

# *ELTEACH* IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

COSTA RICA

MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2014



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## **Front Cover:**

Monte Verde Reserve, Costa Rica

Frans Lanting/National Geographic Creative

# 1

## Challenge and Program Selection

**Costa Rica is one of the most visited countries in Central America and a leader in attracting foreign direct investment in the region. Because of this, tourism and international trade play an increasingly important role in the country's growth.**

Given the importance of English as a tool for communication in these two key areas, the Costa Rican Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP) faces a number of challenges in ensuring the quality of English language education across Costa Rica's seven provinces.

As part of its mission to exchange knowledge, specialized assistance and technical support between Costa Rica and the United States, the San Jose based Costa Rica and USA (CRUSA) Foundation agreed in early 2014 to fund a professional development program to address the quality of public-sector English language instruction.

*ELTeach* was selected for its scalability and measurable outcomes, combined with the capacity to train teachers in both urban and rural areas. This online, self-access program, which

includes two courses and associated assessments, *English-for-Teaching* and *Professional Knowledge for ELT*, had been previously implemented in six countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

**“I am really happy with *ELTeach*.**

**It is not only a course, it is something that teachers can really use in the classroom.”**

**– Mr. Ivan Mora,**

**MEP English Regional Advisor,**

**Perez Zeledón Region**

# 2

## Implementation

In partnership with Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano (CCCN), *ELTeach* was offered to 345 public sector teachers in southern rural areas of the country.

The locations selected for this first implementation in Costa Rica were in the regions of Pérez Zeledón, Coto, Aguirre, Grande de Térraba, Upala and Guapiles. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1: Regions of implementation in Costa Rica.

**“The content I learn today,  
I can immediately apply  
in the classroom tomorrow.”**  
**– Rebeca Morales,**  
**Pérez Zeledón Region**

Because of distance and remote access, these rural areas had been overlooked in previous face-to-face teacher development programs. As an online program that trains teachers in the specific classroom skills and knowledge, *ELTeach* was an excellent fit for this project.



With assistance from the MEP, teachers were recruited from each region and were asked to choose which of the two courses—*English-for-Teaching* or *Professional Knowledge for ELT*—they felt would be most beneficial to their own professional development.

Of the teachers that were recruited, 79% reported that they had a basic or low intermediate command of English. 72% of the teachers had over five years of experience in the classroom; 68% were teaching in public primary schools.

**“This program allows us to grow as professionals, and it makes us more aware of the great responsibility we have within the classroom.”**

**– Adriana Hidalgo,  
Pérez Zeledón Region**

#### Implementation Schedule

Dates	Course & Assessment
March - September 2014	<i>English-for-Teaching</i> and <i>Professional Knowledge for ELT</i>
September 2014	<i>TEFT™ Assessment</i> and <i>TPK™ Assessment</i>

Given the importance of motivating and supporting teachers in online professional development programs, CCCN and the MEP assigned each region a coordinator, whose role was to monitor and ensure good progress through the course.

After an initial face-to-face orientation provided by the academic support staff of CCCN, the teachers were given access to the online courses from March through September 2014.

At the end of September, teachers sat for the *TEFT™ Assessment* (*Test of English-for-Teaching*) or the *TPK™ Assessment* (*Test of Professional Knowledge for ELT*), at testing centers specifically organized by CCCN’s support team.

**“What I value the most about the program is its user-friendly platform. It is easy to navigate, even for people like me who are not very tech-savvy.”**

**– Jose Leiva,  
Pérez Zeledón Region**

# 3

## Results

**Course completion rates were very high, which reflects the perceived relevance of the program content to the teachers' classroom work.**

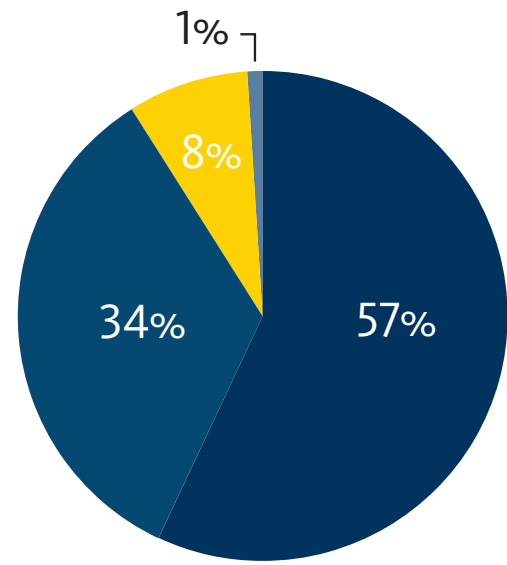
Each assessment has its specific set of Band descriptors that detail what the test taker knows and can do.

Of the 153 *TPK* assessment takers, 57% scored in the highest band, Band 3, 34% in Band 2, and 8% in Band 1. (See Figure 2)

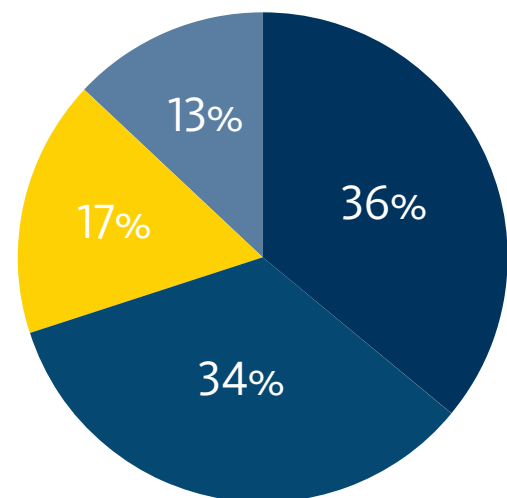
Of the 47 *TEFT* assessment takers, 36% placed in Band 3, 34% in Band 2, and 17% in Band 1. (See Figure 3) Groups that performed best on this assessment had higher average completion rates of course materials.

Many teachers reported an increase in their ability to use English in the classroom as well as improved confidence in English language teaching methodology. Additionally, increased confidence was reported in using technology. For many of these teachers, *ELTeach* was their first time using technology for professional purposes. The training was a unique opportunity to combine teacher development in content with training in digital literacy.

MEP, CCCN, and CRUSA received score reports from National Geographic Learning and Educational Testing Service (ETS) that can inform future implementations of the program in Costa Rica.



**Figure 2:**  
*TPK™ Assessment (Test of Professional Knowledge for ELT)*  
**Scores by Band**



**Figure 3:**  
*TEFT™ Assessment (Test of English-for-Teaching)*  
**Scores by Band**

# 4

## Next Steps

During the program, CCCN collaborated with the neighboring bi-national center in Nicaragua, the Centro Cultural Nicaraguense Norteamericano. Subsequently, the US State Department funded an implementation with 200 Nicaraguan teachers, which began in October 2014.



Central Valley, Costa Rica

Jeff Mauritzen/National Geographic Creative

**“After learning about new teaching techniques and evaluation strategies, I consider the program to be more than useful – it was essential to my professional development.”**

**– Sergio Ugalde,  
Guapiles Region**



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