

E. INFORME

Project Title: Inclusive Education Project for Children with Special Learning Needs

Organization: Manos Unidas

Amount of support: \$10,000

Report Period: June- August

1. Information

I. Project Objectives (short term and long term)

- a. Include 15 students with intellectual disabilities into public regular education classrooms
- b. Insert 3 specialized Camino Nuevo teachers full time into 3 public regular education classrooms in 3 different schools to attend to the 4-5 Camino Nuevo students included in the same classrooms
- c. Hold awareness workshops with three different target groups of each school: teachers and professionals, parents and classmates
- d. Bring awareness to the regular education community that children with disabilities have the right and the ability to study alongside same aged peers and should not be excluded from society
- e. Teach typical peers how to befriend, respect, tolerate and have empathy for people with different abilities.

II. Results to date

- 14 Camino Nuevo students have been included into 3 different public school classrooms, all students began the year with a full inclusion model as of March 11, 2013. Due to the demand for space at Camino Nuevo we opted to immediately include the students in the 3rd classroom that was to be partially included.
- 3 Camino Nuevo teachers are successfully working within two 3rd grade and one 5th grade regular education classroom within 3 different public schools
 - CE “Andres Alvarino Caceres” in the Zarzuela neighborhood, 3rd Grade classroom
 - CE “Los Nogales” in the Los Nogales neighborhood, 5th grade classroom
 - CE “Velasco Astete” in Los Alamos neighborhood, 3rd grade classroom
- Visitation schedules by the academic coordinator of our team SANEE have been formally presented to each institution, visiting the school once a month for a period of 2-3 hours. To this date, several different visits have been made in order to organize the relationship between the Camino Nuevo teacher and the Public school teacher, review curriculum and programming, and organize workshop dates.
- 5 Workshops have been held to date with student and teacher populations within “Velasco Astete” and “ Los Nogales”

- The Camino Nuevo team has approached 3 state preschools for potential “convenios” to begin progressively including our four 4 year old students this year, setting up the relationship with the school for full inclusion in 2014 in the 5 year old class. We have been rejected from two preschools, showered with excuses as to why they cannot accept our students. We have a potential with one preschool and are currently in the process of negotiating terms and trying to convince the teachers to at least open the doors for inclusive recesses.

III. Participation of the beneficiaries with the project

The identified beneficiaries with this project are: the included students with special needs, the classroom peers, and the parents and professionals of the regular education schools. I had a meeting with all three Camino Nuevo teachers in July to interview them on their progress, hear their frustrations, successes and suggestions to improve the program. In all three programs, the Camino Nuevo students are excelling academically, evidence shown in their permanent work, evaluations and data collection.

Profesora Yuneli who works in “Zarsuela” reports very positive success with her 5 students, all of whom had behavior and attention problems at the beginning of the year. All students are now able to work at a fairly independent level, attend to lessons in the class, participate accordingly with school and group activities and are excelling academically.

The last time I visited “Los Nogales”, our fifth grade inclusion classroom, I was so impressed by the friendships that have been made between our students and their peers. Even though 5th grade can often be the “cool” grade where cliques form and segregation of “un-cool” peers is typical, these students have such open hearts and willingly invite the girls to play volleyball at recess and help them with their studies during class time.

All three regular education teachers have been very cooperative with our program this year, willing and interested in learning how to work with our students and making an effort to do so.

IV. Unexpected Results

Upon interviewing the 3 Camino Nuevo teachers, a positive unexpected result was learning that each teacher loves the inclusion program and would prefer it over teaching special education in an isolated setting. That was interesting to me because I would assume the opposite. Since our teachers do not have their own classrooms, they cannot always run things the way they want, and are subject to the decisions of the regular education teacher, I would imagine the contrary. But all three teachers expressed their content with being recognized in the schools for the work they carry out, their unique abilities to manage our students and their positive influence on the school in general.

2. Short summary of the execution of the project to date

This month we are putting together a new promotional video about Manos Unidas and our inclusive focus. The video follows the story of Matsue, one of our students with Autism included in “Zarzuela”. As part of the video, we had an opportunity to interview the classroom teacher, the sub-director and school director with wonderful results. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes, answering questions in regards to the government’s position and involvement with inclusive education, how each one of them perceives our program, what they have learned from our program, how they would like to continue in the future and their personal perspectives of people with disabilities. This was a very positive experience for us. I think they enjoyed discussing the situation in detail and feel like their roles are important and persuasive for future decisions not only within their institution but perhaps in influencing the educational system and its approach to Inclusion.

In general the project is going very well, we have been dedicated to supervising and participating with all three inclusion classrooms. The only one in which we have not been able to complete as planned is the area of family workshops. This year unfortunately we lost our psychologist and have yet to hire a new one, therefore have not been able to carry out all of the workshops with both our own Camino Nuevo families or those of the regular education school. Despite this setback, we are currently interviewing for psychologists for 2014 – it is very hard to find a good psych here!

In lieu of our school growth and program reputation this year we chose to add a 4th member to our leadership/administration/coordination team. Laura Rocaspana, our new program coordinator, is a social worker from Spain with a Masters in Inclusive Education. She has been active in overseeing our Inclusion program, identifying areas to improve and organizing external workshops and training sessions with our teachers. She is working closely with our team “SANEE” to make sure the program is precisely executed.

The last workshop of the year is being organized for October. This workshop will unite all three Camino Nuevo teachers and their partner teachers in the regular education schools as well as sub-directors and school leaders to study best practices in Inclusive Education. The workshop will be led by CN school director Rosa Mercedes, CN academic coordinator Rufminia Rojas and CN’s new program coordinator Laura Rocaspana. The intention for this workshop is to provide our teaching teams with useful tools for their partnership and inform regular education teachers and professionals of the details of our program and specific information regarding pathologies of our included students.

3. Beneficiaries to Date

- 14 Camino Nuevo students included into 3 regular education classrooms
- 3 Regular education teachers benefitting from the co-teaching model with Camino Nuevo teachers
- 3 Regular education classrooms with approximately 90 typically developing students between the ages of 9-11 years old who are sharing the inclusive education experience
- Approximately 90 families who has 1 family member studying alongside a child with a disability and is learning to be aware and sensitive of this reality
- Approximately 30 professionals within the 3 schools who have received our initial workshop and are becoming more open and aware to working with students with disabilities in their school

4. Learned lessons

When we interviewed the teacher and directors of “Zarzuela” we learned that the biggest barrier for successful inclusion is fear. Fear of the children themselves, fear that their differences will interrupt the classroom, fear that children will mistreat them, fear that teachers will be observed in their classrooms. When we asked the interviewees how they think we can best extinguish that fear, their responses were unanimous - through experience, exposure and programs like ours. Good lesson learned!

Another lesson learned: You cant change the system all at once, it takes time. You also cant change everybody’s way of thinking. In one of the preschools that rejected us, we were literally yelled and thrown out of a classroom by an old grouchy 4 year old teacher who told us blatantly that she wasn’t interested in learning how to work with special needs, there is no space in her classroom and she was too old to deal with trouble. Yikes! Some things you just have to accept.

5. Other

6. Attach photos and Video

See attached PDF and Video of Camino Nuevo students in Zarsuela on school sports day

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Signature:



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