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Title and date of evaluation report:	Mid-Term Evaluation Report for project PDI-Bol. 10585 "Capacity-Building of FES Schools in Bolivia", actions 2007 – 2009. June 2009
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1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT(S)

Project Name and Number:	PDI-Bol. 10585 "Capacity-Building of FES Schools in Bolivia"
Associated Organization:	Foundation for Education and Service (FES)
Starting year:	March 2007
Principal Objective:	The objective of the project is to elevate the level of knowledge of the students who study at these schools. The principal objective in this phase is it improve the quality of teaching (Corrected terms of reference Norway 14-01)
Accumulated Costs:	

Principal Activities

In order to obtain the desired results, four fundamental strategies (pillars) have been established for the preparation, implementation, execution, and follow-up of this project:

a) Participation of the Educative community:

The active participation of the "educative community" is sought. This is realized through Development Committees that bring together parents, teachers, students, and authorities. (Five-Year Strategic Project for Institutional Development)

b) Qualification of Personnel:

A training program is being carried out for all personnel (teachers, directors, and administrative personnel) from the 23 educative units pertaining to MSLB/FES on the use of technology and research to solve the problems that one comes across each day. The training is carried out by the Bolivian Evangelical University. The plan focuses on four areas: Principles and values, Research, Classroom Managements, and Society and Cultural. There are two course options. Option A includes 23 classes, 77 credits, lasts three years, requires a thesis for graduates, and results in the granting of the title of Bachelor's in Education. Option B consists of a total of 11 classes, is oriented towards teachers who already have their Bachelor's Degree or who are close to retirement, lasts three years, and results in an intermediate certificate of training being granted to participants at the end of the training program. (Five-Year Strategic Project for Institutional Development)

c) Equipping and specializing the classroom

The aim is to develop classrooms into true learning laboratories by equipping them with customized libraries in accordance with the subjects taught and with sufficient teaching and audio-visual materials to facilitate and stimulate the work of the teacher and the students. (Five-Year Strategic Project for Institutional Development)

d) Up-dating and ensuring appropriateness of plans and programs of study

It is planned that plans of study will be brought up to date in accordance with the students' learning needs and with the demands of scientific and technological advances. Coordinating committees consisting of teachers organized by curricular areas will work to make these changes. (Five-Year Strategic Project for Institutional Development)

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2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

- ¿Who initiated the evaluation?

According to the Engineer Luis Fernando Mercado (Executive Director of the project), the external evaluation of the project was initiated upon instructions from Norway in coordination with the missionary Ingrid Vatne.

- ¿Why was the evaluation initiated?

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to measure the effect on the users (results) and the social impact (impact) of the project's activities in their current form, in order to see if the project is achieving its objectives. The evaluation should be the basis for possible extension and expansion of the project in terms of new modules of seminars or course for the new groups of teachers. (Corrected terms of reference Norway 14-01).

- If an external consultant was used, why?

The services of two consultants have been contracted: René Urbina S. (Bolivia) and Kjell E. Barreth (Norway). As the consultants, we imagine that the reasons had to do with compliance with the norms and recommendations of the BN: to contract persons who are not overly closely linked with the mission organization (Evaluation Strategy for the Norway Interdenominational Office of Cooperation for Development (BN) and the Missionary Organizations of Norway. Sept. 2001. context and challenges, pgs. 5 and 17)

- Principal questions addressed

Analyze the effect of the seminar modules in order to confirm whether objectives for impact on the quality of teaching have been reached.

- Project period evaluated

The evaluation corresponds to the period March 2007 – March 2009.

3. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS / PRINCIPAL RESULTS

The principal findings of the evaluation are presented in three blocks of information: positive aspects in terms of concrete achievements, somewhat positive aspects in terms of processes, and negative aspects in terms of results not yet achieved.

Positive aspects achieved by the project:

- Four very important aspects of the “Program for Teacher Development” can be highlighted: the first is the quality of the training program carried out by the Bolivian Evangelical University, the second is the level of academic results, the third is the program's staff of professors, and the fourth is the enthusiasm and satisfaction that the participating teachers themselves express in regards to their participation in the program.

In regards to the quality of the program, we were able to perceive the carrying out of a curricular plan focused on solving classroom problems through productive competencies, oriented towards principles and values, in a semi-distance-learning format that works well for teachers who have little free time.

The average marks earned by the teachers participating in the training program are satisfactory, ranging from 76-78 out of 100 points (76-78%). Some teachers, especially among the women teachers participating, have earned extremely high marks. For example, there are teachers who

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have earned marks of 80% or higher in all of the ten courses they have taken so far. Moreover, as a result of the trainings some teachers are carrying out research on general learning problems at their Educative Units (schools). In the opinion of the project technicians, these research activities are proof that it is possible to contextualize the curriculum.

The staff of professors from the university has been carefully selected in compliance with the standards required by the project. They have also been trained in using the methodology and the teaching guides. The teachers participating in the program have the following to say about their professors:

“They are very accessible and open to project participants. They treat us very well. We solve problems by working together.”

“In regards to the schedule, they try to pick the best option for the majority. But for some people it’s hard.”

“I see collaboration and willingness to listen to us on the part of the Administration. They show their desire to solve problems, and have done everything they possibly can. They’re great people both on the personal and professional levels.”

The teachers are in generally very motivated, as the following testimonies show:

“We’ve learned to prepare our plans in a way that includes productive competencies. In other words, we formulate our own productive competencies.”

“I was discouraged and wanted to quit, but then I found out I was getting good grades, so I continued with my studies.”

“The parents are happy, and they support us.”

Some teachers say that while finishing the course will not bring them increased economic benefits, it will given them knowledge that will enable them to contribute to and serve the community.

- Another important factor to point out is that each of the Educative Units (schools) has its own “Institutional Development Plans” (PDI) written up well and in detail. These plans cover various aspects of the duty to educate in relation to the institution’s identity, organization, management, pedagogical and curricular aspects, and evaluation systems. The plans are complements by manuals outlining duties.
- At the educative units (schools) that we’ve visited, we’ve verified that parents are satisfied with the effort to acquire technological equipment in accordance with the development planned. Some parents say that with great effort they’ve doubled the amount they contribute to the school in order to reach the local funding goal.
- The writing of the “Manual of Functions and Responsibilities for the Project PDI-Bol. 10585” is significant and praiseworthy. This manual will regulate the functions and powers of the CEN, the project coordinators, the national project directorship, the executive directorship of projects, the national technical consulting team, the pedagogical techniques and processes consultant, the accountant, and the administrative assistant to achieve improved performance.

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Somewhat positive aspects that are still in process:

- About 60% of the students are optimistic about the impact of the project, stating that they perceive some change in the attitudes of educative units' (schools') teachers and directors. One gave this testimony: "They have explained to us and consulted with us about the PDI (the school's Plan for Institutional Development). Before, you wouldn't see the director sitting down with students to hear their opinions, but now he/she does."
- One of the principal results worth pointing out that is still in the process of consolidation is the construction of "Educative Communities," which are beginning to participate more actively by the month in the exercise of co-management of the educative units (schools). The communities' level of representativeness of (students, teachers, administrators, and especially parents) and involvement have the potential to make these communities into the pillars of the project's sustainability.
- Among FES executives a will to improve processes and, above all, to link the local church to the project, can be perceived, as these testimonies show:

"We are working to get the churches interested in what goes on in the schools."

"We have to teach them that this isn't about bringing high schools to the pulpit."

"The churches aren't aware of the project, but we want to work on that."

"[We want to] work with church leaders even though the members of local churches aren't accustomed to this kind of work."

- It's worth mentioning that of the eight elements that will guarantee the sustainability of the project (development of strategic alliances, strategic planning, continuous technical consultation and assessment, transparent administration, management and finances carried out by professionals, in-country [financial] contribution, and complementary funding), the following four are in the process of consolidation:

Development of **strategic alliances** with the **PYM**, some local municipal governments, and parents;

Strategic planning carried out by the management teams, although these still are not well consolidated;

Planning instruments (PDIs) that the schools have for the most part succeeded in writing up;

And the **national contribution**, carried out through local donations.

Negative aspects in terms of results not yet achieved:

Due to social dynamics, to date it has not been possible to fully achieve many of the objectives.

- The development and execution of the teacher training program still manifests certain second-order problems. It has been verified that there have been delays in sending of students'

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homework via email and the virtual platform, and in some cases these delays have been very serious. There are various reasons for these delays, including the professors' lack of practice and familiarity with these media, and in some cases the poor [Internet] services available in rural communities. Nevertheless, the university is making significant efforts to solve these problems.

- The information compiled shows that in some educative units (schools), the level of participation by parents has been weak because, due to social dynamics, some parents are unaware of the project and the project has not succeeded in developing sufficient comprehension among them of the project's aims. Some teachers claim that the parents were not included in the project, as the following testimonies indicate:

"We have erred in failing to include the parents from the start."

"The project is very good, but very difficult. We should have started with the parents. We need to start with the parents."

- While it is true that seven of the eight educative units (schools) evaluated have audio-visual equipment, for various reasons not all of this equipment is functioning properly. In six of the schools where the equipment has been installed, the equipment is not fully functioning in compliance with the standards required by the project. It may be that the lack of technical personnel, the lack of a plan for monitoring and evaluation, and the very dispersed locations of the educative units are inhibiting the process of accompaniment and risk anticipation.
- To date, the project has not clearly identified who is responsible for maintenance and replacement of the equipment acquired, although we supposed that these costs will be assumed by the educative communities and the local municipalities.
- The testimonies of both educative unit personnel and parents coincide in suggesting that the classrooms are overly filled with students. Some teachers believe it is necessary to expand the classrooms and obtain more school supplies, since the classrooms are overburdened with an average of 40 students per classroom. This is another of the critical so-called "boomerang effect" problems, since as the quality of education increases, the demand for enrollment also increases, and, on the other hand, if an unplanned increase in the population occurs, this directly contributes to a decrease in the level of educational quality. If this is happening in these educative units, efforts to improve educational quality will be in vain. This situation merits the development of management efforts to define a plan for the long-term development of the Educative units.
- In reviewing the minutes of **CEN** meetings, we found a dispersion [or lack of focus] in the topics covered, and a lack of follow-up on the topics. We did not find an agenda of intentions to approach strategic matters, nor do there appear to be follow-up reports from the employees. The executives of the CEN themselves say that there is a lack of coordination among them (*Book of Minutes of the CEN. Act No. 16, 1st of April, 2008*). One CEN member had the following to say: "We have the authority to oversee the process. We would like to have more means to carry out follow-up. We haven't been able to *arrive*. We should have a budget."

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4. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the magnitude of the achievements proposed by this project in terms of impact on the national education system, and due to the form in which the project's principal activities have been in relation to the Program for Teachers' Professional Development (PDPD), it is important and urgent to overcome four weaknesses: to seek to strengthen the dynamics of the relationships between the teachers who are participating in the course with the university professors, to generate greater agility in the process of technical follow-up and facilitation at the educative units (schools), to deepen long-term strategic alliances, and, finally, to generate greater, conscientious participation of the educative community. Thus, it is recommended that the following measures be taken:

- Incorporate a course into the curricular plan for the Program for Teachers' Professional Development that makes it possible to understand the nature, benefits, extents, and above all, the way of putting into practice the functions that will guarantee accessibility and flexibility for improved command of the virtual work platform by the teachers participating in the program, in accordance with three criteria: flexibility, simplicity, and low cost. These virtual platforms should provide "work tables" that allow for the exchange of information between group members, options that make it possible to communicate personally with the professor and/or the program coordinator, and options that make it possible to provide, access, and share information whenever the student needs to. This whole system should be coordinated by a technician who will ensure fulfillment of the students' responsibilities to the course's professor.
- Due to the wide geographic space covered, which increases the costs of operation, and due to the insufficient number of supervisory visits to the educative units, it is extremely necessary to incorporate at least two more people into the technical team. These people will provide urgently needed integral technical assistance to the educative units. It will also be necessary to develop technical plans for monitoring and evaluation, including the respective formal follow-up instruments in terms of feedback to verify changes in the processes.
- Since sustainability is a critical aspect of social projects, it is recommended that the project seek consolidation of long-term strategic alliances capable of influencing public policies through channels of power and decision-making available through local municipalities, departmental prefectures, and above all, the Ministry of Education, in order to build medium- and long-term solidarity networks of convergence.
- Given their strategic importance, the "Educative Communities" need greater support in terms of making this structure work. Thus, we recommend that a plan be made for raising awareness about the educative project. This plan should allow for the active inclusion of parents in the conception and execution of the educative project, should fix work agendas, and should put in place a system for archiving basic documentation of the achievements of the project's members.

5. PROJECT LEADER'S COMMENTS

5.1.- BRIEF REPORT ON THE EVALUATION.-

I feel that the evaluation has been not only interesting, but very useful, because it has allowed us to learn in an objective manner about the Strengths and Weaknesses of the project's execution. The team has had high expectations for the evaluation, and the results will enable us to correct the weaknesses encountered and consolidate the strengths. The team of consultants has made a great effort to do a good job. I believe they have had good contacts with different actors of the educative communities, who have

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surely provided them with sufficient elements for carrying out the evaluation and generating this final report.

5.2.- EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS.-

The evaluation's conclusions seem to me to be very objective. It is gratifying to confirm that the Program for Teachers' Professional Development PDPD (organizational seminars for development), the seminars for the teachers, are being carried out in an optimal manner, which confirms for us that the Bolivian Evangelical University (UEB) is doing a good job. The participation of the families is something we need to work on with greater dedication. We're conscious that greater participation by parents is necessary, and that this needs to be corrected. It would be excellent if we could have more project technicians because at the moment we only have two, both working half-time, and this really is not enough, much less so for the second phase when we will make an effort to achieve the impact goals—improving the quality of education for students.

5.3.- EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are pertinent. To put them in practice as part of the post-evaluation process, we will plan and execute intervention processes in the areas described in the recommendations. These will be executed in the period July to December to 2009.

5.4.- MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED

That there will always be positive and negative aspects of the work executed, and that when negative aspects are highlighted, this shouldn't be felt to be an accusation, but rather the most important thing is to seek a way to correct these aspects. In order to enrich the project, achieve our goals, and respond to the felt needs of the beneficiaries, it is also important to take into account the opinions of people outside the project, because they are able to find points that we ourselves do not notice during the process of execution.

5.5.- FORESEEN FOLLOW-UP

In accordance with the recommendations presented in this evaluation, the project's technical team will, in coordination with FES and CEN, plan and execute intervention projects responding to the recommendations and conclusions in order to correct weaknesses. At the same time, based upon this evaluation, the necessary adjustments will be made in order to reach the end goals of the project.

5. TEAM OR CONSULTANT'S DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION

- **Please list the leader and members of the team in the following manner:**

René Urbina Sánchez, Bachelor in Education Sciences and Bachelor in Theology, Metanoia Consultants, male, Bolivian, telephone 431-1840, email: reneus23@yahoo.com

Kjell Einar Barreth, Bachelor and Master's in Communication Sciences, Norwegian, email: kbarreth@gmail.com

- **List the members of the reference group as well, if applicable:**

- Students from the educative units (schools)
- Teachers from the educative units
- Directors of the educative units
- Administrators and assistants from the educative units
- Parents
- Local authorities

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7. **METHOD OF OBTAINING INFORMATION AND OF ANALYSIS**

This work was carried out within the framework of “Qualitative Evaluation,” which is directed to the formulation of reflections that make it possible to contribute to improving the project’s implementation. Given the fact that the Project for Institutional Development Bol. 10585 lacks a Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation, the opinions put forth in this report represent an effort to understand the results on the level of tendencies and risks.

Given the need to use PYM/FES institutions as information sources, a sample consisting of the following eight educative units out of a total of 16 was chosen: Buenas Nuevas A, Buenas Nuevas B, Nacional Cotoca, Barrio Unión de Santa Cruz, Isabel Villegas M. and Manuel Caballero de Valle Grande, Filadelfia de Rurrenabaque, and Buenas Nuevas of Cochabamba. Of these, it was not possible to interview representatives of the Manuel Caballero de Valle Grande educative unit due to the limited time available to the evaluator.

Information was compiled by two principal sources: a secondary source in the form of existing documentation provided by the Executive Directorship of the project, and a primary source in the form of 40 focus-group interviews. In order to carry out the latter, visits were made to each one of the educative units.

The evaluation meetings lasted an average of two hours. Each of the following groups were interviewed separately: students, parents, teachers participating in the training program, teachers not participating in the program, educative unit directors, CEN leaders, national leadership of FES, Mission (PYM) representative, and Municipal authorities.

The instruments used to collect the primary-source information both in individual interviews and in focus groups were structured around open-ended questions grouped in four important areas: level of participation, classroom equipment, teacher training, and project sustainability.

8. **COSTS OF THE EVALUATION**

- **Costs directly related to the evaluation:**

Annexes: Terms of reference
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