

Mexico (Nuevo Leon)

**NCCEP Consejo Nacional de Alianzas Educativas
(National Council for Community Education Partnerships)**

This project focuses on improving academic achievements and reducing drop-out rates at schools in impoverished suburbs by establishing contacts between students (age 12-15), parents, school staff and community experts from social and private sectors. Features include young professionals from local universities who mentor students at risk of failure (“amigo mentor”); a centre for care of adolescents and their families built within the school so that an exchange is stimulated between the school and social workers, nurses and other professionals who work in the centre; and an empowerment programme to enable student mothers to generate sufficient income to prevent families from taking their children out of school. Funding also involves public-private partnerships with companies whose workers live close to the school.

Main focus of innovation: CONTENT, RESOURCES

Other keywords: blended/non-formal, equity

General Information

Name of the ILE: NCCEP Consejo Nacional de Alianzas Educativas (National Council for Community Education Partnerships)

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Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

The education in this century should no longer be considered a task for teachers only and just from academic point of view besides, it has to be equitable for those who lived on the breadline.

Seeing ahead, the National Council for Community Education Partnerships (NCCEP) Mexico develops an innovative education model that involves the participation of the entire community including the private and social sectors to build important bridges to reach unique learning opportunities for students and their families in impoverished suburbs.

By working with school principals, teachers, parents among many other actors in the education arena, the program addresses the educational challenges of public education in a holistic way; in other words, the change in the public education system occurs not just in the classroom, but in the different spaces and interactions the student has access to, such as his/her family, peers, friends, teachers, principal, mentors, tutors, sports mates and program coordinators.

An interesting NCCEP Mexico example is the one taking place in Santa Catarina, Nuevo Leon, where the population inhabiting the industrial area of this municipality has been benefited from their direct intervention in the public junior high schools: Secundaria Técnica No. 31 Dr. Mateo A. Sánchez Treviño, Secundaria 8 Lic. Ignacio Ramírez y la Secundaria No. 5 Federico Cantú (there are some learners from these schools who belong to the morning and late shift).

In these schools, The NCCEP Mexico has promoted an innovative proposal for the comprehensive attention to the student can also serve to the educational system to stimulate the active participation from the diverse society sectors (citizens, private and public sector), achieve decrease the main education problems such as school dropout and school fail; and overcome the obstacles posed by the contexts of marginalization to education.

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

The NCCEP Mexico educational model wants to improve the student academic achievement and decreasing drop-out of school.

That's why the NCCEP Mexico developed a strong academic performance in areas like Math, Sciences, Reading and Writing, English, Technology and Information Systems and Community outreach. There are four formal but flexible ways to achieve this goal: Strengthening school staff's professional development; implementing education technology in the classroom; promoting education success through parents and community and; mentorship, educational guidance and follow up to students.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

It primarily reaches 12 to 15 year old public school students, (junior high school students) bringing pedagogical, financial, human and technical resources to schools, to improve academic performance and decrease school drop-out. Since 2006 we are currently serving 2046 students in Santa Catarina, Nuevo Leon.

Secondly, but not less important is the program's impact on adult learners. According to the Council's paradigm the change must come in a holistic way, this is why parents and school staff development is so important to the program. That's why, the programs that integrate the NCCEP Mexico educational model reaches parents and families, teachers, students of other schools in the area and members of families living in Santa Catarina's industrial zone although not belong to the junior high school's participants.

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The educational model involves a big number of facilitators according to the executed program. Such as the head of the academic work like the Math Lab are their own teachers, which are constantly training by Texas Instruments professionals and University math professors who help the teachers to introduce technology in their classrooms.

The program called "Amigo Mentor" (Academic Enrichment and Student Mentoring Program) which introduces students to the world outside of their neighbourhoods by bringing volunteers and young professionals from local universities to serve as Big Brothers and Big Sisters in an effort to be positive academic role models for students to emulate. The program creates academic and emotional support to students at risk of dropping out school.

About the community programs, there are many other good examples of the kind of facilitators and program operators such as: the Red Cross paramedics teaching students on first aid, psychiatrists and psychologists from local practices or well recognized mental institutions working with students and their parents; legal advisors empowering mistreated women; social workers from the State's Secretary of Social Development visiting student's homes; professional cooking instructors and artists helping moms make handcrafts and food for their business and schools; among many others.

For this task, NCCEP Mexico conducts workshops with the organizations to teach them a same language in terms of evaluation, objective and goal writing, program structuring, among others. NCCEP has also a Program Selection Committee and mechanisms to research and chose from the best local, national or international programs available.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

In contrast to traditional education programs at a classroom level, the model proposed by NCCEP Mexico addresses the education challenges both at a classroom and at a school level.

For instance it gradually brings research based - national and international- education programs completely aligned to the national curricula, although delivered in non-traditional ways by experts of the different kinds of disciplines.

At a classroom level it build up on the basic courses (Math, Science, Reading and Writing, Technology, Community building and English), at a school level develops teacher training, parent engagement, school leadership development, etc.

The NCCEP Mexico educational model works the same way for each of the participating school. The following are some of the most relevant programs.

The "**Program Using Technology in the Learning of Math**" seeks for training in pedagogy the introduction of training materials that could enrich the existing math curricula and program through the use of digital calculators.

In addition, the program is conducted with the development of pedagogy retreats that enhance the transference to technology in the learning of Math. The tool used in the strategy is the Texas Instruments Navigator System and all the schools have designed and set up a Math and Sciences Lab in their facilities to provide the training. In the classroom, the teacher poses a problem for all students and each of them, with calculator in hand, must answer the question. The calculators are connected wirelessly to a central computer and turn it to a project, so the answers from all students can be seen on the board, creating a dynamic of “trial and error” where the students built themselves their own knowledge based on practice, analysis and discussion in the classroom. One of the advantages of this project is that all the participating students and the teacher provides immediate feedback to reinforce or correct what has been learned.

Another example is the program called “**Amigo Mentor**” (Academic Enrichment and Student Mentoring Program). This program wants to raise academic achievement in students with high risk of dropout or reprobation, with the support of a mentor. The program it’s develop by a group of volunteers, social service college students or young professionals who give support in academic matters, extracurricular education activities and encourage students to keep in school and raise its quality of life in the short and long term. Based on a diagnosis made at the beginning of the program, the school looks for students who are at risk of failure and are channelled to the program, which has six months duration. Mentors offer advice sessions on Saturday and provide a report with comments and observations about their intervention. They also document hours of work, activities, and evaluations about their student case. Also, these sessions serve for that the mentors or guests to shared their experience as a college student or professional, which serves to motivate students to continue their higher education and to visit universities, cultural or recreation. One of the virtues of this program is that the work between the youth mentor and student takes place in an atmosphere of empathy and trust, which helps overcome the deficiencies of school.

The “**Centro de Atención Integral al Adolescente CAIA**” (Centre for Student Empowerment) is the great example of the way NCCEP participates with the school community involving every sector. This Center resembles school-based Health Care Centers that are being created in some US communities.

It was built based on the need of the school community; a socio-academic diagnosis with the communities was performed in advance for that matter. The Centre was built inside one of the schools –which yet, it’s a non common way to operate in Mexico; its impact reaches the group of schools that are part of the alliance. Although the building is an important part of the program, the most important piece is the union of at least 14 NGO’s and government’s education and health agencies that implement their projects in the schools; these organizations work professionally in programs such as: health prevention, youth leadership, drugs and early pregnancy prevention, eating and mental disorders, first aid, development of computer skills, mentorships, etc. for students; and self-esteem, small business start-ups, legal advisory and leadership programs for student’s parents.

A whole army of mentors, nurses, social workers, coaches, psychologists among many others work every day at the Centre. They focus their attention on the academic status of students enrolled in the schools affiliated, engaging the community in all sorts of activities towards achieving academic excellence in students. However, the Center also attends students of other schools, young people, adults or any person of Santa Catarina who wants or requires this attention.

In Mexico, this Center is one of very few, of its kind focused exclusively on the special needs of adolescents.

One program dedicated to parents is “**Madres Comprometidas**” (Committed Mothers) which uses empowerment and entrepreneurship training strategies to recover women self esteem and start small community businesses, generating sufficient income to prevent families from taking their children out of school; are ways to engage mothers and families in the academic lives of their children.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

Santa Catarina is an example of urban marginalization, a municipal city located next to one of the most important cities of Mexico: Monterrey. Santa Catarina has serious problems related to a high incidence of alcohol and drugs abuse; a high unemployment and underemployment rate; low educational attainment rates among youth and adults; illiteracy; gang and graffiti; and a lack of employment opportunities which is cause for an increase in interfamily violence and the disintegration of families and their moral values.

For example, before CAIA, Santa Catarina didn't have a place to provide help, advice and give support to teenager students.

In this context, and perhaps as a consequence, schools that implemented the NCCEP Mexico's model recorded rates of up to 15% of school dropouts and 30% fail in classes.

The entry of NCCEP Mexico and their partners in Santa Catarina, has helped the schools are better equipped and more involvement of the school community. For example, now have classrooms with computers for students and organize visits to the parents in the math lab to learn the use of calculators.

Given that the NCCEP Mexico educational model is comprehensive (academic and community) all its actions seek to counter the weight of the social and economic context mentioned above. However, the goal will be slow and long term.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) was created in 1998 and is based in Washington D.C. but works all over the USA. NCCEP's mission is to increase educational achievement and access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students. NCCEP seeks to accomplish these goals by promoting, facilitating and coordinating the creation of community/ education partnerships among schools, parents, community, organization, government agencies, foundations, business, colleges and universities.

In 2006 NCCEP agreed to coordinate and direct the work of several foundations and corporations that have signalled an interest in helping Mexico to improve their educational system as a way to improve public education on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

Once established, one of the aims NCCEP Mexico was to improve the academic achievement and avoid junior high school dropout in slum areas where there are the highest dropout rates and the most vulnerable students.

Participant schools are chosen from highly marginalized urban communities, based on field and data research. Santa Catarina in Nuevo Leon it's one of them. It has an unfortunate record of gangs, drugs and crime among youth.

The NCCEP Mexico's proposal was presented to Santa Catarina, being well received, after a meeting with the 35 junior high school's principals in the District were invited to participate; freely accepts to be integrated the 31, 8 and 5 junior high school.

NCCEP Mexico began working in these schools to incorporate their academic programs, but once analyzed the socioeconomic and cultural context of the area it realized, that besides the academic support to school should attend and address some issues that affect or hinder the progress academic performance of junior high school's students.

Because of this NCCEP Mexico implements youth development programs like youth leadership, health education, drug and early pregnancy prevention, college-going culture, sports, civic education and personal values. By this project was created and installed the Centro de Atención Integral del Adolescente (Center for Care of Adolescents) a space designed to attend not only the student's need also the parents and teachers.

There's where the Community outreach programs develop like voluntarism, public-private partnerships in support of education, family and parent engagement, leveraging government's resources at the state and local levels, and School leadership programs, as transforming school for academic excellence, improving management and leadership styles, promoting flexibility and innovation to improve the teaching and learning functions, providing professional development for teachers –math, sciences and education for democratic citizenship.

Briefly, an academic project implemented in three junior high schools is becoming social engine for the entire town industrial area, not only beneficial to the community of the three junior high school involved, but to students of other schools, their parents and other residents of the Santa Catarina's industrial area.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

The financing of the project is started by the Governor of each state where the program is implemented, the State Government works directly with the Department of Education, and the Municipal Government to involve private actors in the initiative. In each state a Business Council (*Consejo Empresarial por la Educación*) is created to fund the operation of some of the programs and the NCCEP office, at a state level, through their Corporate Social Responsibility Programs, the Council has also the task of involving more corporations into the partnerships.

For every program a public-private partnership is created in order to fund the implementation of the program from beginning to end. Each member of the partnership has a specific responsibility that regards funding the implementation, operation, evaluation or systematization of the specific program. The partnerships are formed by actors from different sectors: the schools; the Department of Education; the Municipal or State Government; a local or national NGO; a local, national or international business corporation; or philanthropic foundations.

The CAIA it's an instance of how it's funding a project. The CAIA was build with the contribution of private companies such as Yesera Monterrey, DAL-TILE Mexico, S.A. de C.V. and Concretos la Silla, S.A. de C.V. Other organizations that participated in the development of the model were: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo Leon, Universidad de Monterrey, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Fundación Santos de la Garza Evia, Fundación Frisa, Supera and CAPA, among others.

It involved funds from several private companies whose workers live nearby the area, some companies contributed with building materials, another put the fence, some others put the computers, and special permits were issued by the government agencies in a timely fashion.

An interesting aspect of this alliance is that the companies and organizations are linked to Santa Catarina, because there are located or by the work they do in the area.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

It is soon to find dramatic changes in the change of school culture -since the project has started in schools in 2006.

NCCEP Mexico has been doing a large databases and information that is continuously producing and analyzing.

However, NCCEP Mexico has been studying the impact of the programs in student academic achievement and socio-emotional behaviour, finding initial trends on student engagement towards better academic performance and the decrease of conflicts in familiar and scholar contexts.

It has implemented several focus groups and interviews with principals, teachers, students and their parents collecting valuable data for qualitative research. The different groups coincide that the social issues of the community such as violence, drugs, gangs, prostitution, lack of positive role models and lack of access to better job and learning opportunities are a community's priority to solve.

For example, the junior high school teachers are more dedicated to the student's academic issues than personal problems. There is increasing participation of mothers in the educational activities of CAIA; at the beginning attending 30 now are able to 200.

That is why the concentration of programs from the beginning in 2006 was focusing on building the community's bonds and structures to operate, without of course delegating the academic piece, which is most important.

Another reference for the well-executed model it's that started in three states (Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua and Veracruz) but in 2009 it will be expanded to 10 states.