment results, as well as other assessments.

According to MIDEH’s planned approach, SDGEE and MIDEH staff organized and implemented events for the workshop “*Use of the test evaluation results for decision-making and adjusting the annual operation plans*” was held in Tegucigalpa on July 4-6. This workshop was implemented with 43 MOE staff from various departments. During the workshop, MIDEH and SDGEE staff addressed many topics, including standardized education evaluation, Education for All (EFA) goals and post-EFA challenges, interpretation and use of test evaluation results, factors associated with student academic

performance, students in the department of Ocotepeque, experiences on the use of MIDEH's standardized evaluation results, and a review and adjustment of annual operation plans based on student academic performance results.

1.3. Provide technical assistance to the MOE and the General Sub-Directorate for Education Evaluation (SDGEE) in the development of education improvement plans by central, departmental, municipal and school level education staff

For IR 1.3, MIDEH will develop a training workshop for staff from the SDGEE, the DGCE and other units of the MOE on developing school improvement plans and monitoring tools to carry out follow-up visits on the improvement plans.

MIDEH project staff conducted training in the western region of Honduras from August 30 – September 2. The visit was carried out in the municipalities of Yarula, Santa Ana y San Juan del Departamento de La Paz, Santa Rosa, La Jigua y Cabañas del Departamento de Copán y San Francisco de Opalaca, San Marcos de la Sierra y Dolores del Departamento de Intibucá. Project staff monitored municipal directors, principals, and teachers' activities, which were intended to disseminate academic performance results for 2015 and 2016, implement the improvement plans at the municipal level, and develop and implement school improvement plans. Municipal governments, parents, and civil society also participated in these activities.

Result 2: Institutionalizing Education Quality Inputs

2.1. Implement the Sub-Directorate General of Education Evaluation (SDGEE/SE)

The fundamental purpose of extending the MIDEH Project was to strengthen Honduras' national capacities in standards-based academic evaluation by establishing an evaluation unit. Beginning in 2018, this team will take the lead in conducting both national and international student performance assessments. The Project's established agreement with the MOE stipulated that this work will be carried out by a unit within the MOE that will co-locate with MIDEH Project and be immersed in the work for about 18 months.

2.1.1. The Secretary of Education creates and establishes the SDGEE/SE with a mandate to administer end-of-grade student achievement assessments

MIDEH's leadership, with the support of USAID's head of the Education Office, Mariella Ruíz-Rodríguez, has promoted the creation of the SDGEE. During informal talks at different events, Dr. Calderón has reiterated her commitment to creating the SDGEE, as well as creating 4 to 6 permanent positions to absorb the personnel that are currently working and being trained under MIDEH.

2.1.2. The Directorate General for Curriculum and Evaluation (DGCE), the Administrative Management, as well as the Minister of Education, make arrangements for the operating funds of the SDGEE to be included in the GOH budget for 2017 and following years.

This sub-IR 2.1.2 requires budget management both for the creation of permanent posts for SDGEE staff, as well as budget resources to needed implement different educational assessments in Honduras.

The end of grade evaluation tests will take place in the beginning of November. The test will be conducted on a sample of schools that is representative at the municipal level, as occurred in 2015. This implies a sample size of 2,498 schools and 321,315 students, which means that it will be necessary to train 4,414 supervisors at the national level, and 2,498 principals. The funding for this entire process was coordinated between the MOE and various USAID-funded projects. The tests were scheduled to take place at the end of October, but the MOE's administrative processes delayed the start of training for all staff that will be involved at the national level.

2.2 *Transfer technical capacity and knowledge to the SDGEE/SE*

MIDEH is currently providing technical, financial, and administrative support to DGCE staff in organizing the 2017 end of grade tests. The team's efforts this quarter focused on planning, implementing, and monitoring the necessary technical aspects to guarantee the proper administration of the 2017 end of grade test. The SDGEE team has obtained valuable experience during their training, which will ensure the sustainability of standardized evaluation in Honduras.

2.2.1. *The core assessment and psychometric related functions currently provided by the MIDEH Project are transferred and institutionalized within the SDGEE*

Transferring and strengthening the technical capacities of the SDEE and DGCE on the fundamental functions of standards-based assessment requires several types of training. MIDEH and DGCE personnel therefore carried out a series of coordinated activities for the 2017 end-of-grade assessment – from planning and implementing the assessment, to analyzing data. During this quarter, MIDEH has carried out the following activities:

1. Developed test specifications and analysis from ItemBanker for each standard in each area and grade.
2. Selected the sample at the national level for the 2017 end of grade test application and data cleaning.
3. Selected the operational and anchor items for each form.
4. Wrote and assigned item identifiers to field test items, including items to assess writing.
5. Assembly of operational test forms.
6. Layout and editing of operational tests.
7. Print the tests and their corresponding supervision.

2.2.2 *Ensure national capacity to provide valid, reliable and timely statistical information, including interpretations and recommendations through reports on the results of student performance assessments*

This quarter, project staff conducted two workshops with the aim of strengthening national capacity for statistical analysis of standardized tests. The first workshop addressed basic and inferential statistics from July 10-14, and the second addressed basic programming principles from July 24-28. Both workshops aimed to train MOE technical personnel, as well as technical personnel from other institutions who are directly involved in the process of assessing student academic performance. The expectation is that participants will share their experiences with other professionals in the country, thereby sustaining the system of assessment that has been developed in Honduras. Participants came from a variety of MOE departments at the central and local levels, as well as from UNAH.

During the present quarter, MIDEH staff developed 3 modules of 40 hours each, corresponding to the Masters in Psychometry and Education Assessment at UNAH. The purpose of the certificate is to develop academic and professional competencies in the field of psychometrics among teachers, professionals, and researchers. Participants included 29 people from the DGCE, the 18 Department Directorates of Education, and UNAH. A fourth module will be implemented next quarter.

In these three modules, the participants successfully designed valid and reliable measuring instruments. With these instruments, they can apply appropriate education assessment techniques and psychometric measurements, as well as design strategies for using and communicating psychometric data.

2.3. The national institution (SDGEE/ SE) assumes full responsibility for the student performance evaluation in which the MIDEH Project provides supervision and accompaniment in the administration of end-of-grade assessments.

The Project is providing on-the-job training to the staff that have been recently incorporated into the project, including one person for psychometry, two math specialists, two Spanish specialist, on specialist for training and monitoring. This staff will later form part of the assessment unit (SDGEE). Technical staff from the MIDEH project, both based in Honduras and from AIR Washington D.C. have participated as facilitators in the training. The new staff share physical space with the MIDEH team and participate in daily project activities.

2.4. Complete documentation and systematization of the main and psychometric functions related to the evaluation of student performance currently provided by MIDEH Project

The MIDEH Project has been working on developing a variety of materials such as manuals, guides, videos and *polimedias*, to illustrate the assessment process, and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills to the staff of the SDGEE, the DGCE and other units of the MOE, as well as other actors related to academic performance assessment.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

During the Project's final year, MIDEH has emphasized developing national human resources that will ensure the sustainability of the standardized evaluation of learning. As part of this approach, MIDEH staff has maintained communication with technical teams at Department Directorates of Education to continue to foment a culture of assessment in the education system.

The biggest risks during this time are a delay in creating the SDGEE and establishing the positions for permanent staff. These could put at risk the continuity of staff that are currently working and being trained under MIDEH to become part of the assessment unit. To mitigate this risk, MIDEH has worked with USAID's Mariella Ruiz-Rodríguez to emphasize the urgent need for the Minister of Education to create the SDGEE.

V. COORDINATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

MIDEH staff has met with various representatives from other USAID-funded projects with the aim of coordinating the financial and logistical aspects of the end of grade test administration. The meetings also addressed a study of factors associated with student academic performance, which will be implemented simultaneously among municipal and department directors, principals, students and teachers in grades four, six, and eight.

VI. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT QUARTER

For the first quarter of FY 2018, several activities are planned with the aim of transferring skills to MOE staff. Result 1 and Result 2 planned activities include:

1. A course on basics of using statistical software (SPSS)
2. A course on the analysis of test data
3. Workshop on associated factors and their practical application
4. The final module for the Certificate in Psychometry and Evaluation.
5. Two courses for the Masters in Psychometry and Education Evaluation.

VII. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

This quarter, MIDEH's expenditures totaled \$438,495. The cumulative cost share stands at an estimate of \$5.5 million, thus exceeding the requirement of the Cooperative Agreement.

At the end of September 2017, the estimated project pipeline stood at \$950,316, corresponding to total funds needed for about 2.33 quarters. The MIDEH Project has documented \$5,588,579 in cumulative cost share through September 30th, 2017, from partners including municipalities, NGOs, the MOE, and counterpart funding from the Common Fund and other donors. Though the project has exceeded the cost share requirements, it continues to document additional contributions from sub-grant recipients and other partner organizations.

MIDEH Project (July-September 2017)	
Total Estimated Contract	\$ 13,252,521
Total Obligated to date (Mod #7)	\$ 13,252,521
Pipeline at beginning of the quarter (July 1, 2017)	\$ 1,388,810
Expenses during the reporting period	\$ 438,495
Unexpended pipeline at the end of the quarter (September 30, 2017)	\$ 950,316
Estimated expense burn rate for the next quarter (October-December 2017)	\$ 468,534
Estimated pipeline quarters	2.33

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: SUMMARY PERFORMANCE DATA TABLE (INDICATOR BASELINE, TARGET AND ACTUAL VALUES)

AO, IR or Sub-IR	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Disaggregation	Sex		Quarter 2		Calendar Year 2017		Performance Ranking
				Male	Female	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Result 1: Better Educated People										
R.2.1.1 Initiating the Sub-directorate General of Education Evaluation operations	1. Creation of the Sub-directorate General of Education Evaluation (SDGEE) within the Secretary of Education to administer a national system of evaluation based on standards	Number	N/A	–	–	1	0-	0**	0 ¹	
	2. Creating budgetary structures needed to hire personnel of the Sub-directorate General of Education Evaluation (SDGEE)	Number		–	–	0	0	4**	1 ²	-

¹ The Minister of Education has committed to creating the sub-directorate this year, and the General Director of Evaluation already sent a draft of the Creation Agreement.

² The Minister of Education has committed to creating space for 4-5 permanent posts within the budget for SDGEE for this year. She has already assigned a person from the General Directorate of Evaluation who is being trained by MIDEH Project staff.

AO, IR or Sub-IR	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Disaggregation	Sex		Quarter 2		Calendar Year 2017		Performance Ranking
				Male	Female	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
R.2.1.2 The SE will require and manage funds to run SDGEE/SE	3. Annual budget allocation of the GOH for the implementation of the processes of evaluation of the end-of-grade tests.	Amount in US Dollars (\$)	Funds Source	–	–			.5 million	0.49 ³	
R.1.2. Accompany the SDGEE/ SE in the socialization of end of grade results	4. Number of events/ activities dissemination of external evaluation results executed by the SDGEE	Number	By type of activity	–	–	0	3	3**	7**	
R.2.2.1. Central and psychometric functions related to the evaluation will be transferred are institutionalized by the DGEE/SE	5. Participation from personnel from the Sub-directorate General of Education Evaluation (SDGEE) and DGCE in academic performance evaluation training	Percentage		–	–	80	100	80**	100	

³ This number only counts the approved amount of funds, but the Minister has committed to making arrangements with the Secretary of Finance to increase the budget and implement the end of grade student evaluations for 2017, with representativeness at the municipal level.

AO, IR or Sub-IR	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Disaggregation	Sex		Quarter 2		Calendar Year 2017		Performance Ranking
				Male	Female	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
	6. Level of direct participation from the Sub-Directorate General of Education Evaluation (SDGEE) in activities related to the end of grade evaluation process.	Percentage	Per component of the SDGEE	–	–	50	60	50**	60	
R.2.3. The national institution assumes full responsibility for carrying out the academic performance evaluation.	7. Percentage of the Sub-Directorate General of Education Evaluation capacity to implement end of grade evaluation process.	Percentage	Per area/ activity	–	–	0	-	0**	**	
	8. Percentage of key informants that express trust in the evaluation process executed by the Sub-directorate General of Education Evaluation.	Percentage at each level	Per process/ activity	–	–	0	-	0**	**	
IR.2.4. Full systematic documentation of principal activities pertaining to academic performance evaluations	9. Documentation of the processes and functions that MIDEH Project has been carrying out.	Number	Manuals/ <i>polimédias</i>	–	–	0	–	0**	**	

AO, IR or Sub-IR	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Disaggregation	Sex		Quarter 2		Calendar Year 2017		Performance Ranking
				Male	Female	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
	<p>10. Academic Performance in Spanish (Context indicator)</p> <p>Percentage of students at satisfactory and advanced performance levels</p>	Percentage	By gender					<p>Grade 1: Spanish: 81%</p> <p>Grade 2: Spanish: 74%</p> <p>Grade 3: Spanish: 38%</p> <p>Grade 4: Spanish: 45%</p> <p>Grade 5: Spanish: 77%</p> <p>Grade 6: Spanish: 36%</p> <p>Grade 7: Spanish: 35%</p> <p>Grade 8: Spanish: 48%</p> <p>Grade 9: Spanish: 34%</p>	***	

AO, IR or Sub-IR	Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Disaggregation	Sex		Quarter 2		Calendar Year 2017		Performance Ranking
				Male	Female	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
	11. Academic Performance in Mathematics (Context indicator) Percentage of students at satisfactory and advanced performance levels	Percentage	By gender					Grade 1: Mathematics: 78% Grade 2: Mathematics: 61% Grade 3: Mathematics: 37% Grade 4: Mathematics: 34% Grade 5: Mathematics: 19% Grade 6: Mathematics: 12% Grade 7: Mathematics: 7% Grade 8: Mathematics: 4% Grade 9: Mathematics: 7%	***	

** This indicator will start to be executed in 2017, as is established in the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP)

*** This indicator was executed in late 2016, but will be reported in the first trimester of 2017.