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CONFERENCE REPORT

SAN PEDRO SULA, HONDURAS – MARCH 28-29, 2012

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Honduran Minister of Youth Marco Midence, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean Mark Lopes, and World Bank Senior Social Development Specialist Rodrigo Serrando-Berthet participate in a live webcast (question-and-answer session) moderated by David Josue Medina Lopez, the communications officer and outreach center coordinator for the USAID-funded Youth Alliance Honduras.

The author's 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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Building Safe Communities Learning Exchange took place in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on March 28 and March 29, 2012. The event was co-sponsored by USAID, the U.S. Embassy of Honduras, The World Bank, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the local newspaper La Prensa. The purpose of the exchange was to assemble public (at the national and municipal level), private, and NGO leaders from the U.S. and Central America to identify pressing issues, brainstorm solutions and elicit information to aid in the development of strategies that will enhance the capacity of institutions and communities to implement interdisciplinary and inter-institutional crime and violence prevention initiatives.

Key note speeches were given by the President of Honduras, Porfirio Lobo; U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, Lisa Kubiske; World Bank Country Manager for Honduras, Giuseppe Zampaglione; USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mark Lopes; and San Pedro Sula Mayor, Juan Carlos Zuniga.

Additionally, representatives from Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, Belo Horizonte, Bogota, Johannesburg, Mexico City, and across Central America shared lessons learned in crime prevention, providing alternatives to gang involvement, and fostering healthy, strong communities. Over 250 participants were part of this two-day event and over 100 press representatives covered the event.

Participants were encouraged to take full advantage of this unique opportunity to build a transnational network of practitioners working to develop prevention strategies in Central America, South America, the United States and other countries. In addition, the conference provided the space for leaders in the field to exchange best practices and models of successfully implemented prevention strategy programs.

The following were the key objectives of the Learning Exchange:

- Discuss and build consensus on critical elements of a strategy to Building Safe Communities that takes a whole-of-community approach to prevention.
- Explore opportunities to better align individual prevention efforts and knowledge, and ultimately leverage greater resources from the public and private sectors, and mobilize the community to action.
- Identify collaborative roles for local and national governments in prevention initiatives.
- Lay the foundation for forming and growing a "community of practice" to share viable information and collaborate across sectors to achieve safer, healthier communities.

More than 200 Hondurans actively participated in the event, including the Minister of Security, the Minister of Youth, a representative of the Government of Honduras' "Safe Municipalities" project, the Director of the Honduran National Association of Private Businesses (COHEP), and a representative from the National Municipal Association of Honduras (AMHON).

Davos-style discussions allowed for interaction among panelists and participations to discuss the following modules: National Prevention Frameworks that Address Safety and Security; Innovative Public-Private Partnerships in Prevention; Developing alternatives to detention and incarceration and reducing prison populations; Comprehensive Public Safety Approaches and Partnerships in Preventing and Reducing Gangs, Violence and Crime; Interrupters- Effective Approaches in Preventing and Mitigating Violence and Supporting Community Safety; Youth as Agents for Change; and Municipal Prevention Planning, from a Honduran Perspective.

The opening session included keynote speeches and a musical presentation by a young artist who won a USAID youth against violence competition, which was webcast live on both USAID and La Prensa's websites. The second day featured a live webcast social media question and answer session where moderator David Josue Medina Lopez, Communications Officer and Outreach Center Coordinator for the USAID-funded Youth Alliance, posed live questions from Facebook and Twitter to Honduran Minister of Youth Marco Midence, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean Mark Lopes, and World Bank Senior Social Development Specialist Rodrigo Serrano.



Music presentation by Edwin Turcios from the Honduran Youth Against Violence Movement.

The two-day event ended with participatory small sessions to encourage dialogue and debate and help participants reflect, prioritize, and commit to action. The result was the identification of several key elements and steps that need to be taken to successfully develop and implement a Municipal Crime and Violence Prevention Plan. Emergent themes included:

- Youth must be central actors in prevention activities.
- Private sector participation and partnerships between the public and private sector is vital to reducing violence.
- Prevention will not work without effective law enforcement and the foundation for effective enforcement is trust in the police, which is lacking in many communities.
- A strong education system is the foundation to prepare youth to be part of an efficient and effective workforce, which provides alternatives to violence.

- Interventions which are framed in the context of family and target the family as a whole are more effective than interventions focused on the youth as an isolated individual.
- Media can play a role in transforming public opinion and should give space for positive news and the prevention message.
- Collecting and analyzing both hard and soft data is critical to successful prevention efforts for the both the police and the rest of government.
- Funding should be based on results and prioritization of activities should be based on solid data received from police and others working in the communities.
- Infrastructure and public space are important elements of creating a strong and safe community.
- A holistic and integrated approach to family, community, government, NGOs and the private sector is key to effective prevention programs.
- No one approach will work for every community and each unique community needs a customized, unique intervention.
- Municipalities have an active role to play in citizen security and crime prevention.



Juan Carlos Zuniga, Mayor of San Pedro Sula; Lisa Kubiske, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras; President Porfirio Lobo of the Republic of Honduras; Mark Lopes, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID; and Guiseppe Zampaglione, World Bank Country Manager gave opening remarks.

PLENARY: OPENING REMARKS

The two-day learning exchange kicked off with opening remarks by Master of Ceremonies Gerardo Tablas, Public-Private Partnerships Advisor, USAID El Salvador . Opening session panelists included: Dr. Juan Carlos Zuniga, Mayor of San Pedro Sula; Lisa Kubiske, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras; Guiseppe Zampaglione, Country Manager, World Bank; Mark Lopes, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID; and President Porfirio Lobo of the Republic of Honduras. Each expressed their commitment to addressing the issues of citizen safety and building safe communities.

Dr. Juan Carlos Zuniga, Mayor of San Pedro Sula, discussed the efforts to improve citizen security throughout San Pedro Sula, which he noted is recognized as one of the most violent cities. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) financed prevention project known as Paz y Convivencia Ciudadana works in 17 of San Pedro Sula's municipalities and focuses on infrastructure to help prevention efforts, such as the construction of libraries with state of the art technology and soccer fields, among other investments. With over 10,000 at-risk youths as its target, the program has built 10 outreach centers where youth can participate in sports and receive different types of support. The program is also building a house for street-children and giving them medical services that focus on rehabilitation and eliminating drug addiction. USAID has also provided support in San Pedro Sula through the Youth Alliance project. The focus of their interventions is on workforce development and job creation, and they partner with local churches across different denominations as well as with local service providers. Dr. Zuniga expressed that while they are currently focusing their efforts on prevention and expect to see success through these and other projects, they have much to learn from past mistakes and need to bridge partisan divides that continue to derail some of their efforts. To this he noted his frustration with the problem and asked everyone to join together to fight for the future of youth.

Lisa Kubiske, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, started off by explaining the objectives of U.S. assistance to Honduras which hinges on improving education and preparing youth to enter the formal economy. Ms. Kubiske highlighted that youth need to see options in the licit economy or prevention efforts will not work. The U.S. government is working on workforce development and education and has linked this to real opportunities through alliances with the private sector. Working in a safe and legal environment, contributing to



Conference Participants

the betterment of their families, and to the greater prosperity of Honduras, gives youth a sense of pride. She noted that the problems facing youth in Honduras are not isolated issues but rather a problem that faces the whole region. The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) created in 2008 has provided over \$361 million for improved citizen security in the region. In Honduras, the U.S. has assisted the government on programs to help prevention efforts and to make the judicial system more effective and transparent. Vice President Biden visited earlier this month and reiterated the U.S. commitment to helping with security in Central America. She concluded by noting that there is a long and difficult journey ahead, but with strong leadership and tenacity Honduras is on the right path to make the necessary changes.

Guiseppe Zampaglione, World Bank Country Manager, noted that the economic impact of violence is very high in Central America. The World Bank estimates that 7.7% of GDP is lost to insecurity. In Honduras, a country of 7 million, 7,104 people died last year from violence. These figures are not meant to discourage or say that the problem is beyond hope. The solution lies in getting communities which have been impacted by violence to become involved in finding a solution, and striking the right balance between prevention and enforcement. In addition, judicial institutions need to be strengthened to deal with the problems. The World Bank is working on citizen security via the private sector, the media, and civil society and is also strengthening the Ministry of Security. Together these interventions will help create the positive impact needed in Honduras and in the region to improve citizen security.

Mark Lopes, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID, began by explaining that President Lobo had the idea of creating a learning exchange with experiences that have worked both in Honduras and in the region. Social prevention is a slow moving process, without much glamour, however there are success stories we can use for inspiration and models such as Los Angeles contain lessons learned on how to make prevention work. It may sometimes seem that the problem is insurmountable, but we have seen successes in our work. These are not just anecdotal changes but actual measurable changes in the lives of communities and people. In these communities where prevention has been successful, there is a larger sense of security and more confidence in the local government. These successes need to be replicated and scaled up. In order to do that, we need to know what resources are needed from the national government, local governments, international donors, and the private sector. Honduras is on the right path with the National Tax for Prevention which was just passed and gives national and local governments an opportunity to work together for the reduction in crime and violence. Guatemala has created a rewards system where the central government can give more money to municipalities that show progress on prevention. At the international level, we have the group of friends of Central America that is committed to seeing progress on citizen security. Under CARSI, the U.S. government works at the municipal level to develop local solutions, while at the national level it focuses on helping to create stronger institutions. He closed by stating that his goal is that people leave this conference with more concrete ideas for how they plan to make citizen security and prevention work in their local community so that we aren't here again in 20 years asking ourselves the same questions.

Porfirio Lobo, President of the Republic of Honduras, closed the session by focusing on unity. He cited the role of USAID-Central American Integration System (USAID-SICA) to identify a regional solution to the problem of insecurity, as this is a regional problem. Within Honduras, there is already an infrastructure for control via the police, the military, and the judiciary. But Honduras needs to build up the infrastructure of prevention, starting with families and with schools, and incorporating the whole of the society so that no one element is left out. No one knows when delinquency will hit their community and no one is exempt from violence, so everyone should be involved in finding the solution. There are those who are attacking this from different angles, such as a focus on youth, on children, on training judges, but these efforts do not work alone. Only the combined efforts will achieve lasting results. He closed by telling participants that what they learn from this experience of sharing knowledge with each other will help the government create a unified response to this problem.

MODULE I: NATIONAL PREVENTION FRAMEWORKS THAT ADDRESS SAFETY AND SECURITY

Moderated by Ruben Gonzales Jr., Senior Advisor Center for the Study of Social Policy and Los Angeles Neighborhood Revitalization Workgroup. Panelist included: Cesar Caceres, Director of Security Program and Coordinator of External Cooperation, Secretary of Security, Honduras; Luke Tate, Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Enrique Betancourt, Director, National Center for Crime Prevention and Citizen Participation, Executive Secretariat of National Public Safety, Mexico.

Cesar Caceres, Director of Security Program and Coordinator of External Cooperation, Secretary of Security, Honduras shared that Honduras' efforts to date have focused on developing a comprehensive response that is both grounded in prevention and in enforcement. At the national level, they have passed the Law for Citizen Coexistence (*Ley de Convivencia Ciudadana*), which sets forth basic norms for mutual

respect and order among citizens, which municipal offices can enforce, together with the police. They have also created the National Citizen Security Council (*Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Ciudadana - NSC*), which is a body that brings together all the actors working in the security sector, including the President, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Security, Secretary of Justice and Human Rights, Attorney General, the national police (PNC), and agencies working towards reintegration and rehabilitation. The NSC is responsible for establishing and maintaining close interagency coordination on issues of citizen safety and coexistence. Using data from national observatories and the PNC, members of the NSC recommend policies to address those problems. However, beyond the work that is being done at the national level, each community needs to develop a plan that addresses their specific problems and is grounded in the realities of their community. What a community needs along the border with Nicaragua will not be the same as what is needed in a community near La Ceiba, and so creating one response to the problem will be ineffective. The responses also need to be multi-dimensional and include education, health, justice, and other factors; otherwise the changes will not be permanent.

Luke Tate, Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, spoke of the approach by the Obama administration called the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. This approach is based on research that demonstrates that crime



Module I: National Prevention Frameworks that Address Safety and Security

prevention is most effective at the community level rather than at a personal level. He highlighted that data is available in the U.S. that shows the probable outcome of a child based on the zip code in which he or she was born and grew up. In poor neighborhoods, the poverty is systemic and has endured for generations. The Obama Administration wants to make inroads to help move children out of poverty, enjoy safety, and have real economic opportunities for their futures. The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) is a joint project between the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human services, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Justice. This group works with state and local government agencies and makes a concerted effort to coordinate across agencies and work from the national to the local level.

NRI bases its work and interventions on data gathered from a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. It tracks money spent in different neighborhoods and the outcomes, which allows NRI to learn what is working and what is not. If neighborhoods don't meet results, then they don't receive more money. In the U.S. crime prevention and neighborhood revitalization has historically been a local government initiative. This is the first time that the national government has gotten

involved to this extent. Some of the lessons learned include that there is no one solution to the problem, rather they must be customized. NRI tries to meet the local communities where they are in terms of their capacity. If they have low capacity, then they work with those communities much more closely, whereas if they have proven that they have the capacity to manage the programs on their own, then they are given more freedom to operate.

Enrique Bentacourt, Director, National Center for Crime Prevention and Citizen Participation, Executive Secretariat of National Public Safety, provided insight into Mexico's national strategy, which focuses on three elements: combating organized crime; strengthening justice institutions; and prevention. Mexico created a National Center for Prevention of Crime (*Centro Nacional para la Prevención del Crimen*) which designs public policies for crime prevention, and relies on an integrated approach towards the prevention of violence through economic development, improvement of livelihoods, and social development. Like the U.S. strategy, they also recognize the neighborhood as the area of intervention for prevention activities. This is complemented by the legal framework which includes *La Ley General de la Prevención de la Delincuencia*, which brings together the three levels of the government: national, state, and local. He has found that the most successful strategies, similar to what has been done in Ciudad Juarez, have both short term and long term goals and interventions. In Ciudad Juarez, they started by re-habilitating 10 public parks. Something that small had a ripple effect and the



Audience Questions

community saw the impact it made. This can be built upon to make longer term changes. The National Center bases its funding on results. Once they see small results, then they provide incremental funding. They don't just give large amounts of funding all at once, as they have found this to be an effective approach.

From Your Perspective, What Is the One Thing Needed to Make Prevention Efforts Successful?

Mr. Bentancourt shared that he believed the one element was political will. Successful models in Los Angeles, Medellin, and other places, have shown that they put their greatest resources towards the problem and devoted real financial and human capital to it. It's a priority with a capital "P". Mr. Caceres felt that empowering the local community was the answer. He argued that you must make the community the leader and active players in the change. This includes the private sector and NGOs. Mr. Tate believed that the solution was in developing a multisectoral approach that draws on all the elements of a community, from health, to housing, education, and economic opportunities.

MODULE II: INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN PREVENTION

Moderated by Gerardo Tablas, Public-Private Partnerships Advisor, USAID El Salvador. Panelists include: Maria Dolores Nieto, Director of Education & Workforce Development, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; Jairo Garcia Guerrero, Director of Security and Community, Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, Colombia; Luis Larach, Paz y Convivencia Project, Honduran National Business Council (COHEP); and Fernando Ávila Ortega, Director, Local Council of Ciudad Juarez, Foundation of Chihuahuense Businesses.

Provide an Example of a Successful Public Private Partnership (PPP) Intervention

Luis Larach of the Honduran National Business Council (COHEP) shared that through a USAID project they work to reintegrate former-gang members into the private sector. The chamber of commerce has intervened to help place these ex-gang members into different businesses with reasonable success. They work to change the mindset of business owners afraid to take in ex-gang members by reinforcing the message that the danger isn't for these businesses to take these youth in, but rather if they don't, then they are likely to reintegrate into the gangs.

Fernando Ávila Ortega, Director of the Foundation of Chihuahuense Businesses in Mexico, shared that through a partnership with the teachers' union and the private sector they are now able to offer an extended school day. The program called *Ampliando el Desarrollo de los Niños* allows children to stay in school longer so that the school day matches the work day for working parents. The extended hours focus on academics including tutoring and recreation through arts and sports. In addition, they are able to provide meals to the students to ensure that they are meeting their nutritional needs.



Module II: Innovative Public-Private Partnerships in Prevention

Maria Dolores Nieto, Director of Education & Workforce Development in the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, explained that through the Chamber of Commerce they work with youth ages 16 and up to help them finish high school, develop work skills, and assist with job placement. They work with the private sector to ensure that there are adequate job placement opportunities and scholarships for college. In Los Angeles they have a lot of support from the private sector for programs that help youth stay in school, and find job opportunities.

Jairo Garcia Guerrero, Director of Security and Community of the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, explained that they work with the media to conduct annual quality of life surveys so they can gauge the way their citizens are feeling about public policies, including what is and is not working. This allows them to adjust their strategies accordingly. The private sector has an important role in building security solutions through ongoing dialogue.

What Motivates the Private Sector to Combat Crime?

The panelists discussed the situation in Mexico. In Mexico, the private sector sought out the support of the government. They wanted the situation to improve, but they found that when the government changed every six years, the programs that the government was financing would also close down. With each change of government programs had to start over again from scratch. By getting involved and becoming a partner to the government, they have ensured sustainability of projects beyond the life cycle of the current party in power, and this means that their agenda continues to get pushed forward.

What Makes PPPs on Crime Prevention Successful?

The panel concluded that there are several factors that make PPPs successful. The private sector is efficient and nimble, and the government has the political will to make change happen. Each brings these strengths to the table, but they are more effective when they partner with each other. One of the critical elements of a successful PPP is to be demand driven. For example, Los Angeles has focused on providing the workforce that the private sector needs, creating a win-win situation. Other panelists noted that using the private sector's knowledge of the local landscape is also invaluable. The government can invest money in a community, but if they don't know what the community wants and they build a basketball court when the community wants a soccer field, then it will never get used and it is a wasted investment.

Building Trust Between the Government and Private Sector to Reduce Crime

One important element of creating successful PPPs is building mutual respect and trust between the government and the private sector. On the one hand government transparency is essential, and on the other having strong and efficient NGOs and private companies that know the local landscape and are directly working on these topics is critical. The panelists suggested that this is one area where the international donor community can really play an important role. They can strengthen the government by creating projects that focus on improving the capacity and management of institutions, which will in turn generate more confidence in their ability to manage public funds. They can also provide funding to the private sector to strengthen local organizations, be they private or non-profit, to more effectively meet their goals. By providing support to both actors they can ensure that these partnerships are built on a strong foundation of trust and mutual respect.

Another important element of building successful PPPs is creating the infrastructure or framework so they can work together, and creating clear rules for how the partnership

will work. It's important to develop a formal mechanism for consultation and goal setting, so that everyone is invested in the plan and knows what needs to be done to meet their goals. This should ideally be a constant dialogue between actors. When deciding what to fund and how, it's important to use good data collected from crime observatories and other sources so that one knows how to best channel their money towards specific interventions.

Finally, it's important to remember that trust building goes both ways. In cases where the private sector is contributing funds to a government managed project, then the government has a responsibility to act transparently and provide donors with information on how the money will be spent. Private businesses contributing to a public fund want to see a return on their investment. And vice-versa, governments giving funding to local organizations through grants want to ensure that their public funding is being used effectively in the community. It's understood that governments have a responsibility to the community to provide certain services, but we should not forget that the private sector also has a responsibility to the community through their work.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In Honduras, the government has now implemented a tax on private businesses to fund security activities. However, many firms go beyond their minimum legal responsibilities and have also created foundations to help with projects that they find beneficial to communities they work in. These companies are rooted in the communities, and so they have a vested interest in improving the areas where they operate and where their employees live.

Building Regional PPPs in Central America

El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have similar problems and are seeking solutions, including exploring how private companies can be a part of the solution. Within the private sector, companies are realizing that a lot of individual efforts don't have the desired impact. However partnerships efforts can have a greater impact. Panelists discussed that a lot of time people only approach problems at an individual level. However, when an individual realizes that it's not only their problem, but it is also the problem of their neighbor, and of the greater neighborhood, it helps individuals, and the private sector, acknowledge opportunities for coordination.

MODULE III: COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY APPROACHES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN PREVENTING AND REDUCING GANGS, VIOLENCE, AND CRIME

Moderated by Ruben Gonzales Jr., Senior Advisor, Center for the Study of Social Policy and Los Angeles Neighborhood Revitalization Workgroup. Panelists include: Guillermo Cespedes, Deputy Mayor, City of Los Angeles; Vincent Holmes, Director, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office; Lieutenant Cheryl Newman-Tarwater, Community Based Information System Manager, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Deputy Chief Patrick Gannon, Watts Community Safety Partnership, Los Angeles Police Department; and Jim Rose, International Narcotics Law Enforcement, Regional Gang Advisor, U.S. Department of State.



Module III: Comprehensive Public Safety Approaches and Partnerships in Reducing Gangs, Violence and Crime

What Factors Make Young People More Likely to Be Involved in Gang Violence, and What Factors Has Your Program Influenced?

Los Angeles has spent a lot of time researching this question and has developed a framework to understand what drives people to join gangs by looking at community, individual, family, and social groups. Vincent Homes of the Los Angeles County Chief Executives Office argued that it's a complex problem with several different causes, among them truancy or disengagement with the education system, a weak family structure, and individuals lack of engagement in their community. Another important factor is the existing level of violence in a community. They focus their efforts on family strengthening and building up the fabric of the community. Strong families and institutions (particularly education) can provide a structure that youth need and can invalidate the youth's need to join a gang.

The Mayor's Office in Los Angeles has created a program called Summer Light Nights to deal with spikes in violence they saw every summer when youth were out of school. It's an anti-gang initiative that keeps parks open after dark during the peak hours for gang activity, and provides free food and other programming such as sports and cultural activities to draw the communities into the parks. This program has been successful in reducing violence and a 50% drop was seen in gun shots fired in the communities where they run the Summer Light Nights program.

One of Los Angeles County's successful programs works with families of youth incarcerated in state detention centers. They have found that younger siblings often

model the behavior of their older brothers or sisters and try to use this opportunity to break the cycle. This approach looks beyond the one youth to the larger family and provides counseling and other services.

What Los Angeles Successes Can Be Shared with Central America?

The gangs that exist in Los Angeles are the same gangs that operate throughout Central America – namely the Mara Salvatrucha (MS13) and the 18th Street. These gangs began in Los Angeles with communities from Central America. Given their commonalities, there are lessons learned from Los Angeles that can be translated to the regional context.

Los Angeles has struggled for over 40 years with a gang problem and they have tried a variety of different approaches towards addressing the problem, including a law enforcement-only approach. Many of these didn't work but some have succeeded. In 1992, Los Angeles had a murder rate of over 1,100 a year. In 2011, they had reduced this number to 200. Among their successful efforts has been embracing “hard-core” gang intervention, where they support former gang members in stopping crime in their communities by serving as “interrupters” of violence. They have also developed community safety partnerships in the police departments. Police working in target communities look at data such as how many people are outside after dark and other indicators of citizen safety, rather than typical police data such as the number of arrests made or the number of crimes committed. This changes the focus on policing within a neighborhood. They have also ensured that they have both leadership at the top for these initiatives and partnerships at the community level to propel them forward. Finally, they have also structured their programs to respond holistically. For example, Guillermo Cespedes' role in the Mayor's Office is not simplistically gang reduction, but he also addresses economic development, two problems that go hand-in-hand.

Another important element of Los Angeles' approach is their commitment to look more concretely at the root causes of violence and crime through their Community Based Information System (CBIS). The CBIS is an innovative data-mapping project that paints a comprehensive and real-time picture of crime statistics and community characteristics, from social services to demographic profiles. They look at data such as number of school aged children in a given neighborhood or the number of liquor licenses per person in a community, rather than just measuring a community by its level of crime. They can now connect better to the communities by understanding what services exist and where there are gaps in services. The CBIS also provides real time intelligence between local, state and federal agencies. Having this data helps law enforcement do smarter policing and their ability to focus their efforts on prevention.

What Is the Role of Law Enforcement?

Effective law enforcement is central to successful prevention strategies. However there are a couple of key factors to make law enforcement more effective. The first is to have a clear picture of what you want to achieve so that law enforcement is used productively. In El Salvador, for example, the police made over 15,000 arrests of suspected gang members based on association. However, the justice sector wasn't able to handle this

capacity, and most of those arrested were released back into their communities. The second is to build trust between the police and the community. This starts by having strong leadership and an effective disciplinary system. Both the community and those in the police department should understand that it is never okay to break the law to enforce the law.

In Los Angeles, they have created School Resource Officers, which are police that work on campus. They have found that insecurity is a big hindrance to learning, and if kids don't feel safe at school, they can't learn. Having police on campus is essential to creating an environment where children can focus on learning and not on whether they will be safe in school while walking between classes. This also has a secondary effect of building trust between the community and the police who work in the neighborhood because children get to know officers personally, and vice-versa.

What Are Some of INL's Programs?

The International Narcotics Law Enforcement (INL) provides training and support to police departments throughout Central America. They operate under the assumption that crime has no jurisdictional boundaries and solutions need to be transnational. INL has instituted a robust officer exchange program which has brought members of the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County on temporary assignments to train and share best practices with their Central American counterparts. They have also organized study tours to the U.S. INL's regional training program focuses on intelligence based policing, with is smart policing based on the combination of data and human intelligence. This helps them determine how to direct their resources against gangs. They focus on using limited resources and the idea that you can make the biggest impact on crime and violence by focusing on the most violent perpetrators. INL has also focused its efforts on building trust in the police in communities where not much trust exists by building bridges between youth and police. They have developed curricula for elementary and junior high students, which has been scientifically validated, to teach them the dangers of drug use and gang involvement. They have trained around 135 police in Central America in this curriculum. They are also focusing on building up victim support services, which can be very scarce. People are often afraid to speak up because they fear a reprisal, which in turn makes prosecuting these cases very difficult.

How Do You Transform Communities?

Community change is often driven from within. This was the case in Los Angeles, where the outrage of community members, particularly mother's burying their sons, was one of the biggest catalysts for change. However, there are structural reasons why communities are slow to change, such as their housing infrastructure, education system, and the community's access to health services. Los Angeles identified 14 different neighborhoods that were in need of transformation and re-development. These were communities where there were high incidences of gang violence and low provision of services. While they have seen changes in all of the areas where they work, they have seen transformation in only two of these neighborhoods so far. The community should

not be an afterthought to the program. They should play a central role in the programs that are being developed.

One of the biggest ways to transform a community is to reclaim public space. In some communities in Los Angeles County, there was a strong sense of social isolation felt by the residents. They never left their houses because they were afraid. They decided that they wanted to try to reclaim the parks as a community space where neighbors could feel safe. The outcome was that neighbors who had lived next door to each other for years and had never spoken to one another now had a safe to meet each other get to know one another. By rehabilitating the parks, they are able to establish community cohesion.

Another factor to be considered is that perception is not always aligned with reality. In conducting a public opinion survey a majority of people thought that the police were the major perpetrators of crimes. A majority also felt that they would personally be the victim of a crime within the next year even though statistically only 4-5% of them had actually been a victim of crime in the last year. This survey showed the importance of community members having the necessary information to make informed decisions. This also ties into sharing successes so the community is aware of the progress being made. Media has an important role to play in ensuring that it accurately portrays facts, so that it does not perpetuate misperceptions within the community. Media outlets that sensationalize crimes should be penalized. The media also needs to share the positive activities and successes that are happening in a community to help offset negativity, which can often permeate reporting.

What Is the Impact on Women?

In Los Angeles, women are often targets of violence, whether in the neighborhood or at home. In Central America, there is a growing incidence of violence against women and an increase in femicides. There are some great resources available such as www.girlsInGangs.com, which is a website that looks at the role of women in gangs.

Closing Thoughts

Los Angeles has had many successes in their efforts to combat crime and reduce gang involvement. From a law enforcement perspective, they have seen a huge reduction in violent crime. From the Mayor's office, they are seeing greater community engagement along with a reduction in crime. The Los Angeles Chief Executive Officer stated that although they continue to see youth with exceptional challenges in their way, he also sees hope in their future. The panel concluded with the thought that the idea that they are "at war with gangs" is dangerous because these individuals are still our youth, and our future.

MODULE IV: INTERRUPTERS- EFFECTIVE APPROACHES IN PREVENTING AND MITIGATING VIOLENCE AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SAFETY

Moderated by Enrique Roig, Coordinator, Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. Agency for International Development. Panelists include: Frank Perez, National Director, CeaseFire; Claudio Beato, Coordinator, Center for Studies in Crime and Public Security, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil; Paul Lewis, Director of Training, Youth Link, North American Family Institute; Guillermo Cespedes, Deputy Mayor, City of Los Angeles; and Stewart Wakeling, Executive Director, California Partnership for Safe Communities.

What Successful Crime Prevention Strategies Has Your Program Employed?

One of the successful models implemented in Los Angeles to reduce the incidence of crime has been the use of interrupters, which is based on the CeaseFire model. This has been particularly effective in reducing retaliatory strikes between gangs, which was one of the biggest factors in high crime rates. This system works because violence interrupters are “credible messengers” who still live in these communities and are known entities to those still involved in gangs. Interrupters are able to talk to gang members and individuals about to commit violent crimes because they are often respected members of the community, and know the context and individuals they are speaking to. As such, the message coming from the “interrupters” is better received. The interrupters use a behavior change communications approach. Gang members have learned to respond to certain incidents in one way, and the interrupters are trying to demonstrate an alternative way to respond to that same incident. The interrupters are paid staff members and work for the Mayor’s office. The Mayor’s office maintains direct contacts with the police department and is notified within 15 minutes of any suspected gang-related incidents. The interrupters, who in order to maintain their credibility must not be seen as having any relationship or ties to the police, are then notified of the incident and report to the scene. The Mayor’s office has two interrupters assigned to each of the 14 target neighborhoods. The CeaseFire violence interrupter model does not always yield short-term results, but it’s important to remember that the problem didn’t develop overnight, and that the solution also takes time.

California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC) also focuses on changing behaviors but has found a different platform than the use of interrupters. They focus instead on using the community and other social actors to pressure youth to change their behaviors. They engage a broad cross-section of community members concerned with violence, which can include faith leaders, community organizers, youth, and others, to build alliances in each city where they work. CPSC’s approach is the direct communication of an anti-violence message.

Youth Link and the North American Family Institute (NAFI) have created the Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) to address violence in Boston, focusing on the most dangerous

neighborhoods. They found that a lot of police departments thought they were doing community policing, however they weren't doing it correctly and thus police were still viewed as outsiders in the community. There was a high level of distrust and misperceptions that existed between police and youth, which this program seeks to address. On one hand, this program teaches police how to talk to community members; on the other, youth learn how to mediate conflict and communicate effectively. They build the relationship between the police and youth through dialogue, which in turn builds trust. Building the relationship between the police and youth is essential to allowing both of them to learn about each other. It also teaches youth how to effectively communicate to those in positions of authority, whether it be their parents, teachers, or employers. This program has since been exported to Belize in partnership with Partners for Democratic Change. The program in Belize and Boston has seen some real success in building bridges between police and youth in the communities where they work.

In Brazil, the focus on crime reduction was targeted towards revamping the police, strengthening the justice system, and creating better social services and infrastructure in the *favelas*. There was a period of time where police could not even enter the *favelas*. The first step was to clear out the armed drug traffickers to make the areas more peaceful. In some very entrenched areas, they had to use the army to do sweeps of the neighborhoods. Once the area was cleared they could send in the *Policia Pacificadora*, or peacekeeping police, who provide a permanent police presence in these neighborhoods to ensure the gangs don't return. All of the police are trained in community policing. With police now controlling these areas, the government can now offer services and do work on prevention and mediation in these areas.



Module IV: Interrupters – Effective Approaches in Preventing and Mitigating Violence and Supporting Community Safety

What Have They Done to Sustain the Short-Term Changes?

Success breeds success, and once you've made some small noticeable changes, it's easy to turn them into longer term successes. One of the biggest challenges in trying to do some of these longer-term preventative approaches is not to allow setbacks to derail the program. There may be a murder or a small spike in murders that will allow some dissent to grow, and the voice of those advocating for a tougher law-enforcement-only approach can overshadow the strategy that you are laying the ground for. As such, it is important that you have leaders supporting your strategy, as they will help you push forward even when you do have setbacks.

In Brazil, they have built upon their success in pacifying slums by expanding state services and improving social services in the communities. They provided basic services and public works, including: installing proper water and sewer services, paving streets,

providing street lighting, landscaping public areas, and creating sports fields and recreational areas. They also have started to focus on bringing healthcare and education to the communities. In Belize, where the North American Family Institute (NAFI) has implemented the Youth and Police Initiative (YPI) program, they were able to negotiate a gang truce through a known mediator, and they have had significant reductions in violence since the truce was signed.

What Advice Would They Give to Others Trying to Start Their Own Programs?

The consensus from the group was that there is no single solution to this problem, and that the combination of a variety of strategies is what makes interventions successful. The approach is dictated by the community and too strenuously embracing one model is ineffective. In Sao Paulo for example, they have employed different strategies in different areas and customized each approach to each neighborhood. This was reiterated by the group from Los Angeles who mentioned that you can't treat all gangs the same. For example, they have very different approaches towards African American gangs than Latino gangs. Learning about these models, it's important to remember that they are tools in the toolkit, but aren't solutions to every problem. Each one needs to be evaluated on its own merits. Community buy-in where the approaches are implemented is also essential for success.

What Role Do the Police Have in Prevention?

The Youth Link Model focuses on building the relationship between police and at-risk youth before they join gangs. Youth Link programs would not be successful if they didn't have the commitment of the police leadership. The Brazilian example also reinforced the message that building trust between the police and the community is essential. When they asked the community to share their biggest problem, they would answer that it was the police. When asked what social service they wanted most, they would say police. So it was a



Youth Volunteers

love-hate relationship, and one that needed to be fixed so that the police would provide services the community wanted. The experience of *Alianza Joven* (Youth Alliance), a USAID-funded project in Honduras that works in about 25 of the most violent communities in the country, found that they did not need the police to do a "clean sweep" of the communities so they could start their work. However, they argued that a sustained law enforcement presence is essential, because they have seen that when law enforcement leaves the neighborhood the murders start again. Although the role of the police is

important, the panel was unanimous in arguing that law enforcement cannot do it on its own.

What Risks Are There in Working with Former Gang Members as Interrupters?

There has been a lot of success with the interrupter model and very few of the individuals picked to serve as in this role have returned to their old lifestyles. In fact, less than 5 in 300 have relapsed back into gang life or using drugs. The interrupters are mostly people who have been incarcerated, and they go through a thorough screening process before being selected to be part of the CeaseFire team. The program takes precautions and does criminal checks and drug tests on a regular basis in order to maintain the credibility of their program.

What Is the Family's Role in Prevention?

Family based services are extremely important and are an important complement to all interventions. Those without strong family ties are more likely to join gangs, so helping to create stronger and more functional family units is an important part of the solution. In Los Angeles there are three generations of families in neighborhoods where they work. They target different programs towards these different groups.

MODULE V: YOUTH AS AGENTS FOR CHANGE

Moderated by Gustavo Payan, Project Director, International Development Division, Education Development Center. Panelists include: Iris Zuñiga, Chief of Staff, Youth Policy Institute; Benjamin A. Torres, President/CEO, Community Development Technologies; Robin Toma, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations; and Salvador Stadthagen, Chief of Party, USAID Regional Youth Alliance Program, Creative Associates.

The panel started with the idea that we need to re-imagine the role of youth. We tell children that they are leaders of tomorrow but we need to make them the leaders of today. We need to start perceiving and treating youth differently. The promise of the present is very powerful to youth. Edwin Medina, a representative of the youth and a beneficiary of the USAID-funded Improving Education for Work, Learning, and Success (METAS) project, commented that it's difficult to grow up in an environment where there aren't opportunities. He and his friends live day by day in neighborhoods that are afflicted by violence and have very few opportunities for improvement. He's seen many of his friends join gangs or other illicit groups, and many have died as a result of those affiliations. From his perspective, youth want to be useful members of their communities, but when those options are not available, youth are drawn to other opportunities. This was reiterated by another youth representative from the METAS project, Issamar Cordona, who stated that youth want support to move ahead and want opportunities to showcase their achievements. The youth need a push to keep them motivated to persevere against the odds.

What Are the Most Effective Ways to Target Youth?

Benjamin Torres of Community Development Technologies, a Los Angeles based non-profit dedicated to promoting economic opportunities and justice for low-income residents, shared that in some Los Angeles neighborhoods a staggering 50% of students don't finish high school. To help turn this around and give youth the foundation they need to become successful members of society, they have focused on engaging and enabling youth leadership and making youth the champions of change in their communities. They ask the students

what they want, and then work to make those ideas a reality. One example of this was in south Los Angeles. The youth leaders and the community decided that they wanted better access to mental health services. They felt that the whole community had become



Module V: Youth as Agents for Change

depressed from having lived through so much violence and from a lack of opportunity. The success of this was staggering. The students who went through the program have all gone to college and are now coming back to their communities and continuing to push forward positive change.

Iris Zuñiga of Youth Policy Institute, which provides education, training and technology services to lift families out of poverty, stated that they work with youth to explore options and then help them devise a plan to reach their goals. For example, if a student wants to go to university, they help them map out a plan to get there. They also provide training to youth who have dropped out of school, and help them get their GEDs or pursue other studies which allow them greater future opportunities.

Robin Toma is with the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, which works to develop programs that address racism, homophobia, religious prejudice, anti-immigrant sentiment, and other divisive attitudes that can lead to inter-cultural tension, hate crimes, and related violence. They team with law enforcement, schools, community-based organizations, youth, the private sector and other leaders to resolve inter-cultural conflicts through non-violent conflict resolution. Through their work they have also targeted youth through investments in schools. They have developed programs to help them resolve conflicts without resorting to violence as well as provide trainings on anti-racism. They have also developed programs to help teach youth valuable life skills, such as how to dress for a job, how to deal with conflicts so they don't escalate into fights, and how to talk to women at the workplace.

Salvador Stadthagen is the chief of party of the USAID-SICA Regional Alliance Program which works in the northern triangle areas of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to improve the justice sector, rehabilitate and reintegrate ex-gang members into society, and prevent youth from joining gangs. He stated that he's started to see children of 10-12 years old joining gangs, which means that prevention efforts need to start earlier and with a younger demographic.

How Does Your Organization Involve Youth In Programming?

Mr. Stradthagen shared that making youth a subject of the intervention and not an object of the intervention is important to a successful program design. On the USAID-SICA Regional Youth Alliance program, they have developed *centros de alcance*, or outreach centers, which are meeting places and training centers located in the heart of high conflict areas. They are also places where children and at-risk youth can avoid the temptation to join gangs or use drugs and are provided with work training, primary education, and other opportunities. Most of the outreach centers are staffed by youth, providing a peer-to-peer exchange. In some cases, they have ex-gang members involved, but this is not as common under their approach. Having youth get involved also allows them to feel useful, increases pride, and it allows them to show their leadership skills by mentoring those younger than them.

The Commission on Human Relations looks for innate talent in youth and then focuses on building off of this. Through one of their programs they have had youth groups start to

make music about social situations they were facing, such as racism or violence. Not only does this raise awareness of those issues, but it also makes the youth the drivers of the message. The panelists picked up on this idea and emphasized the importance of finding unique attributes in youth rather than viewing them as being homogenous – some are good at public speaking, while others are good at organizing. They also shared that youth need empowerment in a different way than adults do, for example, they like to learn through activities that are physical and fun. They need dynamism.

What Is the Role of Family?

In Los Angeles they are also looking at how to transform communities through the family. The children may have one vision, such as employment opportunities, while parents may have other ideas for how they want to see their neighborhood change, and taking both ideas into account is important. They have also found that if the values at home are different from the values that are being taught at school or through other community programs, then the child will be conflicted. However, if you bring parents on board change can start to take place in the family. The Youth Policy Institute uses families in their planning and development for this very reason. If there is a student who wants to achieve a certain goal, say going to college, engaging the family in that goal is important. Otherwise, they might try to derail the work of the youth for various reasons. This approach also helps parents understand their role in the success of their children.

Another important issue to consider is the disintegration of the family and the role that this has on youth development. This is one of the primary challenges encountered by the USAID-SICA Regional Youth Alliance program. Many of the youth they help through their outreach centers are being raised by single mothers or grandparents, either because of migration for better job opportunities, or because of other dysfunctions within the family unit. As a result of the breakdown of the family unit, many youth feel alienated within their families. Knowing that the family can also be a source of problems, the program uses mentors that can share their own experiences and help youth find solutions.

How Can Schools and Education Be Part of the Solution?

In Los Angeles, they have developed a vision for what students should learn and when. If the topic is sex education and teen pregnancy, the target audience might be 14-18 year olds, but if that is the first time the message is introduced, then it's too late. So, they have developed a plan to reach students with these messages years in advance and then reinforce the messages throughout the curriculum. They also work on teacher training so that teachers are aware of the reality of the students' lives and can approach them from that place. For example, a student may be working two jobs to help support their family, or raising their younger siblings, and those are factors that need to be considered.

In Los Angeles all students are required to do 40 hours of community service and write a paper about the impact of their work. This helps create a bridge between community groups and students and reinforces the sentiment that schools are not islands but are part of the community too.

In Honduras, the infrastructure of the educational system is the second largest investment in the country, after roads. There is generally a school in every community. However, there is a missed opportunity to exploit and use this existing infrastructure for the development of the community or to keep children occupied. The challenge before them is to break down the walls of distrust that make the schools islands within the community. The schools should be the life-force of the community and a place where children can play safely and where parents can get additional support they need, such as adult education classes or workshops on parenting skills.

What Are the Major Elements of Success?

A coordinated response between the youth, laws, education, parents, the private sector, and the community is the only way that this will happen. Remember that youth are not the problem, but rather part of the solution.

MODULE VI: MUNICIPAL PREVENTION PLANNING

Moderated by Carlos Loria, International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Director, AMUPREV. Panelists include: Juan Carlos Zuniga, Mayor, San Pedro Sula; Enrique Molina, Honduras Special Investment Fund (FHIS) Barrio Ciudad; Guadalupe Lopez, Municipal Association of Honduras (AHMON); Rosario Arias, President, La Ceiba Red Cross and President, Municipal Violence Prevention Committee of La Ceiba; and Allan Ramos, Mayor, Puerto Cortez, Honduras.



Module VI: Municipal Prevention Planning

What Should Be the Role of the Municipality in Prevention?

The municipal government has an extremely important role to play in the reduction of violence and crime and in creating the conditions to improve the lives of citizens. Honduras is currently undergoing a decentralization process where services formerly managed by the central government are being re-assigned to the municipal governments. However, this is still a work in progress and different municipalities have achieved greater or lesser control over the management of services within their boundaries. The central government is responsible for enforcement and prosecution, and oversees the national police, while the municipal government is responsible for prevention efforts through health, education, arts, and upkeep of public spaces. In this environment of transition it's important to find the balance of where one ends and the other starts. Making this work relies on building the relationship between the national and the municipal governments.

One of the biggest responsibilities of the municipal government is education. Providing a strong educational system is an investment in human capital and can turn youth into a resource demanded wanted by the private sector. The municipalities try to introduce prevention at all educational levels – elementary, secondary, and college – including through arts and health services.

What Is the Role of Infrastructure in Prevention?

The Honduras Special Investment Fund (FHIS) was created to work on major construction and infrastructure projects and has now re-focused their efforts on social prevention. *Barrio Ciudad* is a World Bank Financed project whose objective is to improve the quality of life for the urban poor in Honduras and to enable municipal

governments to continue and sustain such improvements. The project focuses on city-level infrastructure projects to promote urban development and attract new investment, and the development of municipal and community prevention strategies that enhance community security and integration. They begin by conducting an assessment of existing patterns of violence in each neighborhood so they understand the needs of each community. They then look at what infrastructure is working for the community and what isn't, to then develop a plan for whether they should rehabilitate a park or install street lighting. Developing the proper infrastructure to promote economic opportunities (building a central market, or improving roads to reach the market) or to create a better sense of safety (installing street lights) improves the lives of those in a community.

What is AHMON's Role in Crime Prevention?

The role of the Honduran Municipal Association (AHMON) is to advocate for decentralization while strengthening the municipal government's institutional capacities and create the conditions for local economic development. The association ensures that within municipal development plans, there is a focus on citizen security in addition to the other items being discussed. The development of these plans is a collaborative process with elected community representatives, youth, community organizations, and citizens from a diverse set of backgrounds. All the plans are built from the ground up so there is a lot of community involvement. There are often partisan interests and it's sometimes difficult to reconcile these differences, but it is necessary to negotiate until a consensus is reached. Once they have developed a vision, they also need to allocate the budget necessary to follow through on these plans. AHMON also helps ensure that municipalities take ownership of crime prevention and don't treat it as though it's a national government problem. They help to build the relationship between the municipalities and the relevant national level agencies, whether it's the police or urban development, in order to make sure that municipalities are receiving the support they need to meet their goals.

What Is a Successful Municipal Crime Prevention Effort?

The Mayor of Puerto Cortez noted that the new security tax increased revenue for the municipal government. They created a committee of local organizations including NGOs, private enterprises, religious organizations and others to oversee and administer the activities funded by the tax. They went from having two municipal police motorcycles to having a fleet of 40, with radios and other equipment. However, even with these efforts, there is still distrust of the police within the community. To combat this, they have created a centralized hotline in order get reports and take calls from the community, including reports of domestic violence, crimes, or even a city light that has stopped working, and so on. They also use the hotline to gather data. For example, when they started the hotline 32% of the calls were domestic violence related. The last step has been to install security cameras in strategic areas around the city so they can monitor crime while using limited resources.

Citizen Engagement in Crime Prevention

Looking at citizen engagement from a municipal perspective, it appears that in some places in Honduras the culture of volunteerism is disappearing. This is viewed as a further deterioration of the fabric of society. In cities like San Pedro Sula, the volunteer fire department and the Red Cross have very few youth willing to volunteer. Having people take their personal time to paint walls, serve on a committee, or rehabilitate areas, are an important part of community building, and they need to find ways to re-invigorate that culture of volunteerism to help re-build their communities. This extends into the private sector; although there are some businesses that see the value in investing in their communities, there are also those who don't want to invest. Having a private sector that is invested in the communities where they work is really critical to the success of the communities. This may also help end discrimination against those looking for jobs if they come from certain neighborhoods or communities. The private sector needs to care about the community, and needs to provide opportunities.

Education and Schools

Many of the panels hit on the fact that providing a solid education is a stepping stone to many opportunities. Panelists not only advocated for basic education in reading, math, and other topics, but also specialized workforce development.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION AND INCARCERATION AND REDUCING PRISON POPULATIONS

Facilitated by Sandra McBrayer, Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Initiative and Board Member California Standards Authority and Louise Ehlers, Assistant Program Manager, the Law Program, Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa.

Louise Ehler's began the working lunch program by talking about the initiatives of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa and sharing the problems of the justice system in the region, which works with people who have little financial security and are often unable to access the most basic of services, including food, clean water, housing, education and health services. In Southern Africa, they have very large prison populations as they have dealt with some of their social problems through a heavy enforcement approach. There are a lot of prisoners in jail just because they can't pay bail, so prison has an added economic disadvantage to those already at the bottom of the social ladder. In Southern Africa, like in other areas, prisons can often be universities of crime, so providing alternatives within prisons for reintegration into society is important to breaking the cycle of incarceration and recidivism. In their prisons they have found consistent low levels of education and a prevalence of psycho-social problems, which are issues that can be dealt with through successful prevention programs. Finally, she argued that programs need to start with prevention, extend into incarceration, and then continue through post incarceration and re-integration in order to make sure that they are successful. They should not only focus on one of the three.

Sandra McBrayer of the Children's Initiative California argued that in California they have come to realize that they cannot lock-up this problem away. Their adult prison population is as high as 150,000 and they want to reduce this population by 40,000. They also had 9,500 youths incarcerated, but they have now lowered that to 1,100. They have a significant challenge ahead of them to reduce the prison population by 40,000, so they've tried a lot of different methods to find what is successful. She focused on three key elements: education, partnerships, and a future.

- *Education.* They have found that 80-85% percent of inmates have a literacy problem. Illiteracy is preventable, and recognizing that this is part of the problem allows them to focus on it directly. In schools, they have brought in disguised learning where through music and arts they are able to teach kids without them even realizing that they are learning. They also realized that there was a problem with the parents. They addressed this in two ways. First, they started opening up the schools to parents so they could learn English or improve their basic math skills. They also offered parenting classes and engaged parents by advertising the classes in a non-judgmental way.
- *Partnerships.* They found that the most successful schools are the ones where they have health centers, mental health services, police, and other services imbedded in the schools. Some schools behave like islands within a community, but they broke down

these walls and invited these groups onto their campuses. A lot of communities offer incentives to get teachers, fire fighters, and police to live in the communities where they work, because they know that this is an effective way to build community and relationships. The Federal government and state governments provided funds to teachers to buy houses in the neighborhoods where they work. They have also found ways to move this idea beyond the schools and into religious facilities or private companies that can share their spaces and make them “public spaces” for the community to use during designated hours/days.

- *A future.* You have to provide real opportunities. Not every business is offender or felon friendly. It’s a matter of identifying those that are and then providing offenders with the necessary training to open doors to enter into that line of business.

PRIORITIES AND COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Facilitated by Karina Lehrner, Facilitator, Chemonics International.

The two-day exchange ended with small group sessions where conference participants divided into six small groups with the goal of identifying one to three concrete strategies for developing and strengthening multi-sectoral violence prevention policies and programs to build safe communities. Each small group session began with a time for reflection where participants were given the opportunity to share general reactions, impressions, questions, and comments about the



Priorities and Commitments to Action

information that emerged from the panel discussions. The groups then moved to prioritization, where participants identified emerging priority areas identified during the reflection period. The sessions ended with commitments to action where the group focused on identifying next steps and actions for moving forward, based on the identified priority areas. Following the small group sessions there was a final plenary where each small group presented their priorities and commitments to action.

Emergent themes from the two-day event include:

Youth

Youth are central actors in prevention activities. Youth continue to develop psychosocially through the age of 25, so while they should not be treated like children, they also are not yet fully adults, and interventions need to recognize this distinction. Youth need to be taken seriously, nonetheless, and need to be seen as leaders within their communities. Interventions to engage youth should be ground-truthed with youth to ensure that the planned activities will resonate with them. Youth need to be considered at the beginning stage of planning projects and should be included in designing, implementing, evaluating, and modifying programs. Youth-to-youth exchanges are also fundamental to ensuring the legitimacy and resonance of any message that is being imparted. The CeaseFire model has successfully used re-integrated gang members, for example, who are known as Interrupters, to serve as credible messengers within their communities to disrupt planned violent acts. Identifying youth “champions” that can serve as positive role models and provide positive influence is another way to use youth to directly impact their peers.

Private Sector

Private sector participation in safety initiatives and prevention is vital for reducing violence. The private sector is efficient and nimble and has the local knowledge that is critical to making interventions successful. It is an essential part of the solution. Successful models such as those found in Los Angeles have used the needs of the private sector (demand) to drive their workforce development and education programs, resulting in a labor market (supply) that generates employment. This is a win-win model that can be replicated. Businesses have an interest in improving the communities where they operate and where their workforce lives; if for no other reason than safe communities are good for business. Where resistance from the private sector exists, it's necessary to change the mindsets of business owners that think that not hiring former gang members or people from "bad" communities is a good idea. In fact, providing licit opportunities and employment is probably one of the biggest deterrents to crime. Examples like the ones presented from Mexico also show us that the private sector has an important role to play in pressuring the government to focus resources on prevention, and in making government-run projects sustainable over time.

Role of Law Enforcement in Prevention

Prevention doesn't work without effective enforcement. The foundation for effective enforcement is trust in the police, which is lacking in many communities because of years of corruption, *mano dura* tactics, or neglect. Successful programs in the U.S. such as the North American Family Institute's (NAFI) Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) creates opportunities to bring youth and police together to break down the walls of distrust

between the two groups and allows for community policing to be more effective in those neighborhoods where they have implemented the program. Another successful model is one being implemented in Los Angeles, which places police inside of high-crime schools – providing an atmosphere of safety within the campus and allowing students to focus on learning. The work of INL and others, who provide training and mentorship to police officers in Central America, is critical to continuing to reform the police departments to



Presentation by the World Bank of *the Hive*, a knowledge platform on fragility, conflict, and violence, which provides both an online and face-to-face communication platform for the community of practice working on these issues to share and build knowledge.

make them more effective and increase confidence in their abilities. Finally the police need strong leadership in order to set the tone and reiterate the message that no one is above the law, and that it's never acceptable to break the law in order to enforce the law.

The Brazilian example of sweeping the *favelas* provides a great example of how successful police work can be transformative to a community. Once the gangs were removed, the government was able to follow with health and social services to residents, which previously had been impossible to provide. The counter example to this is the one shared from El Salvador, where the police made nearly 15,000 arrests, but most of those brought in were quickly released. The main difference



Priorities and Commitments to Action

between the two cases was that in São Paulo police were operating under a well designed plan, with an integrated approach and buy-in from several different agencies, whereas in El Salvador, the justice system was not able to handle the influx of detainees and the initiative failed.

Education

A strong education system is the foundation for an efficient and effective workforce. Curriculum re-development should be a priority and should focus on improving basic education, providing life-skills through vocational and agricultural programs, and providing access to arts and music. The Ciudad Juarez example of lengthening the school day to match the work-day is one that should strongly be considered by the Honduran government and donor –funded programs. Communities should also explore opportunities to link security and education by having police on campus and involved in the schools in order to create an environment where children can focus on learning and will help build trust between the community and the police.

Family and Social Fabric

Family is the foundation, and values are the glue of a strong community and society. Without these two strong bases society starts to break down. Many participants commented that the Honduran family is in crisis with dysfunctional homes creating the breeding ground for drug use and gang affiliation. Examples such as those from Los Angeles have focused on the family by providing parenting classes, focusing on afterschool programs to provide tutoring and support to children while their parent(s) work, and providing interventions in families where older siblings have already entered into the criminal justice system in order to break the pattern. Integrated family engagement models rather than interventions solely focused isolated individuals have

been effective in Los Angeles. Another important element is to create an environment of individual responsibility, where the actions of one person make a difference both within the family and in the larger community. This lends itself to an increase in volunteerism and community service. It is important to look for a variety of partners, such as NGOs, faith based organizations, and the local government, in order to make these interventions holistic and successful.

Media

The media serve as agents of change for public opinion, and have an important role to play in society, including their role to provide citizens with accurate information and serving as a government watchdog. However, there was a strong sense amongst participants in the conference that the media does not effectively serve this role and instead focuses on sensationalizing crimes and focuses only on the negative. Many panelists called for the media to give equal space to reporting on the positive and small successes in addition to the negative. They also asked for the National Government to introduce laws or regulations around how crimes can be reported in the media, without infringing on freedom of the press, creating censorship, or keeping the truth from the public. In addition to proposed changes to laws, strengthening the media to improve accuracy of reporting would be an important step in creating a well-informed public.

Data Collection/Intelligent Police Work

Police work is only as good as the data they have. Collecting and analyzing data is critical to successful prevention efforts for both the police and the rest of the government. A statistic shared at the conference is that only four to six percent of the population commits 80% of the violence. Having a strong system of police intelligence to identify these select individuals will allow for their successful arrest and prosecution. Removing them from their community has a huge impact on levels of crime and violence. INL's training programs focused on intelligence-based policing, which use smart policing that combines data and human intelligence. This will be critical to helping Honduran police achieve successes in crime reduction. This program teaches police how to direct their resources against gangs, and is designed to have maximum impact in communities where limited resources can be harnessed to provide maximum impact. Good data is also essential to support the rest of the government in making sound decisions about the best investments in their communities to reduce crime and violence. Finally, data comes in many forms and Los Angeles looks not just at crime statistics, but also at other indicators of citizen



Eduardo Umanzor and Gary Lexer performing the song "Welcome to San Pedro." Umanzor and Lexer's songs are part of the municipal violence prevention plan for San Pedro Sula.

security to help them target their interventions, such as how many people are outside after dark or the number of liquor licenses in a community.

Funding Based on Results

Prioritization of activities should be based on solid data received from police and others working in the communities. Using this information will help ensure that interventions are rooted in a solid foundation. While no one wants to make mistakes because the consequences are so high (human life), there comes a point where you can't continue to do diagnostic studies. Action is what is needed. Representatives from Los Angeles reiterated this message, though they are now viewed as a successful model, they have a variety of different approaches and programs that have failed. They've learned from those mistakes and have used them to develop better interventions and programs. The important thing is that they keep trying new things until they hit upon something that works and then they replicate what does work. Having systems that continuously monitor progress and analyze results is important to assist in this process of trying, evaluating, and then determining whether to continue or not. The interventions don't need to be big in order to see successes, and it is possible to turn short term successes into longer term successes in order to generate momentum. Cost permitting, international donors should require evidence-based interventions and provide funding to those that show results.

Infrastructure and Public Space

Infrastructure and public space are important elements of creating a strong community. Several examples from Los Angeles hit on this. For example, the Summer Night Lights program, which identified peaks in violent crime during summer nights addressed the problem by creating family-friendly activities in the most violent neighborhoods. By drawing the community out after dark and into public parks, it served to revitalize the community, build trust between neighbors, and interrupt criminal activity. Work by FHIS to rehabilitate public infrastructure in coordination with municipal governments is critical to promoting economic opportunities, it also create a sense of safety, and provides spaces for entertainment and recreation, which may be lacking in some communities. These examples highlight the multi-disciplinary approach to prevention where the strategy is not a direct crime-related intervention (enforcement) but rather addresses causal factors that contribute to violence, such as lack of safe spaces and positive opportunities for youth.

Holistic Approach

This is a whole of family, whole of community, and whole of government approach to the problem. Prevention starts with the family. Beyond that there is the community, the schools, and the government. No one actor can do this alone. It requires cooperation at every level. Starting at the top, it requires the cooperation between agencies at the national level with a unified plan for cooperation. It also requires cooperation with neighboring governments. At the local level, it's cooperation with existing community groups and actors such as the church and NGOs. Within neighborhoods, it's cooperation and trust building between families and neighbors. Without creating this environment of

cooperation at each level, and weaving this tight and thick social fabric between actors at all levels, prevention will not work. We are beyond the idea that a single agency can make an impact on its own. It's a complex problem and it requires collaboration between national and local governments and NGOs in order to make the change manageable.

Keep It Local and Customize Your Approach

One recurring theme from many of the speakers was that a cookie-cutter response would not be appropriate. Two communities within the same municipality may require as different an approach as two communities on different borders. Interventions should be based on a solid understanding of the capacity and needs of the community, and not an idealized starting point, or they will not be successful.

The Role of the Municipality

Honduras is currently decentralizing government services, and municipalities have an active role to play in citizen security and crime prevention. It's important that Honduras create both a national and local prevention structure with clearly understood laws, rules, and procedures, so that all branches of the government at all levels understand their role and what is expected of them. At a minimum, all municipalities should have a prevention law and municipal prevention council. It's also vitally important that citizens understand these roles and responsibilities, and be able to provide oversight of the government through audits and other means. Groups like AHMON are essential to help strengthen municipalities and to build the bridges with the national government. Finally, decentralization is a process, and not all municipalities have progressed at the same pace, so it's important that each municipality be assessed based on its capacity to manage funds, run projects, and provide services for their citizens.

ANNEX. PRESS COVERAGE