

E. INFORME

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

Organization: Manos Unidas

Amount of support: \$10,000

Report Period: February – May 2013

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.
- 2 workshops have been held to date in CE Velasco Astete school, one for the teachers and professionals and one for the students. We have a schedule of workshops lined up for all schools over the next 2 months.

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. As of date, the Camino Nuevo students are adapting very well to their inclusive environments. They have made friends with the classmates, earned respect and overall enjoy school. The beginning of the school year was a little frustrating for a couple of our students as it was their first inclusion experience so there was some adjustment to new routines and new environments. The classmates of the 3 classrooms have shown excellent adaptation with our students as well, have shown interest in their learning and in all 3 schools often play with our students at recess. The professional teams in each of the school have been open to our workshops, visitation schedules and over all very collaborative. Camino Nuevo parents have been participating in parent meetings and school activities at the regular education schools demonstrating their interest in the inclusion of their children.

IV. Unexpected Results

A few positive unexpected results that have occurred so far is we have found the schools themselves to be much more inclusive of our students and teachers, they are invited to participate in school marches, fundraising activities and sports days. This is a very positive sign, demonstrating tolerance on many levels of the school population.

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

The beginning of the school year started a little bit hectic as always. There was a lot of time spent by the Director a few weeks prior to the school year starting, supporting the inclusion families with formal registration within the regular education schools, placements and those last convincing conversations to make school directors feel secure about their new partnership with Manos Unidas. We had a few bumps to begin with, the most recent school we have our new contract with received our students but placed them in an "extra" classroom space with only 3 other students, a classroom the size of a storage space. As the months have passed there is now a total of 20 students in this "closet space " but somehow the classroom remains functional. There are the typical obstacles one has to face when you have two teachers working side by side in the same environment too. It takes a lot of work to develop a good working relationship and our coordinator is doing her best to problem solve and issues that arise within their environment.

We received 2 new students into the program this year, almost meeting our goal of 15 students. Both students are known past students to us and have returned to the school and are great candidates for this program.

Rufminia, the academic coordinator of the team SANNEE has done an excellent job at organizing and executing site visits to date. She is a fabulous mediator and we have seen that her position is vital to the success of the inclusion project. There always seems to be small obstacles and challenges to face that always need an intermediary (whether its if the regular education teacher includes the Camino Nuevo students within his report card system or how the regular education teacher shares his programming calendar with our teacher) there always seems to be something that needs support resolving.

We have been a little slower than projected in executing the awareness and capacity building workshops due to scheduling conflicts and lack of human resources but have several workshops included during the month of June. Unfortunately our psychologist who was responsible for these workshops quit after a 1 month and we have not found an adequate replacement yet.

Overall the Inclusive Education Project is running smoothly and we are pleased at the way our students, families and members of the regular education community are responding to our inclusion model.

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

(Describe the lessons you have learned via the organization or the beneficiaries where it can be applied)

The biggest lesson we have learned this year is the need to have someone FULLY committed to this program and organize activities with a lot of anticipation. We need to organize the first workshops immediately when school starts during the month of March or before so schools and families will be more prepared for us. We need to have a visitation and workshop schedule presented within the first few weeks of the school year.

5. Other

This year has been a more difficult year than the last few years. The Manos Unidas co-founder and school director, Mercedes, is finishing her last year as a tenured employee of the state meaning she is not working at Camino Nuevo in the mornings and she is the principal person responsible for creating direct relationships with the inclusion schools and organizing activities. Our proposed workshop schedule has been quite delayed this year due to restricted time schedules and lack of quick organization within the first two months of school. Manos Unidas has also experienced a succession of difficult situations within the first 3 months of the school year (unexpected new teachers to train, teachers quitting due to physical ailments, psychologist quitting, opening new classrooms due to demand) which has taken 100% focus away from the Inclusion program, hence the delay in organizing workshops.

6. Attach potos (attached in email)

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Signature:

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