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## Success Story

# Generación Cero: How art and music join their voices against discrimination in the region

*“I want to live a life where I’m not singled out... A life where there is no discrimination.”*



“I want to live a life where I’m not singled out, a life where there is no discrimination”, are the words of the song “Mi Forma de Ser” written and interpreted by young musicians and artists in El Salvador, who donated the lyrics, music, and music video to the Generación Cero social movement in the region.

Generación Cero is an initiative that originally emerged as a result of a regional study conducted by the Pan American Social Marketing Organization (PASMO) under the USAID Combination Prevention Program for HIV in Central America. This was a qualitative study conducted with parents, teachers and community leaders in an effort to understand the dynamics of discrimination and stigma related to HIV and vulnerable populations in the region from the perspective of those who discriminate. As a result of the research findings, PASMO and its partners realized it would not be possible to address stigma and discrimination without proposing a country-level strategy that also addressed discrimination due to gender, age, disability, ethnicity or race, among others. Therefore, in each country of the Central American region, PASMO led the formation of multi-sector technical working groups to promote concrete efforts and actions to reduce social marginalization, stigma and discrimination of any kind under the concept of a social movement entitled Generación Cero (Generation Zero, in English), inspired by the UNAIDS initiative to achieve zero discrimination, zero new infections and zero deaths related to HIV.

In El Salvador, local musicians and artists were attracted to the idea of promoting messages related to the reduction of stigma and discrimination, and, under the leadership of Rafa Garcia, author of the song, worked together to record “Mi Forma de Ser” and engage private sector partners who donated the music video. “We are all equal and free to dream... but there is a long way to go and we can’t rest in this cause”, raps Michael Diaz, one of the artists who lent his voice to the song and effort. On Wednesday July 10<sup>th</sup>, in a widely concurred press conference, the artists who joined their voices against discrimination sat nervously before press, government partners, NGOs, and other stakeholders to officially launch the music video and share their messages of unity, inclusion and non-discrimination. In the following weeks, the artists went to TV and radio programs to promote the song and its messages, and are seeking opportunities to promote it in the rest of the region.

El Salvador is not the exception. The multi-sector technical working group of Costa Rica approached a group of graffiti artists who were also keen on the effects of stigma and discrimination. The artists agreed to create works of art that not only addressed these issues, but also highlighted the stories of forgotten or marginalized figures of San Jose, Costa Rica, many of whom were living on the streets. The Municipality of San Jose also supported the effort along with shop and storeowners who agreed to allow the artists to use their storefront roller blinds as a space to paint and display the graffiti works of art. On Tuesday September 24<sup>th</sup>, in a large-scale event in front of the Calderon Guardia Hospital of San Jose, media, government representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Security Institute, artists, NGO partners and other stakeholders officially unveiled the works of art and spread messages of non-discrimination. The Vice-minister of Health, Dr. Sissy Castillo, provided remarks at the event motivating citizens, artists, government and society at large to join the effort in reducing stigma and discrimination in Costa Rica and the region.

