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WHITE PAPER SERIES

Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) Program

Paper One: Regional Nature

FINAL REPORT

January 2011

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CETT WHITE PAPER SERIES

This document is one in a series of white papers discussing the implementation and outcomes of the Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) program. The CETT program was implemented by USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Office of Regional Sustainable Development, Education and Human Resources Team from 2002–2009. CETT was based on a Presidential Initiative derived from commitments made by the U.S. Government at the Summit of the Americas in 2001 and operated in twenty-one countries in the regions of Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean.

The purpose of this CETT white paper series is to highlight the legacy of the initiative and to provide future program designers with some of the most important lessons learned and best practices developed within the long-term implementation of the CETT program.

The CETT white paper series includes five publications by theme:

Paper One: Regional Nature

This white paper discusses the challenges, successes, and lessons learned implementing a regional model for teacher training. The regional nature of CETT differentiated this program from other, strictly national, teacher professional development efforts undertaken by USAID. Three CETTs in the Caribbean, Central and South America underwent a significant process of compromise and cooperation to arrive at their regional models and this paper documents the initiatives taken.

Paper Two: Testing and Assessment

This white paper discusses the challenges and lessons learned in the process of creating a cross-country testing initiative. The three CETTs carried out testing initiatives to track student performance toward literacy benchmarks, with the goal of showing valid and reliable results. An extremely challenging endeavor, student assessment is further complicated when using tests across countries.

Paper Three: Sustainability

This white paper discusses the lessons learned while anticipating the challenges of sustaining the CETT program after the end of USAID funding. The CETTs worked closely with USAID to prepare for the continuation of the program at the regional, national, and local levels. The paper examines the political, financial, institutional, and social sustainability dimensions of these efforts.

Paper Four: Paradigm Shift

This white paper discusses the systemic change in the behaviors and attitudes of CETT stakeholder groups, including school administrators, teacher trainers, teachers, parents, and students. CETT's teacher training model stressed the inclusion of stakeholders at all levels to promote the importance of reading and writing. Achievement of the program's intended effects depended on the willingness of the institutions and individuals involved to change their behaviors. This paper highlights the lessons learned and best practices in promoting this change.

Paper Five: Cost Effectiveness

This white paper presents a cost-effectiveness study linking financial inputs and CETT program outcomes. The CETT model of teacher training developed differently in each of the three regions and this white paper analyzes the history of costs over time, cost-effectiveness based on teacher and student performance, and the limitations of comparing costs across countries and programs.

WHITE PAPER SERIES

Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT)
Program

Paper One: Regional Nature

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Acronyms

AOTR	Agreement Officer’s Technical Representative
CA-RD	Centroamérica–Republica Dominicana
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
C-CETT	Caribbean CETT
CETT	Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training
FEPADE	Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo, El Salvador
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILCE	Instituto Latinoamericano para la Comunicación Educativa, Mexico
IRA	International Reading Association
JBTE	Joint Board of Teacher Education
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PIU	Program Implementation Unit
PUCMM	Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Dominican Republic
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
UASB	Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador
UPCH	Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Peru
UPN	Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán, Honduras
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies

Introduction and Methodology

The Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) program was a Presidential Initiative to improve the pedagogical skills of teachers in the first, second, and third grades in economically disadvantaged communities of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The hemisphere-wide program—announced in 2001 and implemented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—created three regional¹ CETTs that began implementation in 13 countries, referred to in this study as:

1. C-CETT (beginning in the Caribbean countries of Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Guyana, and Belize);²
2. Centro Andino (Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia in South America); and
3. CETT CA-RD (in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua; and in the Dominican Republic).

The Cooperative Agreements for USAID assistance to the CETT program ended in December 2009 after over seven years of technical support. (Two CETTs were issued a no-cost extension until early 2010.) As a result of the program, 35,095 teachers and administrators received training in interactive methods of literacy instruction. The program reached over 799,000 students in 21 countries.

CETT provided in-service training to teachers and administrators located in disadvantaged rural and urban areas that did not benefit from other donor programming. The program promoted the development of skills and adoption of active-learning strategies for teaching reading by aligning existing pedagogical practice with research-based best practices. The program had five core components:

1. **Teacher training** in effective reading methodologies and classroom management techniques
2. **Materials** for teachers to use to improve their reading instruction
3. **Diagnostic tools** to enable teachers to identify and address students' weaknesses and needs
4. **Applied research** to ensure the efficacy of the training, tools, and materials provided
5. **Information and communications technologies (ICTs)** to broaden access to the program

In addition, the CETTs also focused on sustainability efforts to ensure continuance of the program after the end of USAID funding. Within the parameters of these components, each CETT had the flexibility to manage and implement the program based on its regional context and needs. As a result, the CETTs developed with slight differences in each region.

CETT training *content* was related to seven literacy skills: reading comprehension, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, oral expression, written expression, and vocabulary. Knowledge of these skills provided the foundation for integrated and effective reading instruction.

¹ In this study, “regional” refers to one of the three CETT areas: the Caribbean, South America, or Central America and the Dominican Republic. “Hemispheric” refers to all three CETTs as a single unit.

² By the end of the program in 2009, many more islands in the Caribbean had adopted CETT. Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Guyana, and the Commonwealth of Dominica implemented CETT with USAID funding. After learning of the experiences and results of other countries, the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada approached C-CETT to join, fully financing their own implementation and purchasing C-CETT’s technical support. In 2009, five additional countries signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to expand CETT implementation to St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands.

The CETT teacher training model introduced innovative *techniques* such as continuous teacher training throughout the school year and follow-up support in the classroom. Teacher trainers visited CETT classrooms where they observed teachers and provided feedback and recommendations. Teacher circles gave teachers the opportunity to share their experiences with peers. Each CETT also emphasized the role of parents and the greater community in embracing a “culture of literacy” to support the importance of reading in the early grades.

The program was implemented in two phases: Phase One (2002–2006) and Phase Two (2006–2009). Phase One launched the initial CETT program design and development. Lead implementing institutions in Jamaica, Honduras, and Peru signed Cooperative Agreements with USAID. Phase Two supported a continuation of the CETTs following USAID’s emergent consensus that five years were not sufficient to fully implement the program and achieve the desired results.

Purpose

The purpose of this white paper is to examine the regional nature of the CETT program. From its inception, CETT was designed to strengthen “the capacity of existing teacher training institutions to form *regional teacher training and resource centers* in the Caribbean, the Andean region of South America, and Central America.”³ Regional programs provide an interesting dimension in which stakeholders and beneficiaries span country lines to support multinational change. This white paper examines the regional Centers’ development, the challenges they encountered, and the lessons that may be learned for future regional programs.

This white paper is part of the CETT white paper series, a compilation of five research papers on key topics related to CETT: regional nature, testing and assessment, sustainability, paradigm shift, and cost effectiveness. Each of the white papers examines the three CETTs through a selection of lenses and analyzes the research findings to bring significant and specific lessons learned with respect to CETT activities into focus. This research gives form to the legacy of the Presidential Initiative and provides future program designers with some of the most important lessons learned during the long-term implementation of the CETT program.

Research Questions

The research hypothesis of this white paper is that the CETTs created regional programs aimed to improve teacher training that spanned national borders and surpassed what individual countries could have done on their own. The research team, led by Dr. Richard Navarro and Ann Skelton, compiled the thoughts and attitudes of CETT program stakeholders and beneficiaries in all three regions. The interviews sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How did each of the CETTs conceptualize and implement its regional program design and management?
2. What were the drawbacks and the benefits of working regionally rather than on a country-by-country basis?
3. What were the major challenges of regional cooperation (across and within the three CETTs) and how were they overcome?

³ USAID. (2002). Centers for Excellence in Teaching Training: A Summit of the Americas Initiative Information Packet. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACY696.pdf

4. In what circumstances did regional collaboration limit the CETTs in individual countries? Are there components or elements that should have been left to national decision-making?
5. Will the country-level CETTs continue to collaborate regionally, and if so, how and to what extent will this occur?

The research team drafted these questions with all stakeholder groups in mind and with the understanding that information would come from several different sources. Question five, which relates to the regional sustainability of the program, is addressed in greater detail in the third white paper of the series.

Methodology

This white paper examines the regional nature of the CETTs in two principal ways. First, the research team reviewed CETT documents, including program design documents, developed throughout the existence of CETT. The documents provided extensive information on the program rationale and implementation progress. Second, the research team embarked on a qualitative research study of the CETTs by interviewing key individuals who were actively involved in program implementation.

Sample Selection

The research team visited a sample of CETT countries for this study:

1. C-CETT (Caribbean)
 - a. Jamaica
 - b. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
2. Centro Andino (South America)
 - a. Peru
 - b. Ecuador
3. CETT CA-RD (Central America)
 - a. Honduras
 - b. Dominican Republic

Jamaica, Peru, and Honduras were chosen because they were the sites of the lead implementing institutions,⁴ the regional CETT administration, and the USAID Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR, formerly called Cognizant Technical Officer). The research team selected (a) St. Vincent and the Grenadines as one of the original Eastern Caribbean countries that are geographically removed from the regional headquarters in the West Indies (Jamaica), (b) Ecuador to balance the country visits among the various white papers, and (c) the Dominican Republic because of its geographic location away from the other four Central American members.

In each country the data collection plan was to conduct in-depth interviews with CETT management staff members and stakeholders. The team made efforts to reach out to stakeholders that were involved in the CETT program since its inception, including former CETT staff and experts. The following table shows the final number of in-depth interviews conducted.

⁴ The lead implementing institution is the institution that signed the Cooperative Agreement with USAID. This institution housed the Program Implementation Unit (PIU), the regional management body of each CETT.

Final Interviews Conducted		
CETT staff	Executive director ⁵	4
	Regional coordinator	2
	National coordinator	6
	Other staff	5
USAID AOTR		3
Other USAID staff		4
Implementing institution staff (rectors, deans, etc.)		4
Ministry staff		3
Total Interviews:		31

Data Collection and Analysis

The research team formulated the interview questions based on the draft hypothesis and research questions and created an interview guide with general questions for all respondents and specific questions for certain stakeholder groups. All interviews were conducted using a flexible, semi-structured format so that the interview could be directed by the conversation. Finally, the research team systematically reviewed and analyzed all the qualitative data from three perspectives: (a) looking for common problems and needs that transcended borders and therefore justified a regional implementation, (b) looking for similar (and disparate) themes, challenges, and lessons learned across the three regional CETTs, and (c) briefly examining the hemispheric efforts carried out in support of CETT coordination.

Limitations of the Research Study

The research team identified several limitations to this study. Some of the limitations had been known from the onset of the research, while others emerged during the data collection process. These limitations include:

- USAID funding for the CETT program was coming to an end or had been formally concluded in the three CETTs during data collection for this study. As a result, some staff members were transitioning out of the program or had already moved on to other positions. In addition, due to staff turnover during the seven years of the program, it was impossible to conduct interviews or communicate with all of the current and former CETT staff.
- An innate limitation of this qualitative study is that information was taken only from respondents who self-selected to take part in the interviews. Because the results are not based on random selection they cannot be considered statistically representative. Furthermore, because the CETT program had already ended in many countries, it is possible that stakeholders who responded to the requests of the research team and took part in interviews had been the most involved and believed most strongly in the program's impact.

⁵ The research team interviewed two Executive Directors from the Caribbean (one a director at the time of the interview and one former director) and one Executive Director each from CETT CA-RD and Centro Andino.

- Reports from respondents were not always congruent. In these situations the research team attempted to resolve discrepancies by triangulating reports with additional sources and documentation.
- The research team visited three countries that did not house a lead implementing institution: St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. Though the team made an effort to gather as many opinions as possible about regional relationships with the lead implementing institutions, the findings of this white paper captured the opinions of respondents from only these three countries. It is possible that potential respondents from countries not included in the sample may have had different opinions of regional cooperation.
- Many topics in this white paper overlap other themes in the series. More in-depth analysis of these overlapping topics—testing and assessment, sustainability, and cost effectiveness—is included in white papers two, three, and five respectively.

CETT Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to understand how each of the CETTs developed in order to examine the similarities and differences among each regional approach. This first section of the paper (a) provides a brief summary of the Summit of the Americas Initiative, (b) identifies the guiding principles of CETT that were identical throughout the hemispheric program, and (c) describes the organizational and functional structures that were the foundation of each CETT's distinctive regional approach. The remaining sections of the paper examine similarities and differences in program design and implementation, regional themes, lessons learned, and recommendations for future programs.

Summit of the Americas: Establishing CETT's Guiding Principles

The aim of the Summit of the Americas Initiative, which was the conceptual basis for the CETT program, was to "improve teacher and school administrator quality and to improve the quality of reading instruction in the classroom throughout the hemisphere, with special emphasis on poorer countries and teachers who work in disadvantaged communities."⁶ Following the announcement of the program in 2001, a consultative committee composed of education experts from the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America was formed "to meet with USAID to provide technical guidance to the program."⁷

The consultative committee defined the following guiding principles for CETT design and implementation:

1. Use a participatory process to design the program.
2. Build on existing capacity.
3. Work with innovators and agents of change.
4. Start small and expand after demonstrating positive results.
5. Maintain flexibility.
6. Focus on bringing successful practices to the primary school classroom rather than on institutional strengthening.

Each regional CETT was to follow these guiding principles in promoting the program's greater goal to "improve basic childhood 'learning and literacy' throughout the western hemisphere."⁸ In order to accomplish this goal, each CETT developed the five components outlined in the Introduction: teacher training, diagnostic tools, materials, applied research, and ICTs to broaden access to the program; the regional model created in each CETT reflected that region's specific needs.

C-CETT

The Caribbean CETT (C-CETT) initially included five English-speaking countries in the Caribbean: Jamaica, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, and Guyana. Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada, both self-financed with government funds, were subsequently added to C-CETT. In 2007, USAID provided funding for C-CETT to be expanded to the Commonwealth of Dominica. In 2009, C-CETT expanded to five additional countries: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands,

⁶ U.S. Department of State. (2003). Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training in the Americas [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/August/20030801114640nesnom0.254513.html>

⁷ USAID. (2002). Centers for Excellence in Teaching Training: A Summit of the Americas Initiative Information Packet. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACY696.pdf

⁸ Ibid.

Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis. USAID provided a small amount of program startup funding to each of these five countries. By the time USAID funding ended in September 2009, C-CETT had expanded to 13 countries.

Organizational Structure

Following an assessment of reading instruction capacities and needs in the English-speaking Caribbean, USAID selected the pan-Caribbean Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) as the lead implementing institution for C-CETT. The JBTE has two arms: one located at UWI Mona in Kingston, Jamaica to serve the Western Caribbean, and the other located at UWI Cave Hill in Barbados to serve the Eastern Caribbean. The program was run mainly by the JBTE at UWI Mona with support from UWI Cave Hill.

Program Implementation Unit. UWI education specialists staffed the centralized management structure of C-CETT known as the Program Implementation Unit (PIU). The PIU handled the active, day-to-day management of CETT activities: (a) developing materials and trainings, (b) coordinating with ministries of education (MOEs) across the region, (c) developing and implementing student pre- and post-tests, (d) managing CETT staff, and (e) distributing program materials. The Executive Director handled coordination with USAID's AOTR in Jamaica and the regional Advisory Committee. The PIU also updated the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat with regular reports on C-CETT's progress.⁹

Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was created to inform the planning and implementation of CETT and met with the PIU biannually. It was chaired by the Chief Education Officer of the Jamaican MOE and included several MOE representatives from other C-CETT countries, directors of schools of education in the Caribbean, and representatives of teachers' unions and reading associations. This broad involvement ensured support for C-CETT by various stakeholders involved in education throughout the Caribbean.

The Clusters. The use of established teacher training institutes (TTIs) in each country provided an efficient, well-established network for implementing the new CETT practices. Depending on the size of the country, between six and eight primary schools formed a cluster of CETT schools that received training and supervision support by a teacher trainer from the nearest TTI.¹⁰ Two training coordinators from the PIU supervised these TTI-based teacher trainers. One of the goals of the cluster model was that both pre-service and in-service teachers would benefit from CETT training. Many TTIs integrated CETT methodologies in their pre-service teacher training curricula.

Functional Structure

Program Design. C-CETT centralized its program management in the PIU. A full-time PIU regional coordinator managed staff hiring and the CETT activities. Technical specialists in reading methodologies, testing, teacher training, and ICT developed their tasks in cooperation with colleagues from UWI and other Caribbean countries. The principal program activities of teacher training and continuous

⁹ The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an association of 15 nations and dependencies throughout the Caribbean whose purpose is to promote economic integration and free trade among member states, and the coordination of labor, industrial, social, and foreign policies. CARICOM was established in 1973 by the Treaty of Chaguaramas (http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/revised_treaty-text.pdf).

¹⁰ The terminology for individuals providing CETT training differed from region to region. For the purpose of this paper, individuals who trained trainers in CETT practices are called training coordinators, and individuals who trained teachers are called teacher trainers. In the Caribbean, teacher trainers were called reading specialists, and training coordinators were called teacher trainers.

development of primary school teachers were coordinated by the teacher trainers and training coordinators.

C-CETT was implemented by a pan-Caribbean institution and reflected a regional approach from the beginning. One of the first products C-CETT developed was a set of regional standards for the teaching of reading and writing. These standards were created after studying international standards and the national standards of each country in the region. The new standards were subsequently adopted by C-CETT, endorsed by CARICOM, disseminated to all of the countries represented on the JBTE Governing Board, and adopted by each country after extensive review. These standards became the basis for the development of C-CETT materials, professional development strategies, and evaluation and diagnostic tools.

Program Implementation. The PIU at the JBTE implemented CETT throughout the Caribbean. The MOEs in each country identified their poorest performing schools and worked with the JBTE to establish the CETT program in a cluster of schools around a TTI. Jamaica was the country with the highest number of schools in the program: 43 schools in six clusters. Initially, one training coordinator in the PIU was responsible for all six clusters in Jamaica plus the cluster in Belize. A second coordinator took responsibility for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, and Guyana. A total of 68 schools in five countries became CETT schools in the early stages of the program. This number grew as the number of countries increased.

Regional Model

- C-CETT created a regional model that centralized management and design activities at the Program Implementation Unit in the JBTE. The JBTE at UWI was the sole institution implementing C-CETT. The JBTE developed all of the CETT components, including the teacher training, materials, diagnostic and assessment tools, ICT, and applied research methods in the classroom.
- The JBTE implemented C-CETT through teacher trainers hired by C-CETT. The teacher trainers were located at the TTIs, worked with the school clusters near each TTI, and reported to two training coordinators at the JBTE.

Centro Andino

In South America, Centro Andino was implemented by an alliance of universities in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. The following subsections describe the organizational and functional structures created, the responsibilities of the implementers, and the development of Centro Andino from initiation in 2002 to the end of USAID funding in January 2010.

Organizational Structure

USAID commissioned an external evaluation of institutional capacities to identify likely universities in each of the three Andean countries. Based on the evaluation of potential partners, USAID identified a consortium of three universities to implement Centro Andino. The Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH) in Lima, Peru, was chosen as the administrative lead and lead implementing institution, working with the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (UASB) in Quito, Ecuador, and the Universidad Nur in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. It is important to note that these three universities had not worked together previously and designing the CETT program became an opportunity to create a new university alliance.

Regional Leadership. The Dean of the Faculty of Education at the UPCH became Centro Andino's Executive Director responsible for the CETT program's regional leadership. The Executive Director led the Executive Committee and PIU, Centro Andino's management and technical bodies respectively. The regional coordinator was located at the UPCH and reported to the Executive Committee. Although regional technical teams (see below) developed specific components of CETT, the regional coordinator oversaw the day-to-day implementation and managed the program's operations, communications, deadlines, and deliverables.

Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was the decision-making body of Centro Andino. It defined national roles and responsibilities, established program goals, and functioned as the program's policy arm and proponent of the regional vision. The Executive Director chaired the committee, whose members included the national coordinators from Bolivia and Ecuador, the regional coordinator, and the USAID AOTR. The Executive Director and the national coordinators in Bolivia and Ecuador were part-time CETT staff, but maintained their decision-making authority as deans in their respective universities and divided their time between CETT and university duties.

Regional Technical Teams. CETT components were designed and implemented by regional technical teams, with representatives from Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. For instance, the UPCH led the teacher training team with members from Ecuador and Bolivia. Ecuador's representative led the evaluation and research team with members from Peru and Bolivia. Bolivia led the materials development team with members from Ecuador and Peru. The Peruvian-led training team was also responsible for the *marco técnico*—the framework of the pedagogical approach to teaching reading.

National Teams. Each country had a national team that included specialists in training, materials, technology, testing, evaluation, and applied research. The national coordinators, with the Executive Director, led the respective national teams and created the Centro Andino PIU. Though the PIU mirrored the Executive Committee, its function was to sign off on strategies and implementing tasks related to each country's needs.

Functional Structure

In 2002, USAID Washington signed a Cooperative Agreement with the UPCH to implement the CETT program and the UPCH, in turn, signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with each of the other two universities. During start-up, the Executive Committee met every two to three months and held frequent telephone conferences in an effort to reach a consensus on their respective roles. Thereafter it held at least one annual meeting, the *Seminario Interno Anual*.

Program Design. Regional technical teams, comprised of representatives from each member country, developed the technical components of Centro Andino. The regional coordinator was responsible for the coordination of the technical teams' work. While teams provided the technical expertise for developing the teacher training model, materials, and assessment tools, the Executive Committee had to approve all products. Accommodations were made to allow each country to develop its own professional development strategy and materials. The regional teams maintained regular electronic communication and periodically met in person.

Program Implementation. The national teams at each university were responsible for implementing the CETT program in their country. Each university was responsible for finding CETT staff and technical experts, hiring teacher trainers and training coordinators, and choosing schools. The universities created agreements with MOEs to collectively select CETT schools, so that ministries were involved and approved the implementation of CETT. To reach more geographic areas, all three universities provided teacher training both in-person (*modalidad presencial*) and via distance learning (*modalidad a distancia*).

Regional Model

- Centro Andino created a different regional model than C-CETT. While the UPCH was the lead implementing institution with direct responsibility to USAID, partner universities in Ecuador and Bolivia were integrally involved in the program design. Regional technical teams, composed of experts from each country, ensured that individual country needs and challenges were addressed. Each university shared program responsibility by taking the lead in developing one of the CETT components.
- National university teams took the lead in implementing CETT in their country. These teams were accountable to the PIU and the regional coordinator for managing the program “on the ground” and ensuring the success of CETT. They were given autonomy to create agreements with the MOE and choose schools where they wanted to implement the program.

CETT CA-RD

A consortium of institutions in five countries—Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic—implemented CETT in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CETT CA-RD). Mexico also participated by providing technical assistance. USAID funding supported CETT CA-RD from 2002 to June 2010.

Organizational Structure

USAID conducted an external assessment of the regional capacities and needs in Central America and the Dominican Republic in 2001 and 2002. Based on the information collected and advice from the CETT consultative committee, USAID identified institutional partners in the region: (a) Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán (UPN) in Honduras, which was the lead implementing institution; (b) Universidad del Valle (UVG) in Guatemala; (c) Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Educativo (FEPADE) in El Salvador; and (d) Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) in the Dominican Republic. USAID also selected the Instituto Latinoamericano para la Comunicación Educativa (ILCE) in Mexico to provide technical assistance for the ICT component. Nicaragua joined CETT later in Phase One, represented by the Escuela Normal Ricardo Morales Avilés (ENRMA) and the MOE. As in Centro Andino, these institutions had not worked together prior to the CETT experience.

Regional Leadership. The Executive Director, located full-time at the UPN in Honduras, was the principal administrator and manager of CETT CA-RD. The Executive Director was a member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Technical Committee. The Executive Director and the AOTR, located at the USAID mission in Honduras, remained in close contact throughout the program.

Executive Committee. The Executive Committee conceptualized the regional vision of CETT CA-RD and made the major decisions concerning the CETT program. In addition to the Executive Director, the Committee included members from each implementing institution: rectors of the education institutions in Honduras, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, and representatives from ILCE and FEPADE. Near the end of Phase Two in Nicaragua, the MOE housed the CETT leadership and a representative from the Nicaraguan MOE was present in the Executive Committee. The CETT AOTR in Honduras represented USAID on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shared resolutions with the Technical Committee that in turn developed the CETT components and implemented the program.

Technical Committee. The Technical Committee, comprised of the national coordinators, was the implementing body of CETT CA-RD in charge of the day-to-day operations of the national CETTs. The Technical Committee was responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the CETT components. Each institution developed a specific component that was then reviewed by the other members: (a) the UPN in Honduras was responsible for teacher training, (b) the UVG in Guatemala was responsible for research and evaluation, (c) FEPADE in El Salvador was responsible for sustainability and private sector involvement, (d) ENRMA in Nicaragua provided feedback from the field on the implementation of the CETT CA-RD materials and products, and (e) PUCMM in the Dominican Republic was responsible for developing materials. ILCE in Mexico was responsible for the ICT component.

Functional Structure

Once the lead implementing institution and the institutional partners had been identified, USAID signed a Cooperative Agreement with the UPN in Honduras, which then signed sub-agreements with each partner institution, as in Centro Andino. In order to administer the program throughout the region, the UPN had to adapt its own institutional systems to comply with USAID accounting, administration, and reporting regulations. The UPN also had to ensure that each of the institutional partners had developed sufficient capacity to administer the program according to USAID policies.

Program Design. The Technical Committee designed the guiding framework of CETT CA-RD, which outlined the development and review process of the CETT components. In addition to taking the lead on one component, each member of the Technical Committee also participated in the review and approval of all the other components. PUCMM, for example, was the lead for developing teacher and student materials. PUCMM developed the materials and shared them with all members of the Technical Committee. Once all of the members had provided feedback, PUCMM revised the materials and disseminated them for piloting. PUCMM shared results from the pilots among all members and began a new round of feedback. The cycle was repeated until all members of the Technical Committee agreed that the materials met the needs of the region. This was the process for all CETT components.

Program Implementation. The national coordinators were responsible for implementation of CETT in their countries with oversight from the other members of the Technical Committee. Implementation processes conformed to national and institutional policies, and often involved agreements with the MOE or the local USAID mission (see the next section). Each country also developed its own criteria for selecting teacher trainers and CETT schools. In Honduras, for example, the UPN published a request for applications according to established guidelines and screened teacher trainer candidates according to UPN hiring procedures. The selection of schools was coordinated with the MOE in all countries.

Regional Model

- CETT CA-RD created a regional model in which member countries equally shared CETT leadership responsibilities and component development. The member institutions designed CETT components and solicited feedback from the other countries. Other than the Executive Director and AOTR, membership on the Executive and Technical Committees did not overlap. Extensive communication and shared decision-making was required.
- National coordinators implemented CETT in each country and collaborated with their respective MOEs and USAID missions. As in Centro Andino, the national teams were responsible for adapting the program to their needs without losing the CETT CA-RD regional vision.

The Role of USAID

USAID approved and oversaw the regional structures created in each CETT. With 13 countries involved at program startup, regional and hemispheric supervision was a foremost issue. The Office of Education and Human Resources within USAID's Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau (LAC/RSD/EHR) was responsible for disbursing funds to the three CETTs, reporting results to the U.S. Congress in Washington, and overseeing USAID and AOTR responsibilities in implementing countries. This subsection describes the relationships created among the CETT implementing institutions, USAID Washington, and local USAID missions in the member countries.¹¹ USAID, as the donor agency, had and continues to have an integral role in the long-term success of the program.

CETT Institutions' Relationship with Washington

Each lead implementing institution (UWI in Jamaica, the UPCH in Peru, and the UPN in Honduras) signed a Cooperative Agreement with USAID to formalize their partnership and responsibility for the design and implementation of CETT. The LAC Regional Office of Education in USAID Washington made the initial decisions about the management structure of the CETT program. At the hemispheric level, USAID Washington initially supervised the program, though each of the lead implementing institutions was located in a country with a USAID mission that would also be involved in CETT program management.

During the first year, the Cooperative Agreements for C-CETT and Centro Andino were signed in Washington, D.C. and activity managers were located in the USAID missions in Jamaica and Peru. The AOTR was located in Washington. The Cooperative Agreement with the UPN was signed in Honduras and a USAID-appointed AOTR was located on site at the Honduran mission.

By year two, the LAC Regional Office of Education made changes to this oversight structure to the mutual benefit of USAID and the CETTs. Management responsibility moved to the USAID missions and funding was provided for AOTRs in the Jamaican and Peruvian missions. This decision strengthened program management as the AOTRs became more closely involved in the day-to-day implementation of the program and participated in the Executive Committee meetings.

CETT Institutions' Relationship with Missions

AOTRs placed at the Jamaican, Peruvian, and Honduran missions provided technical supervision for the CETT program. The setup established a triangular relationship between USAID Washington, local USAID missions, and the CETT implementing institutions. The AOTRs in Jamaica, Peru, and Honduras were to create a working relationship with each member country's mission as well. If local missions had an education officer, he or she became the activity manager for CETT.

Reports from the countries visited showed that local missions' levels of involvement in CETT varied. Some local USAID missions, such as in the Dominican Republic, were closely involved with the CETT program: mission staff helped promote the program to the local MOE and worked with the implementing institution to expand CETT methodologies. In other instances, mission staff members noted that they wished they had been more informed and involved in CETT activities and decisions. Others noted their confusion about the difference between a USAID program that is regionally managed and one that is considered to be within the mission's portfolio. This sense of a mission's ownership of

¹¹ USAID has a mission in all member countries of Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD. With the exception of Bolivia and Ecuador, all countries in Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD also have bilateral education activities in the missions. In the Caribbean, the Eastern Caribbean mission supports the countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. USAID missions are also located in Jamaica and Guyana.

CETT was a factor in some countries. Other missions, especially those without an education officer, showed minimal interest in CETT.

All respondents interviewed stressed the importance of USAID mission involvement in CETT program development at the regional or local level. The research team found that the level of involvement of local missions was closely related to the continuity of CETT at the end of USAID funding. This topic is discussed further in the third white paper on sustainability.

Development of the CETT Program

As the regional CETTs outlined the roles and responsibilities of each of the implementing institutions and stakeholders, the next step was to develop and implement the five components of the CETT program:¹²

1. **Teacher training** in effective reading methodologies and classroom management techniques
2. **Materials** for teachers to use to improve their reading instruction
3. **Diagnostic tools** to enable teachers to identify and address students' weaknesses and needs
4. **Applied research** to ensure the efficacy of the training, tools, and materials provided
5. **Information and communications technologies (ICTs)** to broaden access to the program

Though each of the institutions may have had a clear vision of who was responsible for the CETT components, agreement on the design and implementation of each component was more difficult and took a significant amount of time. This section outlines some of the challenges and their resolution while designing the CETT program components and building a successful regional program.

Overcoming Philosophical Differences—The Pedagogical Model for Literacy Instruction

At the inception of CETT, participating countries needed to learn to work together in order to develop the CETT components. This cooperation developed differently in the CETTs due to the set-up of the Centers by USAID. In C-CETT the development of the teacher training model was decided solely by the JBTE at UWI. In Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD, however, the member institutions had to overcome challenges related to philosophical differences in approaches to reading.

The CETT partners in Central and South America extensively debated the innate differences in the philosophy of pedagogy and teaching literacy. Their debate reflected many of the same themes that played out in the United States in the “reading wars” in the 1990s.¹³ In Centro Andino adherents of the strict constructivist approach to teaching reading did not agree with those advocating a more mixed approach to teaching that included phonemic awareness, comprehension, and listening skills. Although continuous efforts were made for each country to present its approach to literacy instruction, the three countries could not reach consensus.

The conflict illustrated a flaw in the way the regional technical teams worked: Members of the regional teams tended to remain loyal to their country's position rather than contributing to a unified approach. After extensive negotiations, the regional team for teacher training and the regional coordinator identified the basic objectives of the CETT program (to teach children in grades one to three to read), identified the teacher competencies needed to teach basic reading skills, and from this baseline, developed the teacher profile and training plan needed. Though reaching this point was difficult, the significance of the outcome indicated a positive shift in regional collaboration. As noted by several respondents, coming to this consensus paved the way for greater regional cooperation in Centro Andino. These same respondents noted that this time of negotiation was necessary to build trust and understanding of each country's perspective.

¹² Program sustainability, also an important CETT component, is discussed in white paper three.

¹³ Lemann, N. (1997). The reading wars. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 280(5), 128-134.

In CETT CA-RD, the Technical Committee extensively debated the “correct” approach to teaching literacy. While some believed very strongly that a constructivist approach to teaching and learning should be at the core of CETT training and materials development, others took a more traditional approach to literacy, advocating for a greater emphasis on more traditional approaches and acceptance of phonics. USAID brought in consultants with an expert in literacy education who advocated a mixed approach, based on evidence and international research. Finally, the Technical Committee developed a “Scope and Sequence” table with the current pedagogical trends in each country and throughout the region that served as a baseline for developing the pedagogical and methodological structures for the program.

Overcoming philosophical differences in teaching literacy did not happen without changes in program staff in both Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD. Though differences in philosophies were often resolved through evidence-based compromise, many respondents noted that some staff understood these compromises as ultimatums. For example, when the program representatives from Peru returned from discussions about their CETT model, some within the UPCH felt that the team had ignored their views by accepting the mixed approach to teaching reading and consequently left the program. Though a consensus on the approach was achieved and work on the establishment of the CETTs was able to move forward, it is important to note these differences in philosophy and subsequent changes in staff, as they were significant in the overall development of the Centers in these two regions.

Teacher Training Model

The first component of the CETT program promoted the improvement of literacy instruction through in-service teacher training, classroom follow-up, and continuous in-service support. In all three regions, the CETT program had to deal with country- and even district-level differences in teacher preparation, training, and professional development. All of these factors were taken into consideration in the development of teacher training courses and materials. Furthermore, all three CETTs had to deal with the constraint of limited staff time and resources in maintaining follow-up with teachers. A description of the three teacher training models that were created is provided.

C-CETT

The C-CETT model was an eclectic balance between whole language and an integrated approach to teaching reading and writing. Each school cluster surrounding a TTI had a dedicated, full-time teacher trainer and ICT specialist working in the schools. The teacher trainers provided in-service training throughout the school year, visited and observed teachers in the classroom, and provided support in classroom management. Teacher trainers also developed local and regional workshops and school-specific training sessions. The ICT specialist trained teachers and school staff on how to use ICT resources, such as listening centers in the classroom. C-CETT also developed its own virtual network, called the EDUCOMM system, which enhanced regional collaboration among different CETT schools. Some teachers participated in teacher circles, in which teachers met to share and discuss best practices in CETT methodologies.

Centro Andino

CETT teacher training in the Andes included workshops and classroom observations followed by coaching and feedback. In addition to holding training sessions, teacher trainers modeled CETT teaching strategies and observed teachers’ application of the CETT techniques in their classrooms. The training cycle was determined by the needs, preferences, and sometimes the geography of each country. Toward the end of the program, the Andean teacher trainers also developed online professional development modules that were used in combination with in-

person support. CETT teachers participated in teacher circles where they discussed their challenges and successes in implementing the CETT practices.

CETT CA-RD

The teacher training model in CETT CA-RD focused on the three phases of professional development: training, follow-up, and in-service support. First, teacher trainers provided training in learning theory, literacy, and methods for teaching reading and writing. The second phase included teacher trainer follow-up in the classroom. Trainers modeled CETT techniques in the classroom and observed teachers using the new techniques. Since teacher trainers could not be present all of the time in the field, teachers formed teacher circles at their schools to support each other with peer group discussion across grade levels.

Key similarities were apparent in each region. A component of teacher training was followed up by trainer observation and accompaniment in the classroom. Some CETT trainers modeled effective practices in teaching in the classroom so that teachers could learn specific techniques in practice. Teacher circles were also used in all three regions so that teachers could share their experiences and work with peers to compare and discuss best practices in the classroom.

The understanding that the program could be adapted to relate to specific country needs was one of the main outcomes of agreeing on a common CETT vision. Training was modified based on an assessment of present teacher knowledge and the specific characteristics of the local school system or calendar. In Bolivia, for example, where rural schools are far apart from each other, the training model concentrated most of the formal workshops in monthly sessions during the first year. In the second year, teachers had fewer workshops together but continued with trainer follow-up. Peru and Ecuador, on the other hand, conducted the training workshops and in-class support in stages, introducing CETT methods over a two-year period with some follow-up in the second year.

Teacher and Student Materials

Developing CETT materials was a challenge in all three CETTs. Each Center was to develop materials for teachers to improve reading instruction. Two of the three Centers also developed student materials to complement teacher materials. Developing materials at the regional level was important to maintain the common CETT methodology; however, as noted in this section, adjustments needed to be made to align the materials to local contexts and national curricula.

Caribbean

C-CETT focused on developing teacher training materials that were specific to the Caribbean context and that provided stories and lessons that teachers could use in their classrooms. C-CETT teachers reported that they did not have enough culturally relevant materials, and as a result, members of the PIU developed a manual for teachers that incorporated local culture, food, and geographic places into reading lessons. A similar pamphlet was designed for CETT principals. The materials were based on examinations of each country's cultural context, sent through a pilot program, and then revised to incorporate feedback from teachers and other CETT stakeholders. Some respondents mentioned the lack of Caribbean-specific reading materials as a continuing need in the schools.

A challenge noted by C-CETT staff members was the lack of supplementary reading materials in Caribbean schools. Most children had the schoolbooks necessary for learning to read, but schools lacked reading corners or libraries where students could read for enjoyment. The PIU created partnerships with Pearson Books and Scholastic Books (the latter with the help of USAID Washington)

to donate appropriate reading materials to classroom libraries. These books were also reviewed by C-CETT to insure cultural sensitivity.

Centro Andino

The development of teacher and student materials presented challenges in Centro Andino due to time constraints. Materials produced by the regional technical team (led by Bolivia) were reviewed by all countries before they went into production. As in CETT CA-RD, this created a lengthy process in which each country would review the materials, send comments, the team would make revisions, and the cycle would begin again. Upon finalizing the materials, the national staff in each country had the opportunity to adjust the format or add items pertinent to their local context.

The process caused delays that persisted throughout the program. This was particularly problematic in Ecuador, which begins its school year earlier than the other two countries. The Ecuadorian school year begins in September and goes through June, while the school year in Peru and Bolivia runs from January to November. Despite the fact that an Ecuadorian member sat on the materials technical team, some respondents noted that Ecuadorean schools had trouble receiving materials in time for the start of the school year. In spite of these issues, those who worked on the materials found that the exchange of experiences was professionally valuable. One respondent noted that the materials were invariably improved and the educators felt enriched by the process.

CETT CA-RD

In CETT CA-RD, because of the length of time it took to settle ideological differences, many of the countries created their own materials based on their perceived needs and theoretical approaches to reading. Although the Dominican Republic was designated as the lead on materials, initially other countries did not accept their materials. The Technical Committee agreed on a methodology for validating student and teacher materials that allowed for universal review and feedback. The time-consuming process of passing materials to all the partners for review and feedback included the partner countries that had not been assigned a role in developing materials. While initial conflicts arose on whose materials to use, the materials developed by the Dominican Republic were eventually accepted by all the member countries.

Variation at the national level was accounted for in the regional design. Guatemala and Honduras, for example, prepared supplemental materials in order to align the regional CETT with national curriculum policies. This flexibility, coupled with strong adherence to the regionally prepared materials in the implementation of CETT in each country, strengthened the regional identity of CETT CA-RD and the coherence of the teacher training approach. Interview respondents indicated the value of working together to strengthen the materials with expertise from all of the countries. When asked a series of questions about the quality of the products and whether they could have done as well on their own, all respondents said the jointly developed product was better than any country could have created relying on its own expertise alone.

Diagnostic Tools and Assessment

All three CETTs were to design assessments to monitor teacher and student performance in the classroom. The CETTs took considerable steps to create measureable and valid assessment tools. Regional components of assessment initiatives are mentioned only briefly here, as the white paper on testing deals specifically with these topics.

All three CETTs struggled to develop assessment tools that could measure changes in CETT classrooms and remain applicable to different national education systems. For C-CETT the challenges were in developing the Caribbean standards document, the foundational assessment document for student diagnostic testing. The PIU testing specialist worked collaboratively with a group of colleagues from the other C-CETT countries. The difficulties described in developing the standards document appeared to be issues having to do with points of curriculum (e.g., whether contractions should be a standard for grade one or how to word a particular statement). Differences between countries in the names used to refer to objects created difficulties when common assessment tools were piloted in several countries. At times the PIU staff had to rewrite questions or remove them altogether when they were unable to accurately measure a student's knowledge because of linguistic or cultural differences.

In Centro Andino, the first assessment tools created were used to measure teacher performance. In subsequent years, the focus of the Center shifted to not only assess teachers, but also to create instruments for measuring student achievement in reading.¹⁴ According to one respondent, the intention was to create a single reading test for each grade across the three countries. Although the initial achievement tests included questions that could assess children in all CETT schools (since they mapped to the CETT teacher and student materials), national differences and broader issues of school quality came into play. In the first iterations of the tests, the results showed that the Peruvian children scored higher than expected, while the Bolivian children scored lower than expected. The Ecuadorean children scored in the average range. Attempts to align the tests or weigh the results were very difficult, and the countries struggled to apply tests that would provide reliable results. Centro Andino faced these challenges throughout the life of the program.

In CETT CA-RD, the development of assessment tools was also a challenging process. Guatemala's UVG was designated as the institution in charge of developing student diagnostics. However, due to the philosophical differences mentioned at the beginning of this section, the first assessment tools were not well received by the other countries. These tests also did not align with the teacher training and materials being developed. Adding to the resistance some countries exhibited about accepting the assessment tools was the concern that one of the country teams was in charge of assessing the performance of the others, as well as itself. Despite the fact that this concern was never entirely overcome, in Phase Two the UVG was able to apply successful reading assessment tests to children in all CETT CA-RD countries. Unfortunately, as noted by several respondents, these tests were not applied until the last two years of the program. At the time of publication, longitudinal data was not yet available, though Guatemala was beginning its third application of the annual tests.

¹⁴ This shift was also related to an increased focus by USAID on CETT student achievements in reading. This is discussed further in white paper two on testing and assessment.

Regional Characteristics Across the CETTs

An analysis of the regional nature of the CETT program necessarily includes a discussion of the cooperation among the CETT member countries, both in the regional and hemispheric contexts. In visits to the field, the research team repeatedly heard from CETT staff and stakeholders about their experiences in learning to work together with the other implementing institutions, and the value added, in their opinion, of having this regional experience. At the same time, many respondents also shared the “growing pains” of the program, citing initial discords and disagreements in organizational management and component design. This section presents four regional characteristics that influenced the development of the CETT program: regional cooperation, leadership, organizational design, and hemispheric interaction.

Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation was essential to the successful implementation of CETT, both among implementing institutions and in developing a common regional vision for the program. The challenge in Central and South America was to achieve a cooperative working relationship among countries with distinct histories, political views, and to some extent different cultures. These entities had never worked together on a common program. However, despite differences they were able to establish a common vision of what constituted the CETT approach. That these CETTs eventually achieved this vision is a testament to the effort and skill of the CETT staff and key stakeholders.

C-CETT

In C-CETT, the JBTE had an existing structure of regional cooperation in the Caribbean and there was no need to coordinate different institutional partners with varying operational structures. As a result, C-CETT respondents did not note any challenges in learning to work together. Once the Cooperative Agreement was signed with USAID, the JBTE representatives from the initial five countries joined the program with apparent confidence in the shared goals and strategies. All recognized the need to redress the problem of underperforming schools throughout the Caribbean and accepted that in-service training of primary teachers was the correct approach. Though there were debates about the pedagogy, C-CETT managed to reach accord with minimal friction.

Centro Andino

Centro Andino initially made slow progress while the representatives from the three member institutions were learning to work together. The UPCH wanted to design the program components and materials based on their prior experience. As a respondent from Peru noted, the idea was to design the program components and then convince the other countries that this design was the best option. This created disharmony, however, because the representatives from Bolivia and Ecuador had their own ideas about the CETT vision. Though most of these challenges were related directly to the theoretical approach to reading instruction (see previous section), several respondents in Peru and Ecuador noted sources of friction arising from the different historical perspective of each nation, particularly in the context of conflict between the two countries.

As noted previously, the challenges that Centro Andino overcame paved the way for successful regional coordination and a common vision for the CETT program. Respondents in all three countries noted that the initial differences tested the relationships between the institutions, but also built mutual trust

and respect. As a result, the implementing institutions were able to move forward and agree that the CETT vision was a product of all three members, giving them vested interest in the program.

CETT CA-RD

In CETT CA-RD, the member institutions defined CETT objectives in ways that also conformed to their national interests. A respondent stated that the Technical Committee members met to “show what they knew and [what they] were able to do” rather than to learn from each other. Differences in national contexts, institutional goals, and approaches to pedagogy and reading all played a role and resulted in each institution suggesting its own vision without considering the goals or needs of the others. One of the greatest challenges noted was that members on the committees were not listening to each other, because commitment to the regional CETT program was secondary to their national interests.

Greater flexibility came to be seen as an important value underlying the overall CETT approach. Respondents commented on the importance of listening to the other member institutions and opening each other’s eyes to various potential approaches. The Center also built mutual pride based on the regional characteristics of the program. Many CETT CA-RD respondents commented that the program needed to have the flexibility to allow different countries to adapt nonessential items to their own cultural preferences without altering the CETT approach. The shared vision did not preclude this flexibility to adapt to individual country needs.

Maintaining Communication

The CETT program challenged each regional CETT to communicate effectively across national boundaries. Continuous communication was necessary in developing the CETT components and in implementing the program once the components were finalized. Respondents from all three regions agreed that communication between the countries had not been easy; it demanded both considerable time and resources, which greatly affected regional cooperation.

In C-CETT, members of the PIU frequently had to travel to conduct workshops and trainings on various islands. Travel between islands in the Caribbean can be difficult, costly, and extremely time-consuming and the development of ICT and virtual communication was especially important. The leadership of C-CETT envisioned a strong ICT support base for the regional effort and brought an ICT specialist from the private sector to work on this endeavor. All of the participating islands were to be connected through a virtual platform called EDUCOMM. However, because challenging topography sometimes made it difficult to secure a reliable internet connection, some islands were unable to use the system. The islands that were able to use EDUCOMM conducted some meetings and trainings virtually and reduced the need to travel.

In an attempt to define roles and resolve questions about the leadership of the program, the Executive Committee in Centro Andino met at least quarterly during the start-up period and had regular telephone conversations. The internet helped the CETT staff and regional technical teams in later years through their use of email, instant messaging, and Skype. The difficulty and expense of travel forced the committees and the technical teams to look for satisfactory means of communicating beyond face-to-face meetings and the technical teams relied heavily on electronic communications.

In CETT CA-RD, Technical Committee members traveled to a joint meeting approximately four times a year over a seven-year period. The joint meetings provided the forum for discussing controversial issues in a formal quarterly meeting. The Executive Committee met annually. According to respondents, the travel proved to be a burden on members’ personal and professional commitments

and was one of the difficulties in implementing the program. However, most respondents mentioned that these meetings were essential in allowing the CETT staff members from each country to share opinions in a forum with others.

Key Findings

- Implementing institutions in each member country had to learn to work together, both in agreeing on the regional CETT vision and in developing the CETT components. In order to come to agreement, the member teams often had to change their thinking to a more regional approach, rather than pursuing only their national interests.
- The regional visions created in the three CETTs did not preclude individual countries from adapting the program to their local needs. Implementing the program slightly differently in each country was seen as one of the program's successes.
- Constant communication was important to achieving regional cooperation. All three CETTs relied on both virtual and in-person meetings to work together and share ideas.

Challenges

- The pressure to get the program “up and running” quickly, as noted by some respondents, did not account for the time it would take to agree on the program design and CETT components. The extra time needed to resolve differences delayed the delivery of trainings in CETT schools.
- During program start-up, significant resources were needed in each CETT to bring together teams to develop the CETT components. Travel between countries is expensive, and maintaining communication was considered one of the program's main challenges.

Leadership

Efficient and effective leadership had a decisive role in shaping the CETT program and its success. Leaders included both people in charge of managing the overall CETT program and those implementing CETT nationally, from the implementing institutions to the CETT schools. Two models of leadership were important in the success of CETT: traditional leadership, where one figure or position holds the power, and distributed leadership, where multiple actors collaborate to lead the initiative. While traditional leadership was needed in the regional CETT management structure, distributive leadership was most successful at the national and local level, including the distribution of training in CETT schools.

Traditional Leadership Model

Perhaps the best example of traditional leadership and its importance to CETT was the role of the Executive Directors. All three Executive Directors, in C-CETT, Centro Andino, and CETT CA-RD, had a vision of CETT that transcended national interests, which was important in achieving a successful regional model.

C-CETT was developed under the leadership of a strong, well-known Executive Director who was respected throughout the region. The Director's extensive knowledge of education in the Caribbean, as well as his awareness of some of the challenges in expanding the CETT model, provided C-CETT staff with needed insight into the strategic direction of the program. In Centro Andino, the deans of the three implementing institutions were well-known academics in their field, and their close collaboration with each other was respected and emulated by other members on the CETT team.

At times when the Executive Director was not able to provide strategic leadership, as in the first years of CETT CA-RD, clashing interests and personalities hindered the development of the program. Member countries were not willing to work together, and guiding leadership to move past these differences was needed. One of the respondents mentioned that the second Executive Director “was able to navigate through a tempest,” working with the national teams to build a regional vision. Several other respondents specifically noted that the respect they had for the Executive Director, a former Minister of Education with vast experience and a strong commitment to CETT, contributed to their willingness to have open discussions and move forward.

Distributed Leadership Model

Interviews with Executive Directors also brought to light the importance of leadership among other CETT staff, particularly the national coordinators and teacher trainers who implemented the CETT program on a day-to-day basis and provided needed support in CETT schools. Though the CETT model was designed by the PIU, teacher trainers administered and led the CETT trainings. In C-CETT, for example, the leadership role of the teacher trainers and training coordinators was critical in keeping the momentum going in the TTIs and CETT schools.

In Centro Andino the deans were closely involved in the design and development of the CETT program even though they were not full-time CETT staff. The work of full-time CETT staff, such as the national coordinators, was essential. The dean of the UASB in Ecuador relied closely on the national coordinator to implement and manage the program. The coordinator selected a team of experienced teachers to become the CETT teacher trainers. These trainers in turn were tasked with leading trainings throughout the country. Coordination of these trainings was done by the UASB, but school administrators were also involved. Principals, for example, had a leadership role in ensuring that teachers attended the trainings and that they had the necessary materials and resources to implement CETT practices in their classrooms.

In CETT CA-RD, interviews with training coordinators indicated the importance of the distributed leadership model as well. Teacher trainers were tasked with not only training the teachers, but also with providing follow-up support in the classroom, with assessing the teachers, and modeling CETT practices when necessary. Thus, these staff members needed to be vested in the program, and became leaders of CETT change to the teachers. CETT teachers often considered the coordinators to be their mentors.

Key Findings

- The role of the Executive Director was essential for program success, particularly in respect to creating a regional vision. All three Directors were renowned in the education community and greatly respected by the CETT teams. They were also able to guide the teams past national differences.
- Effective leadership among other CETT staff was also important, specifically national coordinators and teacher trainers. These staff members were important in keeping the momentum of the program going and in motivating CETT teachers and principals to successfully implement CETT practices.

Challenges

- When effective leadership was missing, the negative impact on CETT staff and stakeholders was noted. A lack of effective leadership in top management also led to discord among the national teams, and according to one respondent, disinterest in the regional vision.

Organizational Design

The selection of nongovernmental institutions rather than the MOEs as partners in the CETT program was done in part to keep the regional Centers removed from political changes in government. The institutions provided a politically impartial view to the regional design. In the view of several respondents, the distribution of the program in universities provided a level of autonomy from the MOE (with the exception of Nicaragua) that allowed the CETT to foster a common “regional way of thinking.” A perspective shared by many respondents was that MOEs and other government agencies would not have been willing to set aside national interests to build a regional vision for the CETT program.

A point repeated by most interview respondents in all three regions was the frequent turnover of government administrations, especially in Central and South America. As one respondent noted, there were four party changes in his country’s government during the implementation of the CETT program. During each government change, maintaining program continuity was a challenge because CETT staff had to reintroduce the program to a new minister of education. CETT staff from CETT CA-RD noted some of these same challenges in Nicaragua, which experienced several turnovers of government and was the only country where the program was implemented by the MOE.

Though many respondents discussed the challenges of dealing with the MOEs, they also stressed the potential benefits of having the MOEs more involved in the program, especially considering program sustainability in the long term. Several interview respondents commented that they wished the MOE had been more integrally involved during the process in the hope that increased involvement would have led to greater adoption of the program and an easier road to sustainability beyond USAID funding.¹⁵

Key Findings

- The CETT program was implemented in institutions outside of the MOEs (except for Nicaragua) in order to maintain program stability and continuity during changes in government. Respondents in all three CETTs noted that this was a good decision, considering the frequent turnover of governments.
- According to respondents in Central and South America, the placement of the program in educational institutions and universities also promoted a regional way of thinking, because the institutions were willing to work together without political motives. If MOEs had been involved in implementing the program, most governments would have promoted their national agenda rather than collaborating to build a regional program.

Challenges

- In Nicaragua, where a teacher training college within the MOE implemented the program, challenges related to government turnovers inhibited the continuity and stability of CETT development.

Hemispheric Interaction

USAID provided various opportunities to encourage CETT implementers from the three regions to share their experiences and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. It also provided technical assistance to the CETTs on key issues related to regional design and program implementation. An

¹⁵ A discussion of the political implications of placing CETT in nongovernmental institutions is discussed further in white paper three on sustainability.

emphasis of the Summit Initiative was to base the CETT program on evidence-based practices of teacher training and reading instruction. To this end, there were many attempts to have each of the CETTs not only share their experiences during CETT, but also to learn about other examples of successes in reading instruction, particularly in the design phase.

International Reading Association (IRA) Conference—2002

The first chance for staff from the two Spanish-speaking CETTs, Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD, to meet was during the IRA conference in Puebla, Mexico, in October 2002. In conjunction with the conference USAID organized a two-day workshop for key technical specialists from the two CETTs. The purpose was to aid the development and implementation of the newly awarded program by giving CETT staff the ability to learn about best practices from the region and the United States.

USAID debriefings noted that participants received the IRA conference and the USAID-organized workshop very positively. The hands-on teaching approaches were particularly interesting to participants who were more accustomed to purely theoretical presentations. During the workshop, the participants worked to develop a methodology together; this was an early indication of a commitment to collaboration. For language reasons, representatives from the Caribbean did not attend the meeting, bringing up a challenge that would continue in hemispheric efforts to share the CETT experience.

CETT Hemispheric Workshop—2003

USAID hosted the first hemispheric workshop in 2003 in Austin, Texas with representatives from all three regional CETTs in attendance. According to the CETT program agenda,¹⁶ the purpose of this hemispheric meeting was to:

- Present and discuss best practices in early grade reading instruction from both the United States and the region, including how the CETTs will integrate these best practices;
- Review reading instruction methodologies, diagnostic tools, reading materials, and teaching modules from the United States and the region and discuss how they can be adapted by the CETTs;
- Visit local Austin schools to see effective reading programs and provide an opportunity for the teacher trainers to talk with U.S. teachers about what works and what does not;
- Provide an opportunity for the three CETTs to meet to coordinate future implementation and communication strategies; and
- Provide an opportunity to attract private sector interest in supporting the CETT initiative.

Invited academics from the University of Texas presented the Texas Quilt approach to teaching reading, a balanced methodology that incorporates elements of both phonics-based and constructivist approaches. As a result of the workshop, C-CETT modified the Quilt approach's content to address Caribbean issues and added writing to the components. As previously noted, the two Spanish-speaking CETTs were internally divided at the time on the ideological approach to teaching reading. While the Austin workshop did not lead to an early resolution of those divisions, it did provide a platform to discuss the various approaches and promote dialogue. The workshop was also important for introducing the CETTs to each other and giving the CETT implementers in the Caribbean an opportunity to learn more about efforts in the other two regions.

¹⁶ Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training: CETTs Meeting Agenda, April 28–May 2, 2003.

Hemispheric Workshops—2004, 2005, and 2007

Three additional hemispheric meetings were held in Peru (2004), Jamaica (2005), and Ecuador (2007). The purpose of these workshops was twofold. First, the CETTs were given an opportunity to share their experiences and discuss common challenges. Second, USAID Washington hosted these meetings in order to provide technical assistance to the CETTs: Technical experts and specialists in various areas gave presentations and were available to meet with the CETTs to develop their strategic plans or answer their questions. At the Ecuador workshop, for example, three themes were noted as most relevant to the CETTs at the time: teacher training, sustainability, and assessment. Experts gave regional CETT staff specific tools and instructions on how to assess their program strategies.

All three of the workshops utilized an interactive, learner-centered methodology. The meetings included field trips, case studies, and individual and group work to stimulate the learning environment and provide CETT administrative staff, teacher trainers, and testing specialists with valuable information to take back to their countries. The workshop was usually divided into two tracks: (a) the directors' track, which included the executive directors and the national coordinators from each country, and (b) the technical track, which included specific information and strategies related to technical areas such as reading comprehension, monitoring and assessment, or differentiated instruction.

Most interview respondents thought the meetings were worthwhile in enabling them to meet others working in CETT, though differences between the CETTs were apparent. C-CETT especially welcomed the hemispheric meetings to help understand the challenges of their distant colleagues in Central and South America. Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD enjoyed the meetings as well, though some questioned whether they were particularly useful. Some respondents mentioned that some of the challenges of their CETT were so specific to their region that sharing their experiences with the other CETTs would not be useful.

Many respondents thought the meetings were important because they gave CETT implementing institutions the opportunity to liaise with their USAID counterparts, both the AOTRs and the Washington staff. In terms of working together to build a common regional program, the hemispheric meetings were important in highlighting the importance of CETT and the program outcomes achieved.

Centro Andino Visit to the Dominican Republic—2009

During the last year of the CETT program, the two Spanish-speaking CETTs participated in one more event for sharing best practices in sustainability. Centro Andino intended to have ministers of education come from each of the three countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru) and meet with the Minister of Education of the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic was a success story in building CETT sustainability: The program had scaled-up nationally and also expanded into math instruction. (Details are presented in the third white paper on sustainability). The Dominican experience was of further importance because the Ministry of Education, the USAID mission, and the CETT program had signed a three-way MOU solidifying their partnership.

Unfortunately, though all of the ministries initially voiced their interest, only the Peruvian Minister attended the visit. Nevertheless, this meeting gave the two CETTs a chance to discuss some of the main issues in sustainability, including challenges to program scale-up. Interview respondents reacted to this meeting in different ways. Some Centro Andino respondents viewed the event as a success in hemispheric cooperation and knowledge sharing. The same respondents, however, often focused on the positives of meeting the other CETT rather than the benefits of creating further collaborative ties. Other respondents did not think this meeting was helpful, particularly because two of the ministers did

not attend and, in one respondent's opinion, because the minister in attendance had motives for the visit unrelated to CETT.

Key Findings

- Hemispheric meetings gave the CETTs an opportunity to meet each other, share best practices, and document their CETT experiences. The purpose of these meetings was also to provide expert assistance to the CETTs in various technical areas. However, most respondents mentioned the social aspect of these meetings as the most useful.
- During program start-up, a hemispheric meeting was useful for the CETTs to meet each other and to discuss the regional and hemispheric vision during the program design stage. Unfortunately, only staff from the two Spanish-speaking CETTs attended the meeting in Puebla, Mexico.

Challenges

- A significant challenge to hemispheric cooperation and sharing was the fact that one of the CETTs had English-speaking staff, while the other two were in Spanish-speaking countries and had Spanish-speaking staff. This created a language barrier that divided C-CETT from Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD, affecting both direct interaction and the feasibility of sharing their CETT training manuals, materials, diagnostics, and other products.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

CETT staff and stakeholders shared many insights and suggestions about the regional nature of the CETT program. In all three regions, the overwhelming response from all respondents was that the regional approach of CETT led to a program outcome that was better than what the countries could have achieved individually. Though sometimes contentious, the process that each of the CETTs went through to develop common regional approaches bound them together and created a sense of importance that surpassed the capacities of any one member country. The following lessons learned were gathered from respondent interviews and from the research team's review of key program documents.

General Lessons

1. It is important for the program implementers to establish a coherent and realistic regional vision for the program in the design phase. Based on CETT's experience, the regional vision should clearly state the defining principles of the program, with the understanding that the specific components of the program may be adapted to local contexts.
2. In planning, designing, and implementing a regional program, it is important to allow both time and resources for implementing partners to learn to work together, particularly if the partners have not worked together before.
3. Effective leadership is necessary to promote the regional vision of the program. Key management, whether concentrated in one position or diffused throughout the management structure, should be committed to the regional vision and should be able to overcome obstacles to this vision among the individual member countries.
4. The implementation of a regional program in nongovernmental institutions promotes program continuity and stability over time. Though a regional program needs the support of national governments for implementation, the placement of the program outside of the government decreases the potential for political differences related to regional program goals.
5. Finally, it is necessary to establish the purpose of any hemispheric ties between regional programs, whether it is to share best practices or to collaborate at some level. If the hemispheric purpose of the regional programs is to share experiences and program materials, then barriers to communication, such as language differences, should be considered.

Other Region-specific Lessons

Overcoming Differences. In Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD, the first lesson learned in developing a regional vision was the need to overcome the cultural and philosophical differences that separated the countries. A respondent who successfully navigated the early conflicts commented that it was “not easy to understand another culture.” He continued, “They had to know more about the other's history and be respectful of the differences.” This respondent, a team leader, welcomed the benefits of the regional approach as a model that was more holistic, had the benefits of multiple voices, and contributed to a regional identity.

Developing Program Components. In Centro Andino and CETT CA-RD, the fact that the countries spoke the same language did not mean that they had the same education systems or that identical teacher training models could be applied. The development of CETT components, such as the teacher trainings, materials, and diagnostic tools, was considered one of the most challenging parts of

the CETT experience. Most respondents agreed that they did not anticipate that developing the CETT components would take as long as it did. In their work on assessment and testing, the CETTs struggled to create tests that could be used in all of the member countries. That this component was perhaps the least developed was in itself a lesson learned.

Maintaining Communication. The CETTs were able to overcome their differences and build successful CETT programs because of their constant communication with each other. Respondents noted that the use of virtual communication, such as Skype, was an important tool for facilitating the implementation of the program. They also agreed that there were serious challenges to virtual communication, especially in times of disagreement. During those times, face-to-face contact was usually needed in order to resolve the issue.

Working with USAID. The regional program was commissioned by USAID Washington, managed by AOTRs in three USAID missions, supported by staff in local USAID missions, and implemented by institutions in each member country. This created an involved system with many potential stakeholders. Most interview respondents mentioned that the roles and responsibilities of USAID staff, both in Washington and in local missions, needed to be clearly defined in a regional program. Further, the relationship between the donors and the implementing partners, especially in circumstances where several implementing institutions made up one regional CETT, needed to be clearly defined as well.

Recommendations for Future Programs

The following recommendations have been identified for future regional efforts in educational programs, particularly in cases where the program's implementing institutions are not ministries but various partners in each member country.

- Devise clear definitions and goals of what "regional cooperation" will be and whether it will include continuous cooperation or only cooperation at certain phases of the program.
- Plan whether regional coordination should happen at the level of national, institutional, or private partnerships. A regional program at an institutional level will bypass many of the difficulties of getting MOEs to work together. However, the lack of MOE involvement at the start may provide difficulties when trying to scale up the program later on.
- Consider finding existing institutions that have a history of regional cooperation, so that the program can build on existing relationships. If possible, work with implementing partners that are knowledgeable about international regional programs and have worked with international donor programming.
- Delineate clearly the roles and responsibilities of USAID management of regional programs, whether implemented from Washington, D.C. or from local missions.
- Work closely with implementing partners and host institutions to find and foster effective regional leadership of the program, including knowledgeable individuals without biases for or against any one country's efforts who are able to promote a culture of regional cooperation.
- Ensure that implementing institutions have the necessary technical assistance and support in the early stages of program design and implementation. Promote effective communication between regional partners.

This white paper has endeavored to shed light on the conditions that hindered and supported the achievement of the regional objectives and shaped regional outcomes. Based on the evidence and data collected, the CETT program was valuable in creating a regional program superior to what each country

could have created on its own. Each of the CETTs formed a strong bond and commitment to its collective regional goals. This collective strength came from the realization that the regional nature of the CETT program should be considered the highest priority. One region even developed regional standards for reading and writing that impacted national curricula.

Many respondents commented on the fact that “no one country had all the expertise needed” to carry out the work needed in CETT. Instead, they came to rely on the strengths of each country to produce a regional product. This synergistic way of working was particularly evident in attitude changes, a necessary factor in the process of achieving a high quality and regionally valid outcome.

