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QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2008



ALIANZA JOVEN REGIONAL
USAID-SICA



QUARTERLY REPORT
FROM
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Prepared by
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for
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OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ADVANCES THIS QUARTER

This report covers the period of activities from March 1 to June 30, 2008 for the Regional Youth Alliance project (Alianza Joven Regional – AJR) also referred to as the Gangs Prevention Alliance for Central America and Mexico. In this second quarter, efforts were focused in consolidating alliance partnerships by obtaining substantial counterpart and leverage commitments and signing working agreements with partners. Activities with these partners include planning implementation of prevention programs and expanding the networks of contacts in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa). Additionally Terms of Reference to compete for funding for Outreach centers were handed out in San Salvador and San Pedro Sula. Proposals were selected in San Salvador. Initial Juvenile Justice Workshops were held in the three countries, yielding the first approximation of the situation, identification of relevant stakeholders and issues, potential consultants and firmly establishing the program as an actor in this field in the region.

The agreements signed this quarter include the Office of Paz y Convivencia (P&C) in San Pedro Sula, Honduras to implement all aspects of Result I in that city; the Governor of the 4250 Rotary District, the six Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa and the Coordinator of the Rotary Population and Development Initiative for Honduras for implementing six Outreach Centers in Tegucigalpa; the National Prevention Program of Honduras (PNPRRS) for media sensibilization seminars and general program interaction and; the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Cortés and the Honduran Association of Maquila, to implement the Desafío 100 program in san Pedro Sula.

The agreements discussed and in negotiation include: the private sector of El Salvador (ANEP) for a Desafío 10 and Desafío 100 programs; the private sector of Honduras (COHEP); the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa and PNPRRS for a Desafío 100 program. The agreements also include FOPRIDEH of Honduras for joint work related to the Juvenile Justice component; With SICA/PAIRCA for the organization of a Juvenile Justice Regional Forum; CNSP of El Salvador/OCAVI (an institution of integration part of SICA) to support for the organization of a meeting of the Central American Crime Observatorie; COMJUVESOL, a cooperative of former gang members in San Pedro Sula, assistance to develop their general services provider business; CFO, a faith based organization to open the first Outreach Center in Majicanos, El Salvador and; Fe y Alegría, to implement an Outreach center in comunidad 13 de enero, Sacamil, Mejicanos in El Salvador.

The inauguration of the program office took place on April 8th and was attended by Ambassador Aníbal Quiñonez, Secretary General of SICA; Mr. Larry Brady, USAID's Acting Director; the Attorney General of El Salvador; the Vice Minister of Security of El Salvador; special guests Ms. Constance Rice, Co-Director of the Advancement Project in Los Angeles and Ms. Christy McCampbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Drug Issues at the US State Department; Supreme Court Judges; the Director of the National Civilian Police; officers and representatives of CSO and churches. The activity was widely covered by national media, including several TV stations. The main newspaper *Diario de Hoy* published a full page article of the event, featuring Mr. Juan José Gómez, a former gang member who benefited from USAID/Creative Associates Youth Alliance Program in Guatemala and his employer. They were both speakers at the activity. This

activity served to raise awareness of ex gang members in the Salvadorian society (see Attachments at the end of the report).

The public signing of the agreements with the implementing partners generated a substantial amount of media (TV and print) coverage. The media impact of these activities, which contributes significantly to the increasing awareness in the general population, can be assessed by examining the list of articles the news generated, which is provided in the Attachment at the end of the report.

In early April, Mr. Harold Sibaja and Mr. Eduardo Pimentel (a Guatemalan employer who has offered job opportunities to former gang members), were invited by the Foreign Ministers of El Salvador and Guatemala to make a presentation at the Iberoamerican Seminar on Youth and Development, held in San Salvador in preparation for the Presidents' Summit on Youth, scheduled for October 2008. The participants included representatives from all of Latin America and international organizations. The presentation was very well received. Mr. Pimentel, along with a former gang member, were invited by UNESCO to present these reintegration experiences in an international seminar in Bahrain.

The project's Regional Director, Mr. Harold Sibaja, was invited to give a testimony before the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee for the Western Hemisphere of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., related to the Merida Initiative. Mr. Sibaja presented the challenges that Central American youth face and the balance that should exist between law enforcement and prevention of juvenile delinquency. <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/sib050808.htm> .

With assistance from Creative Associates headquarters, a template for a one-page electronic monthly program Newsletter was developed. Issues No. 01 and 02 were distributed electronically to a wide variety of interested parties during the month of June (**Attachment #3 and 4**) This newsletter will help keep relevant AJR stakeholders and different audiences and actors in the field of prevention informed.

Tax exemption and clearance and license plates were obtained for the project vehicle. The rest of the IT equipment and office supplies purchased in the United States arrived and was cleared from customs and installed.

AJR received the visit of Mr. Timo Weinacht from Germany's GTZ on April 24th. Mr. Weinach explained that GTZ will initiate a \$5.8 million youth violence prevention program with SICA in 2009. He was very much aware of AJR's program activities and even had a copy of the program's description. He said that we should not be surprised that their program would look similar to AJR's, and welcomed joint cooperation on the subject.

ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY IN THE REGION

During the first six months of 2008, there were 1,115 homicides registered in El Salvador, 2,381 in Guatemala and in Honduras the average of 44 homicides per 100,000 seems to be stable.

Although there have been notable efforts to reduce levels of crime, the homicide rates is one of the principal challenges in the Northern Triangle. Even if crime increased in Nicaragua during the first quarter of the year, it remains substantially lower than in the other three countries.

In El Salvador, police authorities are implementing “Plan 500” to capture gang members accused of homicide and are at large. With this measure they hope to lower crime rates. This plan has been designed to last one hundred and twenty days and is focusing on the departments of La Libertad, Santa Ana and San Miguel. Some organizations that work with *maras* and gangs have reported that young gang members that were undergoing rehabilitation processes have been captured.

In Guatemala, the emphasis has been placed on direct confrontations related to organized crime and narco-activity. In 2007 there were seven hundred and ten kilograms of cocaine seized, and in the first six months of 2008 the amount seized almost tripled to near two thousand kilograms. Authorities have verified that up until this point for the year, 31 small planes have landed in Guatemalan jungles.

In Honduras, during the first six months of the year there has been an increase in homicides inside prisons. Jails continue to be the most dangerous of places. Between April 25 and May 2, twenty eight young people, most of them associated with *maras* and gangs, were killed. In the last seven years there have been four hundred violent deaths in Honduran prisons at the hands of fellow prisoners. The Departments of Francisco Morazán and Cortés, which most important cities are Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula respectively, continue to be the most insecure places, with alarming homicide rates: 63.9 in the first and 72.2 per 100,000 people in the second, according to figures released by *Casa Alianza* of Honduras. This organization has denounced the assassination of minors, many of which present the characteristics of extra-judicial executions. *Casa Alianza* registered from 1998 to May 31, 2008, a total of 4,225 boys and girls violently executed in Honduras. Recently, a promising young female medical student was killed when her car was stopped to be burglarized. In reaction to this security situation, a huge “white march” took place in San Pedro Sula in the month of June, organized principally by business people and churches. The march drew the support of various of the population.

Of the killings inside Honduran prisons, the one that stands out is incident that occurred on April 5, 2003 in El Porvenir at La Ceiba. On that day sixty-nine prisoners were murdered, of which sixty-one were members of *maras* or gangs. At the time, this prison was severely overcrowded with over five hundred prisoners and maximum capacity for 240. Fifty-two persons, between military and penitentiary police were finally accused of this massacre. In June, twenty-two of the accused were sentenced to a total 740 years in prison; twelve were absolved and sixteen have escaped and are evading justice (one of the perpetrators recently died). This violent prison massacre received international attention because of the heinous act of setting the prison on fire was set on fire to control the internal prison gang warfare. The incident generated so much pressure throughout the Judicial System that it brought about this unprecedented sentencing.

Presently, there are preparations for the XVIII Iberoamerican Summit of Presidents and Heads of State, to take place in El Salvador in October of this year. The theme of the Summit will be “Youth and Development” and in the host country there have been several preparatory events

such as: a Seminar on Youth and Development (April 1 and 2), the Iberoamerican Meeting of Ministers of Youth (April 3), the XVIII Iberoamerican Conference of Ministers of Education (May 19 and 20), XI Iberoamerican Conference on Culture (May 22 and 23), the II Iberoamerican Conference on Gender (June 5 and 6), the X Iberoamerican Conference on Infancy and Adolescence (18 and 19 of June), among others. These events have focused on themes related to Youth (perspectives and tendencies), inclusion of youth in public policy, improvement of the quality of life for youth, migration and prevention of violence. International organizations such as UNDP, UNICEF, CEPAL, FLACSO and ILO have participated in these meetings.

The IV Anti-Gang Summit took place in El Salvador during the month of April, with the participation of more than three hundred delegates from eight countries. Among the agreements reached during the meeting was the strengthening of information exchanges regarding gangs' criminal activities, the incorporation of other investigation agencies from the USA and the police corps to the Anti-Gang Transnational Center (CAT), shared use and twenty-four hour per day access to the information system of INTERPOL (which contains gang member profiles in the region), the implementation of the extradition treaties between countries and the promotion of a law that permits the confiscation of ill-gotten goods and cash that could be invested in prevention. The "Top 20" list was created to disseminate the profiles and photographs of the 20 most dangerous gang members that are at-large in Central America. The approach is intended to limit their free-movement and make it more likely that they will be recognized and captured in any of the countries participating in the anti-gang efforts. They also agreed to promote the establishment of a Central American Fingerprint Exploitation (CAFE) system, a system that allows each country to identify gang members that have an outstanding arrest warrant or represent a menace to public security.

In Honduras, seven Fiscales (Public Attorneys) started a hunger strike, which gathered much support, including Human Rights organizations and official personalities such as the Appeals Court Magistrate from San Pedro Sula, Ms. Tirsia Flores. This strike and protest had the intent to force the resignation of the Attorney General, Mr. Leonidas Rosas and his Adjunct, Mr. Omar Cerna. The protesters were also denouncing the high levels of corruption in the Public Ministry. This scenario shows the difficulties being experienced in Honduras in the field of justice, which also affects juvenile justice (see Result II of AJR program).

Also in Honduras, the Labor Department, with the support from the Inter-American Culture Institute, started the "First Job" project, whose goal is to provide six-month long vocational training programs for vulnerable youth during the next four years. The purpose of the training is to promote their reinsertion into the job market and social inclusion of at least six thousand young people who live in marginal urban areas in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba and Comayagua. The program will cover the costs of transportation and food for the beneficiaries. This program although timely, has not received much publicity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS QUARTER

Result I: *Jump Start Public-Private Initiatives for Gang Prevention Awareness, Rehabilitation and Reinsertion*

During this second quarter there have been important advances in respect to the implementation of the prevention models and methodology that was developed by the Youth Alliance Program in Guatemala and now being expanded to El Salvador and Honduras.

In this quarter we are focused on the following areas: Developing the Terms of Reference and Criteria for the Evaluation of Proposal documents; Identifying different civil society and faith based networks to invite possible partners and; holding meetings in Honduras and El Salvador to explain in detail the competitive process to the parties interested in participating and the nature of the model and how to present proposals.

The competitive process announcement drew the attention of a substantial number of individuals and organizations dedicated to work with youth in El Salvador and in San Pedro Sula, Honduras; at the meetings Terms Of Reference were distributed and the proposal submission process was explained.

AJR's personnel participated during May 27-28 in a joint retreat with the Youth Challenge Program of USAID in Guatemala and with AJR grantee, *Asociación Alianza Joven*. In this retreat the group went over a detailed analysis of the situation of the initial Outreach Centers operating in Guatemala that included lessons learned and recommendations to improve the model. This methodology developed in Guatemala can be applied to the development of the Outreach Centers where AJR will operate. The group also went over a situational analysis and lessons learned from the *Desafío 100* experience to date. Additionally, a discussion was held with Ceiba, an NGO that provides IT prevention options, the group that may become an AJR grantee to assist in application of higher level of technology in AJR's regional programming.

Component I: *Preventing young people from entering gangs*

Activities

El Salvador

- AJR Project Director and officers presented the program and participated in the "Discussion Group" (Conversatorio) of 13 local PVOs. This group of PVOs was invited to participate in the competitive process to develop Outreach Centers.
- On April 25th, 40 interested parties attended a meeting at AJR's office to explain and hand out TORs, of which twenty-three organizations requested the TOR documentation.
- Among the organizations that attended, there were Catholic and Evangelical Churches and CSOs dedicated to working with vulnerable youth or youth involved in gang activity.

- Eight proposals were received, of which three fulfilled all requirements and qualified as implementers for Outreach Centers with AJR's support. The OCs are located in or near the communities where the groups work. The three qualifying proposals were: the Centro de Formación y Orientación (CFO) of the Parroquia San Francisco in Mejicanos, San Salvador; the Centro de Educación para Todos (CET) of "Fe y Alegría", also in Mejicanos, San Salvador; and the Tabernáculo de Avivamiento Internacional (TAI) in Ilopango.
- The OC for the Tabernáculo de Avivamiento Internacional (TAI) will be located in San Bartolo, but there are pending implementation details and this OC development is progressing slower than the other two.
- The CFO Outreach Center will be located in Colonia Universitaria Norte and the CET OC will be located in Comunidad 13 de Enero. Although both are located in Mejicanos, an area suffering from the presence of gangs, the 13 de Enero community is an enclave of the 18 Street Gang, which is completely surrounded by MS 13 territory and known as a center for drug distribution. The establishment of an OC there presents particular challenges, but also great opportunities to demonstrate the results of the intervention.
- Senior Technical Officer Juan José Hernández, was invited to make a video presentation of the Outreach Center model to the Mayor and City Council of Mejicanos, San Salvador, drawing great deal of interest and facilitating the support of the City Council for the approval of \$1,700 towards the repair of the future OC in Comunidad 13 de Enero.
- Also, support has been requested through AJR to the Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Pública (CNSP) for the repair of the facilities of an abandoned community center where the Comunidad 13 de Enero OC will function. The cost of the repairs, estimated in \$6,000 (six thousand dollars), is beyond our funding capabilities, as normally it is the responsibility of the partner to provide the adequate facility. AJR is also trying to involve other possible partners from the private sector such as CASALCO (Chamber of Construction) and the Rotary Clubs in helping to fund the needed repairs.
- Even if the competitive process for the implementation of the OCs drew the attention of several organizations, not many presented proposals due to the requirements requested from counterparts and the relatively modest contribution of AJR (\$18,000). Other partners presented proposals that were not viable or did not conform to the requirements to develop the OC concept.
- The lower than expected participation for the OCs has forced AJR staff to look for additional partners, and if found eligible, AJR will coach them through the proposal development phase. The project is focusing on identifying strategic opportunities with partners who can sustain the OCs beyond the AJR assistance period and who can serve as models. In this sense AJR staff have been in discussions with Ministry of Security officials, businesses and organizations with whom plans are to build alliances to open two more Outreach Centers in El Salvador. One OC development is emerging in the Lourdes area in the Municipality of Colón -- known for the high levels of youth violence.

- On April 8th, a presentation of the program was made to the Rotary Club of San Salvador, the dean of El Salvador Rotary Clubs. The Club expressed its interest in the OCs model and there is hope to develop them as a partner in this effort. AJR is in the process of developing relationships with the Rotary Clubs of El Salvador further, to encourage them to support establishing Outreach Centers.
- A meeting was held with Ms. Rhina Reyes, Executive Director of FUNDEMAS, which promotes Business Social Responsibility in El Salvador. The possibility of identifying businesses interested in supporting implementation of Outreach Centers to better the surroundings where they have operations was discussed. Ms. Reyes pointed to the possibility that the company AGRISAL may become interested in assisting in the opening of an OC near the Plaza Mundo Shopping Center.
- AJR Director and Senior Technical Officer met with Mr. Roberto Simán, Executive Vice-President of AGRISAL; Dr. Juan Daniel Alemán, General Manager of Corporate Issues of Corporación SIGMA; and the Director of the Program for Social Strengthening of FUSADES, Mr. César Max Méndez to present the project and explore possibilities of collaboration. Mr. Simán offered to try to get an appointment with Mr. Bobby Murray, to introduce the program and explore opportunities.

Guatemala

- A meeting took place with Mr. Emilio Gobaud of APREDE/ Interpeace, to discuss the activities of the Central American Coalition Against Violence and the need to coordinate between projects in the area of prevention of youth violence which are in the fold of SICA. Interpeace has obtained a mandate from SICA to request funds from the international community for a prevention, youth policies, and rehabilitation framework.
- The grant awarded to the Asociación Alianza Joven (AAJ) was key to supporting the development of the AAJ, continue supporting the Guatemalan existing outreach centers and the *Desafío 100* beneficiaries. The AJR program supported this effort until the new USAID Youth Challenge Program (*Programa Desafío Joven* PDJ/USAID) was awarded to CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC. (CREATIVE) on April 18, 2008. This eighteen-month PDJ/USAID program will fund AAJ to develop 10 new Outreach Centers in Guatemala, strengthen the existing 7 OCs and create new opportunities for former gang members through a new effort: *Desafío 200 - La Misión Continúa* (Challenge 200-The Mission Continues).
- Thanks to the AJR/USAID award, by the time the new Guatemala bilateral program started, the *Asociación Alianza Joven* (AAJ) was operational and had already secured support from the Swiss Embassy to place an initial 36 youth in jobs with the private sector. The support provided during the transition provided AAJ with the conditions to

hire a psychologist and a Desafío Program Officer. Later with a new award from the new bilateral program, AAJ hired its first Director (until then managed by board of directors) and a Finance/Administrative Assistant. Currently, AAJ and the USAID/Guatemala's Youth Challenge Program are reviewing lessons learned and perfecting the existing programs. These lessons learned will enhance the impact of the new initiatives being developed in El Salvador and Honduras.

HONDURAS

Activities

San Pedro Sula

- A formal agreement was reached with Paz y Convivencia (P&C) and signed with its President, the Mayor of San Pedro Sula. Through this agreement four Outreach Centers (OCs) will be initiated in the most vulnerable areas of the city. P&C will finance 50 percent of the cost of this effort. The agreement also includes jointly developing the Desafío 10 and Desafío 100 prevention programs for Honduras. A no objection to contribute \$92,000 from P&C to the joint program with AJR was obtained by P&C from its donor, the Interamerican Development Bank. P&C has expressed its interest in learning from the implementation of these first four Outreach Centers, to then extend the methodology to 14 additional communities (one in each of sector of the P&C area) in the coming years.
- On May 14th, a meeting to hand out TORs for presenting proposals to implement OCs (and to explain the competitive process) was held at the offices of P&C. Fourteen individuals and organizations attended the meeting, of which eight organizations showed interest and received the documents. None of these organizations presented proposals by the due date. These organizations were approached afterwards and they expressed that the level of difficulty and the work involved in preparing the proposals prevented them from doing so. At least two of these organizations are actually interested in presenting proposals and have mentioned that they intend to do so. The local NGO, *Jovenes Hondureños Adelante* (Jah-Ja), one of the organizations that received the TOR, has expressed interest in developing a proposal to work in the Chamelecon area, which is considered one of the most violent parts of the city.
- Pastor Arnold Linares who heads a very modest Evangelical congregation in Rivera Hernandez, one of the most violent areas of the city, has an ongoing prevention effort focused on helping troubled youth that are failing or have dropped out of the formal education system. Pastor Linares is struggling to operate a center and the modest contribution of \$18,000 that AJR could provide could substantially help his efforts. AJR will work with Pastor Linares to help him prepare a proposal. (a photo of the possible site is attached)

- One of the three Rotary Clubs of San Pedro has expressed interest in joining prevention efforts by supporting OCs. A formal presentation of the concept to the San Pedro Rotary Clubs is pending.
- During the May 11-14 program visit to San Pedro, Project Director Salvador Stadthagen and P&G Director Jacobo Regalado were invited to present the program during morning TV and radio shows.
- AJR Program Director and Senior Officer Juan Hernández visited city civic leaders such as Monsignor Rómulo Emiliani, who leads prevention efforts in the city and former Mayor and Rotary Club leader Mr. Héctor (Tito) Guillén, and obtained positive endorsements from them for the program.

Tegucigalpa

- An introductory meeting took place with the Governor of the 4250 Rotary District (comprising Guatemala, Honduras and Belize) and the Coordinator of the Population and Development Rotary Initiative for Honduras. The Governor had visited an Outreach Center in Guatemala and the Coordinator happened to have seen the P&C and AJR presentation of the OC concept in San Pedro Sula. In this first meeting they pledged the support of Rotary to open OCs in Tegucigalpa. In a following visit to Tegucigalpa, a presentation was made to the Presidents of the six Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa, which signed an MOU on June 10th with AJR to finance 50 percent of the costs of implementing six OCs in the city. If this occurs, it could extend project funding to ten more OCs. This will mean an initial contribution of \$54,000 (fifty four thousand dollars) by the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa. The Clubs also pledged to assist the OCs with external volunteerism.
- The agreement signed with the National Prevention Program (PNPRRS) opens the door to get support from them in identifying vulnerable areas and possible partners and in gathering governmental support for the OCs that may be opened in Honduras.

Component II: *Encouraging gang members to abandon gangs*

The development of a controlled and well-crafted methodology that encourages young gang members to abandon gangs is one of the most difficult challenges for AJR. For this reason some visits to prisons in El Salvador, where young gang members are held, and several meetings with actors and institutions involved in the issue have been made during the quarter. Out of these exploratory visits AJR encountered the following:

- A reinforcement and validation of the critical role that the religious element plays in causing youth to abandon gangs. Normally it is pastors and priests who cause enthusiasm in young people to consider formulating a different life style outside of the gangs. Religious elements are performing this kind of work in prisons and communities with

substantial success, most of the time with minimal resources. Their work may be one of the most cost-effective approaches in place.

- An important finding is that support can be provided to youth while they are still in prison. This is due to the large percentage of gang members already in prison and the fact that gang activity continues inside the prison (especially because prisons are segregated by gang and gang commands are effective from the inside).
- Another preliminary finding relates to the percentage of youth in gangs who want to leave the gang if they had an opportunity. In El Salvador, it was found through some interviews that at least fifty percent of 18th Street gang members would be willing to leave the gang and at least thirty percent of MS gang members would also be will to do so, if they had opportunities outside of the gang. In Honduras these percentages seem to be higher; about sixty percent of gang members seem to be ready to leave the gang. In Guatemala, interviews with former gang members show that more than half would be willing to do so.
- Finally, an important finding has to do with the opportunities available for former gang members. Churches and organizations involved in work with gangs have been able to develop effective rehabilitation processes and programs, but have difficulties and weaknesses in finding opportunities for young former gang members. The main problem is that they are not able to find jobs for them. As a result, when gang members leave prisons and return to their communities, they will most likely return to a life of crime since it is the only option they have to earn an income.

During this quarter there has been ample opportunity to identify ongoing models and partners and to start work with potential partners to design and share ideas to construct rehabilitation methodologies for youth. AJR plans to strengthen some of the Faith Based Organizations which are already working on these efforts. At the same time, they are piloting new initiatives to rescue, recuperate, rehabilitate and reinsert these active gang members. Another issue that has become obvious during the quarter is that AJR cannot commence crafting a media campaign to motivate gang members to leave the gang as this work would create antagonism from active gang members and overburden the incipient initiatives underway.

Among the activities and results obtained in this quarter are:

- Visits to and establishing preliminary relationships with organizations such as CREA, REMAR and Orphan Helpers, who have demonstrated interest in working under agreements with AJR.
- A visit to the Cojutepeque prison in El Salvador allowed the opportunity to observe the possible scenarios on which to focus the efforts so that young people abandon gangs. There the team observed that many young offenders are abandoning gangs, but once they leave prison they have no alternatives other than crime or gang life.

- One particular opportunity in the works in Guatemala is with Pastor Rolando Salazar, an Evangelical minister associated with the Torrefuerte Pastors Network, who is already dedicated to the rescue of gang members and operates two rehabilitation centers for male drug-addicts. This could be a cost effective program involving covering the basic living costs of the participants, following a specific methodology and institutional strengthening for sustainability of the pastor's operation. This pilot program could work with young, male former gang members. This target group could be engaged sometimes before leaving or right after being released from prison or on the street with the purpose of undergoing detoxification treatment, to reconnect with their family, or to help them re-enter society and help them find a job. The success of a pilot project of this nature would encourage other young people to abandon gangs and decide to change their course in life.
- In Guatemala, the Regional Director has conducted several meetings with former gang members to understand the motivations of active gang members and to define a pilot strategy to offer rehabilitation opportunities for active gang members. The conversations held have pointed out that many youth would be willing to take advantage of this opportunity. Also, youth are expected to be motivated if they were removed from prison or out of a conflictive community setting to initiate a rehabilitation process. The ideal setting would be a one-month camp that could be set up so that gang members can be exposed to training, sports, opportunities to meet special visitors, and the development of a challenging, joint project to motivate a change of paradigms and consider a six-month rehabilitation program in an established rehabilitation institution. Next quarter, AJR will meet in Guatemala with potential alliance partners to discuss piloting an initiative like this. The identified alliance members include the Ministry of Interior, Boy Scouts, World Vision, FBOs, US Peace Corps and others. The initiative will be considered successful if 20 youth are involved in the one-month camp effort, 14 of them accept the challenge of a six-month rehabilitation program and 10 are successfully placed in jobs at the end of the six months. The idea is to pilot an initiative that could be replicated and expanded into new programs.

Desafío 10

The reality television show *Desafío 10*, which was produced for the first time in Guatemala, is a creative and bold strategy that not only raises awareness in society about the need for opportunities for former gang members and motivates social leaders to look for solutions for these young people. The reality show concept also sends messages, on a wide scale to active gang members, of possible social acceptance and potential motivation to leave criminal life.

The production of a reality television show of this kind alone has a cost of over \$100,000, so its production viability depends on a labor intensive process of getting numerous sponsors, including a TV network willing to donate five hours of prime time and business willing to pay for commercials to support the cost of production.

Both in El Salvador and in Honduras, there have been significant advances to organize and produce national-level *Desafío 10* reality shows with private sector partners.

El Salvador *Desafío 10*

- ANEP has expressed its interest to develop a local versión of *Desafío 10*. But, due to time constraints this has not materialized into a plan. Nevertheless, there was an initial meeting of the Project Director with the Vice-President of Planning and Programs of TCS, the major TV Network in El Salvador. The concept received a good reception, but there was a clear message that to be viable the project would have to include additional support from the private sector.
- Meanwhile there have been efforts made to identify young, former gang members with the profile, story and capacity to communicate with an audience that could make them potential participants (“actors”) in the Reality Show. It is expected that one of the *Desafío* participants will be a young, former gang member, still in prison but due to be released, who intends to marry his girlfriend, also a former gang member.

Honduras *Desafío 10*

- The agreement with Paz y Convivencia includes the goal of producing the *Desafío 10, Paz para Honduras* Reality Show. As a condition, the Inter-American Development Bank can only finance a portion of the cost of the production of the show. Despite this condition, Mr. Jacobo Regalado, the Executive Director of P&C, has pledged to invest his time and use his personal contacts to make the needed sponsorships possible.
- A visit to San Pedro Sula was organized with Grupo REC, the group that produced *Desafío 10* in Guatemala, to evaluate the available equipment and technology in-country for the production of the show in that city. During this visit a possible script and the ideas that the show could address were discussed with P&C.
- With a Guatemalan-Honduran co-production in mind, even with the limitations found, the hope is to start production before the end of October. This is due to the resolved by Grupo REC and the Honduran production partner.

Component III: *Job opportunities for rehabilitated former gang members*

Desafío 100 is a structured program of job opportunities for young people who have abandoned gangs and have not been able to close the circle to achieve full reintegration because they can not find businesses willing to hire them. Normally this unwillingness by employers to hire these youth is due to the tattoos, criminal records and the lack of employable skills.

To assure the success of this initiative at least three efforts are required:

- Identify, evaluate and select the young, former gang members who are looking for a job opportunity;

- Identify through ANEP in El Salvador, COHEP and the other Chambers in Honduras and CACIF in Guatemala, the affiliated business that would be willing to provide jobs to the former gang members; and
- Follow-up and monitor the youth placed in jobs with businesses to help support them so they can successfully surmount the day-to-day difficulties of reinsertion.

The steps in the candidate selection phase of the process are designed to ensure that both, the former gang member and the business offering the job are a good match. The most important steps in this phase are:

- Identify candidates through local organizations and churches that are assisting former gang members.
- Undergo psychological tests and interviews to assess candidates' capacities, personality profile, capacity to adapt and occupational preferences. With the interviews the willingness of the candidate to make a true commitment with the *Desafío 100* program is assessed.
- Collect documentation to verify the identity of each candidate, criminal record, health certificates and recommendations from those who can verify each candidate's separation process from the gang.
- Raise awareness of the private sector enterprises who commit to offering jobs to former gang members. This process involves some typical characteristics to business owners and to the managers of human resources about former gang members and strategies to deal with potential problems and communication issues.
- Raise awareness of the young people selected to participate in the program to encourage them to construct a "life project" around the opportunities that employers are offering.
- Follow-up and monitor the participants in their places of work and encourage them to persevere in this challenge and opportunity. Assist the participants when they tackle fulfilling day-to-day needs and meeting challenges of reinsertion into the labor market and society.

The process of implementation of *Desafío 100* requires the involvement of diverse and multiple actors; it requires that the former gang members receive endorsement by those social or moral leaders or mentors that have helped them in their process to abandon their gangs. It requires that the participant candidates are willing to work and complete their reinsertion process.

During this second quarter, the following accomplishments related to this component have been achieved:

El Salvador

- A breakfast meeting-presentation was held with an important group of influential members of the private sector, including Mr. Agustín Martínez, Vice President of ANEP; Mrs. Elena de Alfaro, member of the Presidential Commission for Peace and Citizen Security (also an influential figure in ANEP); Mr. Ricardo Montenegro, member of the "Patronato" of ANEP and involved in issues of security and Mr. Germán Vega, who is in charge of Social Responsibility of CASALCO (Builders Association).

- After the formal presentation of the program to the Executive Council of ANEP on June 24th, the organization decided to officially endorse *Desafío 100* and gave instructions to Mr. Tomás Contreras to work out the details of an Agreement.
- A draft of an agreement between ANEP and AJR regarding the involvement of the private sector in prevention activities is being negotiated, through which the *Desafío 10* and *Desafío 100* would be implemented.
- Churches, organizations and social leaders that can propose young, former gang members as candidates to *Desafío 100* have been identified and approached.
- A format to register candidates was developed and distributed to some of the above. Some candidates are starting to complete application forms.

Guatemala

- A visit was made to the Pepsi Cola concessionary in Guatemala City to discuss the results of the seven former gang members that have been employed by the company through the USAID/Guatemala Youth Alliance Program as part of their Social Responsibility program.

Honduras

Tegucigalpa

- COHEP and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Tegucigalpa (CCIT, an institution with more than 100 years of existence) were visited to promote their involvement in a *Desafío 100* program. A draft agreement is being discussed with COHEP and CCIT, which will include the participation of the National Prevention Program (PNPRRS). PNPRRS, a government entity will provide a good number of candidates to *Desafío 100* (beneficiaries who have been benefited from the ongoing PNPRRS tattoo removal program).
- The CCIT, as a program alliance member, is key since they already have a well-developed Job Bank that will benefit the program.
- Mr. Amilcar Bulnes, President of COHEP, participated in the signing ceremony of the *Desafío 100* program in San Pedro Sula. COHEP received substantial media attention during this ceremony.

San Pedro Sula

The *Desafío 100* program experienced positive inputs during this quarter. Our alliance partner, Paz y Convivencia, was very interested in starting-up a program and this enthusiasm provoked its initiation of actions without taking into account the rigor with which AJR approaches the entire process. Accomplishments were:

- The signing of an agreement between AJR, P&C and the Asociación de Maquiladores de Honduras y la Cámara de Comercio e Industrias de Cortés (CCIC). Mr. Dan Zelikow, Vice-President of the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and P&C's funding source, served an honor witness.
- With the signing ceremony in mind, P&C invited 100 young people to attend it as "beneficiaries." These young people were identified and invited hurriedly (by asking some social leaders in the city for candidates). Some of them may be considered vulnerable youth, but are not former gang-members, nor did not fit the profile as candidates for the *Desafío 100* program. This is an example of a lesson learned by P&C early in the process and the importance of working out all of the details before making public announcements.
- Some of the businesspeople from San Pedro Sula became enthusiastic with participating and identifying solutions to solve the problem of youth violence in the city. The President of CCIC, Mr. Larach, wanted to set the example and offered to employ three or more of the former gang members who are selected by the program.
- A Multi-Service Cooperative ("Cooperativa Multiservicios"), COMJUVENSOL was formed by rehabilitated former gang members from the *Generacion X* group to provide services, such as painting, air conditioning unit repair and landscaping services. The group has received support from international donors and its offices and some services are provided by the Mayor of San Pedro Sula. Even with this support, the group is struggling to become self-sufficient and economically viable. Recognizing that not all former gang members can become employees, self-employment propositions like this one could be considered as models that could be explored and encouraged. For this reason, AJR has held discussions with COMJUVENSOL to consider providing management support to help them re-think the business and revise their business plan. An agreement was reached with MBA Without Borders (MWB) to provide the services of a highly qualified MBA volunteer to assist COMJUVENSOL for 45 days. AJR will cover the costs of a modest stipend, lodging and transportation. A highly qualified candidate, Joel Montgomery, has been identified and will probably travel to San Pedro in early August. If this model is successful, AJR will consider options for replication in other countries in the region.

RESULT II: Assess regional legal/justice frameworks and practices and promote multi-country policy and legal reforms to improve the treatment and rehabilitation of youth

Meetings were carried out by AJR in the first few months of the project's implementation with individuals and institutions working in juvenile justice in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The meetings helped AJR staff identify relevant actors who were later invited to participate in initial workshops on Juvenile Justice in all three countries during the month of June.

During these workshops participants were able to discuss the current situation of Juvenile Justice in their respective countries, as well as identify problems, weaknesses and present challenges.

The facilitator of the workshop, Mr. Samuel Fadul, began the process of analysis by inviting the participants to express their ideas and points of view regarding juvenile justice in a brainstorming activity. This session provided a segue to discuss the construction of a “problem tree” to identify a central problem with its causes (roots) and effects (branches).

Some major problems highlighted in all three workshops were the lack of holistic approaches to improve juvenile justice, the challenges present in coordination and collaboration between juvenile justice sector operators and institutions, as well as the lack of political will and investment in the development of sound policies and programs for youth in the three countries.

These workshops allowed AJR to make an initial analysis of the current situation of juvenile justice, allowing for a more concrete vision of the specific needs and problems facing each individual country in order to be able to better tackle the component. The results of the workshops also allowed for a preliminary identification of priorities and noted the interest of many of those participating to be able to include them in the upcoming Working Groups. Many of the participants would like to continue their contribution to help assess and improve the juvenile justice system in each country.

Potential members for the Juvenile Justice Working Groups were identified in the workshops. These working groups are currently being formed in each individual country, in order to continue the discussion of the most relevant issues determined in the initial workshops. They will also provide input and validate the work of the consultants who will be working along with them in assessing the legal frameworks, policies and practices in each country.

AJR is currently in the process of selecting consultants among the ones that have been already identified in each country. They will provide support, first by collecting existing assessments, diagnosis, investigations and other documents written by national and international experts. Some of the consultants have been published by international organizations, such as UNICEF. In addition, the consultants will work together through the Working Groups to analyze frameworks, identify impediments to a well-functioning system (including the coordination and collaboration among juvenile justice sector operators, i.e., prosecutors, public defenders, judges, police, correction facilities officers, etc.) and discuss appropriate treatment and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. It is also expected that, together with the Working Groups, best and worst practices can be identified. The findings and recommendations of the Working Groups will be systematized by the consultants in each country and presented to SG-SICA.

Furthermore, after completing the country by country analysis and recommendations of the working group are systematized AJR staff, with the assistance of another consultant, will conduct a comparative analysis of juvenile justice in the region. The analysis of the different juvenile justice systems in the region will help determine diverging elements in the different countries in relation to the treatment of youth in conflict with the law. This will further allow SICA to discuss the different approaches and determine working possibilities for regional framework for juvenile justice.

The effective reduction juvenile delinquency and violence in the region requires an integrated and coordinated effort. This requires building regional consensus around this issue, sharing

views, and identifying expertise and good practices which could be replicated in the region. AJR has deemed it strategic to organize a high level Regional Juvenile Justice Forum at the end of this year. AJR has continued discussions about the organization of this Forum with SG-SICA and PAIRCA (Program to Support Central American Regional Integration - funded by the European Union) and has preliminarily set the forum to take place in mid-November 2008. PAIRCA has initially agreed to set aside \$20,000 to help fund this event. The activities related to the planning and organization of the Forum is further explained under Result 3.

The results of the individual country evaluations and analysis conducted by the consultants and the Working Groups and further comparative analysis will provide important inputs for the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum (RJFF). The presentation of the results and recommendations of the working groups and consultants, as well as their participation, will help to promote the need to develop a regional consensus on this issue. These recommendations may also subsequently be used by SG-SICA to advocate for the development of a coherent juvenile justice policy framework in the region.

The possible participation, with invitation from SG-SICA, of the Central American Court of Justice, the Central American Judicial Council (the Central American Supreme Courts) and PARLACEN (which are important pieces in the regional institutionality) as sponsors of the RJJ Forum is a deliberate strategy to include these institutions. Until now, these groups have been far away from the issues and while searching for solutions.

Activities:

Regional

AJR Director held an orientation meeting (arranged by SG-SICA) with Ambassador Eduardo Rosales, Director of Foreign Policy of Honduras. Honduras holds the rotating Presidency of Central America during the June-December semester. The meeting lasted several hours and served to introduce all aspects of the program to Ambassador Rosales. The ambassador has a human rights background and he was particularly interested in the *Desafío 10* and *Desafío 100* programs and the upcoming Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. Ambassador Rosales officially requested, on behalf of the Pro-tempore Presidency, that the Forum take place in Honduras. AJR explained that the only constraints to this would be financial. AJR staff noted that the activity was originally budgeted to take place in El Salvador and that any cost difference would need to be covered by others, such as PAIRCA. The ambassador offered to collaborate in all aspects of the program and offered his personal assistance and contacts to help AJR with the principal TV networks in his country to facilitate the *Desafío 10* reality show.

AJR considers that holding the Forum in Honduras would be ideal, as that country probably has the weakest Juvenile Justice system. Tegucigalpa, as the host city of the Forum, would permit a higher number of Honduran participants. Plans need to be made to include key experts and participants from El Salvador at the Forum. Salvadoran participation will help ensure that their well-developed Juvenile Justice system produces an echo effect in Honduras.

El Salvador

- An initial meeting with UNICEF country officials, Miriam de Figueroa, UNICEF Representative; Sunah Kim, Program Coordinator; and Karla de Varela, Project Officer for Policy, Legislation and Child Protection; took place in April. In this meeting, AJR Director presented the program and UNICEF expressed interest in coordinating actions and in collaborating with AJR. They also showed particular interest in the Outreach Centers model. Mrs. de Varela mentioned the possibility of making a link between the juvenile judges and the Outreach Centers so that minors under their charge in court (on alternative measures of parole) could attend these centers. She also briefly explained the activities currently being implemented by UNICEF in this field which included a special course in Juvenile Justice which is being taught at the Judicial Training School utilizing UNICEF and Projovenes program funds. Also mentioned were the problems facing juvenile justice in the country, such as lack of application of the law and lack of funding for programs. UNICEF praised the Juvenile Justice Office of Supreme Court of El Salvador as a regional good practice. AJR invited UNICEF to form part of a Regional Alliance along with SICA, USAID, private sector (ANEP, COHEP CACIF), Rotary Clubs among other relevant stakeholders.

The meeting was a productive event, noting great interest on behalf of the representation of UNICEF in El Salvador to work together, and established a desire to collaborate in furthering juvenile justice in the country and regionally.

- After initial meetings had taken place with the UNICEF offices in El Salvador and Guatemala, discussions were started with Sonia Eljach, Regional Advisor for Child Protection at the UNICEF Regional Office in Panama, on the possibility of establishing a regional alliance with UNICEF and signing an MOU. The AJR Director started discussions with Mrs. Eljach, however conversations with the office in Panama did not reach any conclusions. On May 7, the AJR Director sent a draft proposal to initiate a formal collaborative partnership with UNICEF at the regional level, but no response has been received from that office and no interest has been shown from UNICEF to formalize a regional alliance with AJR.
- As part of the international technical assistance provided by Projovenes project, AJR was invited on May 25 to a formal meeting at the European Union Delegation Offices. Present at the meeting were Projovenes consultant, Victor Herrero, and a specialist in Juvenile Justice. He gave a very interesting presentation of an evaluation of the situation of the prison and rehabilitation system in El Salvador. This presentation was useful to understand the challenges involved.
- AJR held an initial workshop on Juvenile Justice in San Salvador on June 25 at the Sheraton Hotel. More than 20 juvenile justice sector operators, government officials, experts and interested actors participated. Present at the workshop were Supreme Court Magistrate, Mirna Perla; Supreme Court Office of Juvenile Justice Director, Jaime Martínez, UNICEF's project officer Karla de Varela, CNSP Executive Director Armando Jimenez; community police representatives and judges were among other relevant stakeholders. AJR gave an initial presentation of the program. During the meeting the participants were able to discuss

the current situation of Juvenile Justice in El Salvador, its problems, challenges and best practices. During the first part of the workshop a brainstorming activity was held. The participants were encouraged to present their points of view and ideas on cards to stimulate discussion. The participants agreed that the Juvenile Criminal Law is one of the best in the region; however the problem lies in the lack of its appropriate application. Among other problems highlighted were the lack of political will and lack of financial resources for juvenile justice programs and institutions. After an extensive discussion among the participants and with the assistance of the facilitator, the group identified the central problem of juvenile justice in El Salvador as being, "the incoherence between formal recognition and effectiveness of the State and society in fulfilling youth and children's rights."

- AJR carried out several follow-up meetings in June with Karla de Varela of UNICEF/ El Salvador. Through Mrs. Varela, the ongoing collaborative relationship between AJR and UNICEF/El Salvador has been fruitful. Mrs. Varela has been a key ally in recommending juvenile justice experts in El Salvador who could support Result II, as well as international experts that could participate in the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum to take place in November 2008. She also recommended participants for the initial Juvenile Justice workshop. Her expertise in juvenile justice issues makes her a pivotal member of the Working Group. The inclusion of experts, like Mrs. Varela in the Working Group, will allow AJR to reach concrete recommendations for the improvement of juvenile justice in El Salvador, as well as for the advancement of this particular result.
- AJR also carried out follow-up meetings during the month of June with Jaime Martinez, Head of the Juvenile Justice Unit of the Supreme Court of Justice of El Salvador. The assistance provided by Mr. Martínez has also been key in assisting AJR to identify participants for the initial Juvenile Justice workshop, as well as in identifying possible consultants and members of the Working Group. The work in Juvenile Justice and the existence of this Unit in the Supreme Court can be viewed as a best practice in the region and could be presented as such in the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. The Magistrate of the Supreme Court, Mirna Perla, is very involved with juvenile justice issues and is very willing to participate in the Working Group.
- AJR Director and the Liaison Officer met with renowned Juvenile Judge Aida Santos de Escobar. Judge Santos de Escobar pledged her support for AJR's program and agreed to participate in the Juvenile Justice Working Group. Judge Santo de Escobar's district is includes Mejicanos where AJR's partners plan to operate two Outreach Centers. There were discussions that those two Centers could receive youthful offenders who have been given alternative/restorative sentences. These youth could either perform civic work at the OCs or engage in other OC activities. The possibility that the Coordinators of the Centers receive some training about alternative judicial measures was also discussed.

Guatemala

AJR Regional Director identified Mr. Samuel Fadul, a very able consultant and Seminar/Workshop Facilitator living in Guatemala, to conduct the Juvenile Justice Workshops in all the countries. Mr. Fadul has led more that 1,500 seminars and Workshops

in Latin America and is one of the best professionals in the field. Discussions on the strategy for the Workshops took place with Mr. Fadul and terms of reference were negotiated.

- On June 27, 2008, AJR held the initial workshop on Juvenile Justice in Guatemala. More than forty leading experts -- civil society members, representatives from international organizations, such as UNICEF, key judges, magistrates, government officials and other juvenile justice sector specialists. Present at the workshop were, among others, Silvia Roxana Morales Alvarado, President Magistrate of the Chamber of Childhood and Adolescence of the Supreme Court of Justice; Abner Paredes, Program Coordinator for the Youth Rights Program of the Centre for Legal Action on Human Rights (CALDH); Catalina Soberanis, Political Officer for the UNDP; and Oscar López, Deputy Secretary of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic. AJR gave a brief presentation of the program and the objectives of the event. With the facilitation of consultant Samuel Fadul, the group dynamic used in Honduras and El Salvador was replicated. During the workshop there was a long discussion on what the focus of juvenile justice should be in Guatemala and the differentiation that should be made between “maras, pandillas and youth”. Most of the participants agreed that even if there is an adequate legal framework there is a lack of prevention policies, programs and insufficient investment.

After an extensive discussion, the group dynamic enabled the construction of a “problem tree” with its causes and effects. The participants defined a “Deficient National Protection System for Children and Youth” as the central problem facing juvenile justice in the country.

- Both the Regional Program Director and Director of AJR have had ongoing exchanges with Mr. Justo Solórzano, the Project Officer from UNICEF/Guatemala. A collaborative relationship between AJR and UNICEF/Guatemala has been established through Mr. Solorzano. His recommendations have been important in identifying Juvenile Justice experts and participants for the initial Juvenile Justice workshop that was held in Guatemala on June 27. Solórzano’s extensive knowledge and expertise in juvenile justice issues makes him a very important member of the Working Group. The inclusion in the Working Group of experts, like Mr. Solorzano with extensive knowledge in juvenile justice issues, will allow AJR to collect important recommendations for the improvement of juvenile justice in Guatemala.

Honduras

- On May 16, AJR Director met in Tegucigalpa with Carlos Carrera, Deputy Representative of UNICEF in Honduras. Mr. Carrera showed great interest in the work of AJR, as well as initial interest in collaborating with the program.
- AJR held an initial workshop on Juvenile Justice in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on June 11, 2008. The activity was organized with the support received from AJR’s partner in Honduras, FOPRIDEH (Federación de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo de Honduras). With the assistance of FOPRIDEH, participants to the workshop were identified and invitations were sent. FOPRIDEH provided assistance to AJR in ensuring participation in the meeting of more

than 20 important experts, civil society, judges, prosecutors, police, government officials and other juvenile justice sector actors. AJR proposed and is discussion to sign an MOU with FOPRIDEH. This agreement would allow collaboration to promote legal reforms and policy regarding Juvenile Justice. This agreement would also help to find appropriate solutions to the problem of youth violence in Honduras and to promote together with organizations that are part of FOPRIDEH to encourage comprehensive, community-based youth violence prevention models.

RESULT III: *Collaboration and Assistance to SICA to catalyze regional policy reform and harmonization; and gather relevant stockholders to spur development of policy initiatives and implementation of reforms*

The current issues affecting each country regarding juvenile justice, although similar in nature, differ substantially in some areas, such as the organization and level of development of juvenile justice institutions and the application of the law. To be able to reach consensus on feasible policy and/or legislative reforms and improvements in the application the law in each country is a complex process; it is even more so when looking at the feasibility of consensus at the regional level.

On February 20, 2008, the Heads of State of the SICA member countries held an extraordinary meeting in San Salvador to address issues of regional institutions. On that particular occasion, the Central American Court of Justice (CCJ), PARLACEN and the Central American Judicial Council (CJC) proposed to the Presidents of the region the need to consider their inputs and opinions on matters of regional security, especially those relating to violence, gangs and mutual assistance in criminal matters. The Presidents agreed that the proper coordinating institutions, SG-SICA and the Central American Security Commission, should take into account the recommendations that the above mentioned regional institutions propose.

The statement made by the Central American Presidents at this extraordinary meeting held in February strengthens the role that those integrated institutions might play in finding solutions to regional issues such as, juvenile and gang violence, which have become endemic problems in Central America. The establishment of a Regional Juvenile Justice Forum to be held as a joint effort between SG-SICA, the Central American Court of Justice, the Central American Judicial Council (the Supreme Courts of each Central American country), and the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), with support from the Pro-tempore Presidency of SICA (Honduras) and PAIRCA (Assistance Program for the Regional Integration of Central America), will provide these regional institutions the opportunity to receive and give inputs from the relevant stakeholders in the region and to get directly involved in the issue. Furthermore it will also provide SG-SICA the opportunity to introduce the possibility of a coherent unified regional strategy, policy and/or legislation regarding Juvenile Justice and promote the process of integration and cooperation between the Central American countries.

The Forum will provide the above mentioned institutions with a strategic and exceptional opportunity to develop their mandates. For example, the Central American Court of Justice has as one of its priorities to carry out comparative studies of Central American Legislations to

achieve regional harmonization and prepare draft uniform laws. PARLACEN, has under its mandate to serve as a deliberative Forum for the analysis of political, economic, social, cultural and security issues in Central America and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in the region. Furthermore, the Central American Judicial Council has as its main objectives to establish a permanent link between the Supreme Courts of Justice in Central America in order to seek solutions to common problems and promote the development of individual legislations and reforms necessary aimed at the unification of legislations in the region.

The conclusions and recommendations provided during the regional event will be systematized and presented to SG-SICA and the sponsoring institutions in order to serve as support for key proposals in the framework of Regional Democratic Security, and will also be useful in the advocacy efforts to promote improvements in the juvenile justice systems in the region. The Working Groups and others are expected to start making the improvements at the beginning of 2009.

The systematization of the results of the analysis and recommendations regarding the individual juvenile justice systems in each country provided by the respective Working Groups and consultants (Result 2) and further comparative analysis will also be important tools for the development of a possible regional framework.

The recommendations provided at the event might also subsequently become important inputs for a comprehensive regional strategy on prevention of youth violence with appropriate approaches, including prevention, intervention (juvenile justice), rehabilitation and reinsertion of youth in conflict with the law.

AJR held several discussions in the months of May and June with both SG-SICA and PAIRCA (Programa de Apoyo a la Integración Regional Centroamericana) about the organization of the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum and presented both institutions with a concept paper and preliminary budget. As a result of these talks, PAIRCA has initially agreed to finance most of the costs of the event. SG-SICA is in the process of sending out letters to the respective integration institutions and possible sponsors of the event.

AJR will work closely in the coming months with SG-SICA, PAIRCA, the Pro-tempore Presidency of SICA and the respective integration institutions in planning the Forum in order to develop a strategy, including the methodology and establish thematic areas to ensure the success of the event.

The National Council for Public Security (CNSP) in El Salvador has under its mandate the oversight of the Central American Observatory on Violence (OCAVI). The Observatory was established in August 2005, under the Human Governance and Security Project of the CNSP and the Center for International Studies and Cooperation of Canada (CECI). The purpose of OCAVI is to contribute on citizen security and democratic governance in Central America by diffusing knowledge necessary to enable the definition and implementation of national and regional policies. OCAVI's mandate is intended to help improve strategies of prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and social reinsertion, as a measure to reduce violence and crime in the region.

In an Extraordinary Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Member Countries of SICA, held in October 2006, in Bosques de Zambrano, Honduras, the OCAVI was recognized as a regional institutional mechanism. Member countries were urged to support the exchange of information to support the OCAVI mandate.

The Regional Advisory Council (RAC) of the OCAVI was constituted as an intergovernmental coordination entity to manage the Observatory and oversee the collection, standardization and systematization of regional information to be published on OCAVI's website. During the First Meeting of the RAC, held on February 7th and 8th of 2007, the indicator chart was standardized and indicators were prioritized.

The next step for the OCAVI is to ensure institutional support from the governments of the countries of the region, in order to guarantee the availability of the information necessary to maintain updated data in its website. To achieve this, a second meeting of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) needs to be held. Tasks before the Council are to create mechanisms and instruments to aid on the consolidation of OCAVI's regional work. OCAVI's work in the region is an important mechanism to have more and better information on youth violence in Central America. AJR plans to give a small grant to the CNSP for the realization of the second meeting of the Regional Advisory Council. With the help of AJR, PAIRCA has also initially agreed to assist in the funding of the event.

Activities:

- During the last quarter, AJR Director held various meetings and kept on-going communication with Erich Vilchez, Director of Political and Legal Affairs of SG-SICA, to discuss advances in the regional program and possibilities of cooperation and assistance to SICA. AJR Director is currently providing follow-up to the conversations held with SG-SICA in order to ensure the implementation of the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum in November, OCAVI's RAC meeting and other activities agreed upon with SG-SICA.
- Project Director has held various meetings and kept on-going communication with Hector Dada, Director for the Assistance Program for the Regional Integration of Central America (PAIRCA). The PAIRCA project ends this year, but still has funds for the implementation of activities with SICA. There have been discussions with PAIRCA for funding assistance for the implementation of the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum and the meeting of the Regional Advisory Council of the Central American Observatory on Violence (OCAVI). AJR presented a concept paper and budget for the Forum. The CNSP, with assistance from AJR, presented a concept paper and respective budget for the OCAVI meeting.
- Also discussed during these meeting was the involvement of AJR in the coming International Conference on Violence and Security in Central America, set to take place in October 2008 in Honduras. Mr. Vilchez mentioned that they were moving forward with the planning of the conference and already had a concept paper developed by a consultant. Mr. Vilchez also mentioned that there would be a follow-up meeting on July

15 in New York with UNDP representatives to continue with the planning of the event. It was agreed that AJR would participate in the next meeting which would be held in El Salvador and join the team that is planning the event in order to provide inputs, identify possible speakers and experts that could take part in the event, among other things. There is a possibility that AJR gives a presentation on the regional program and/or present a small trailer on the *Desafío 10* Reality Show. These conversations dispel the notion that AJR will have a major role in the organization of the Conference.

- Another important issue discussed with SG-SICA is the possibility of developing a regional-level youth violence prevention working meeting. Donors would be invited to attend. As lately there has been an increase in violence prevention and security programs at the regional level, many of which are or will be implemented in coordination with SICA, therefore there is a need for a coordinating mechanism between projects/donors to avoid duplication of efforts and also look into possibilities for cooperation. This donor/project Coordinating Working Group on prevention, rehabilitation and reinsertion, would include international organizations such as AECI, GTZ, UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, EU and existing regional programs such as Interpeace. Mr. Erich Vélchez requested AJR assistance in setting up and coordinating these meetings. An initial meeting of donors/projects would ideally take place during the second week in August. There has to be additional discussions with SG-SICA regarding this possibility.
- AJR Director has been working with Mr. Mauricio Herdocia, who is advising CJC and CCJ regarding their possible inputs on Democratic Security in the region, so the issue of Juvenile Justice is included in these considerations. Also Mr. Herdocia can be instrumental in advocating with both institutions regarding their sponsorship in the Forum and perhaps its follow-up.
- In one of the meetings with AJR, Mr. Vilchez mentioned that he would look into the possibility of having the Secretary General of SICA attend the signing ceremony of AJR's Agreement with ANEP for the *Desafío 10* and *Desafío 100* programs.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- The limited number of personnel that SICA has assigned for Security related issues, makes it difficult for AJR to be able to have steady interaction with the organization. SICA has said that this will change, because through the Spain-SICA Fund resources, they are supposed to soon be hiring up to six additional, dedicated professionals. If possible SICA would like to hire one professional from each country, to cover security-related fields such as Defense, Police, Legal issues in reference to security, etc. SICA has taken longer than expected to find those professionals and has requested AJR to propose candidates. Given that SICA needs an in-house expert, knowledgeable of juvenile justice and gangs, AJR has proposed Elisa Gómez, a Spanish candidate who participated in AJR's Guatemala Workshop. Ms. Gomez could be developed into a liaison officer and that would prove to be very useful to AJR's program.

- AJR has still not been able to hire a Coordinator for the work started in San Pedro Sula. At this point, AJR is depending on the assistance from the personnel of its alliance partner, Paz y Convivencia. An ad in La Prensa, the main newspaper in San Pedro Sula, yielded over 60 CVs, but none of the applicants were qualified for the position. Currently and under AJR guidance, a psychologist hired by Paz y Convivencia is conducting the initial tests to the candidates for the *Desafío 100* program (work opportunities for former gang members-Ex.)
- In Tegucigalpa the enthusiastic welcome that the program found in all sectors may be dampened because of the lack of a full-time AJR employee. Nonetheless the Rotary Clubs will partner with AJR to open from six to ten Outreach Centers in the next year, COHEP is an enthusiastic partner and the powerful Chamber of Commerce of Industry of Tegucigalpa will allow AJR access to its Job Bank to start a *Desafío 100* program. In addition, all of the activity of the Juvenile Justice Working Groups and the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum will also take place in Tegucigalpa.
- In El Salvador, the Centro de Formación y Orientación (CFO) proposed the Organización Juvenil Nueva Generación XXI (NSXXI) as a partner for the operation of the Outreach Center they plan to implement with the help of AJR in Mejicanos. However, because of the lack of agreement between the two organizations, CFO decided to implement the OC effort alone. AJR is considering to make a small donation to NSXXI to make the small library operated by NSXXI more accessible for the use of vulnerable youth in Mejicanos.
- The upcoming electoral phase in El Salvador is heating up, and it is increasingly difficult for private sector organizations focus on longer term prevention issues. This is perhaps in part the reason why the pace of the program in that country has been slower than in Honduras and Guatemala.
- In El Salvador it is more difficult to promote the concept of a “former” gang member than in the other two countries. There is a societal perception and a perception inside the gangs themselves that whoever enters the gang cannot truly abandon the gang but they can “calm- down” (“calmarse”). AJR program can contribute to coin the concept of EX in El Salvador, as a condition to which a youthful gang members can aspire to becoming if they are ready to change their life.
- The lack of response from UNICEF at the regional level and from the Honduras office was unexpected. Collaboration with the national offices in El Salvador and Guatemala has been fruitful and is ongoing. The partner found in Honduras, FOPRIDEH, has made up for the lack of involvement of the UNICEF there. An additional effort is planned with the UNICEF Regional office in Panama. AJR will offer them the opportunity to have some type of participation in the upcoming Regional Forum of Juvenile Justice.

The issue of not initiating any kind of activities regarding Result II in Nicaragua, may complicate things in regards of the regional approach that the result is expected to achieve. The fact that the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum is to be sponsored by the Central American Court of Justice whose headquarters are in Granada, Nicaragua and the Central American Judicial Council on

which Nicaragua is quite active may cause the Forum to encounter problems. There might be questions about the fact that Nicaragua is not participating in the Forum, as no Working Group is being organized there. Very aware of the delicate situation for USAID in Nicaragua, AJR will be requesting its CTO to contact and negotiate a compromised approach with USAID Nicaragua. A solution to this issue could be that AJR establishes a partnership with an NGO working on prevention there such as Centro de Prevención de la Violencia, CEPREV (which is organizing a Central American Violence Prevention Meeting, financed by Austrian Cooperation, during August 20-21) or Fundación Nicaragua Nuestra. This NGO could organize a Working Group with the assistance of a local consultant. AJR would monitor the process from long distance and Nicaraguan experts could eventually participate in the Regional Forum. The CACJ, CAJC and PARLACEN could play an important role at the Forum as they search for regional solutions in the fight against crime. Their mutual role was reinforced recently in the Declaration given by the Presidents at the Extraordinary Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the SICA Member Countries that was held in San Salvador on February 20, 2008.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Originally it was thought that separate working groups would be organized to deal with each of three sub-themes of Juvenile Justice in each country. It was discovered that due to the relatively low level of specialization and the fact that many of the stakeholders also deal with all the issues, separate discussions groups were not warranted. The initial findings that Juvenile Justice problems seem to be systemic makes it better to follow a process that encompasses involving the most relevant actors for the three themes (legislation, coordination among justice operators and rehabilitation) in discussions. This also increases opportunities of systemic solutions and a better coordinated advocacy process.
- Discussions with organizations involved in rehabilitation and AJR assessments point to the necessity of increasing the technological and IT training skills offered at the AJR Outreach Centers. The skills in highest demand by the labor markets in all the three countries are for IT skills. Also basic IT skills are now necessary for entry into almost all levels of jobs. The relatively modest amount that AJR can invest in each OC makes it difficult to finance the procurement of more than four to six computers for each site. Computers are the most common feature that attracts young people to spend time at the Outreach Centers. AJR procurement of OC computers is limited by the number of computers that it can purchase based on “Buy America” restrictions and available budget.

NEXT STEPS

- Consult with stakeholders and select the consultants who will work in Result II in each country, from those already identified.
- Prepare TORs to present to consultants, negotiate terms with them and prepare draft contracts.

- Finalize the list of potential Working Group members through consultation with the relevant stakeholders and consultants.
- Prepare a draft invitation letter for Working Group members that explains the terms of their engagement, including the voluntary donation of their time.
- Hold a coordinating meeting in El Salvador with all consultants, including one consultant that will be eventually working to systematize the regional perspective as an input for SG-SICA to discuss scope of work and strategy to establish the Result II Working Groups and other project work. This meeting is scheduled to happen during the month of July.
- Resolve OC computer sourcing problem described in Lessons Learned above and keeping in mind the following steps:
 - a. Explore justification of a waiver to allow procurement outside of the “Buy America” policy based on the price differences and possible leverage that could be obtained through price cuts offered by a program benefactor (5ND).
 - b. Explore sources of donated computers in the USA. There are several NGOs that do so. Some expect a sourcing fee and others sell at a minimal price. All expect recipients to pay for shipping costs. Each shipping container can hold up to 400 computers.
 - c. Explore with CTO and with Creative Headquarters if such expenses are allowable under USAID regulations.
 - d. The possible grant being negotiated with Ceiba in Guatemala will contain provisions to make the best use of donated computers and, if feasible, to include their acquisition and shipping.

ATTACHMENTS

PHOTOS OF THE INAUGURATION OF AJR'S OFFICES IN EL SALVADOR AND OF THE AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2008

INAUGURATION OF AJR'S OFFICES IN EL SALVADOR



MEDIA COVERAGE OF AJR INAUGURATION



THE CO-DIRECTOR OF THE "ADVANCEMENT PROJECT" OF LOS ANGELES, MS. CONSTANCE RICE, ADDRESSES GUESTS DURING THE INAUGURATION

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AJR AND PAZ Y CONVIVENCIA IN SAN PEDRO SULA



JACOBO REGALADO, DIRECTOR OF PAZ Y CONVIVENCIA, AJR'S PARTNER IN SAN PEDRO SULA AND SALVADOR STADTHAGEN, DIRECTOR OF AJR, DURING THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN BOTH ORGANIZATION



JUAN JOSE GOMEZ A FORMER GANG MEMBER BEFECIARY OF A USAID PROGRAM WAS INVITED ALONG WITH HIS EMPLOYER TO GIVE TESTIMONY AT THE ACTIVITY OF HIS REINSERTION THROUGH DESAFIO 100

SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL PREVENTION PROGRAM IN TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS



MS. NOLVIA ALVARENGA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL PREVENTION PROGRAM OF HONDURAS AND MR. SALVADOR STADTHAGEN REPRESENTING AJR, SIGN A COOPERATION AGREEMENT



HAROLD SIBAJA, REGIONAL DIRECTOR AND SALVADOR STADTHAGEN, PROJECT DIRECTOR TALK TO MEDIA REGARDING THE AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL PREVENTION PROGRAM

SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE ROTARY CLUBS OF TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS AND AJR



DISTRICT 4250 ROTARY GOVERNOR MR. RICARDO MARICHAL (THIRD LEFT TO RIGHT) AND THE COORDINATOR OF THE ROTARIAN INITIATIVE FOR POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR HONDURAS AND PRESIDENT OF THE TEGUCIGALPA ROTARY CLUB, MR. GUILLERMO VALLE, SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO IMPLEMENT SIX OUTREACH CENTERS IN TEGUCIGALPA WITH AJRO



THE PRESIDENTS OF THE ROTARY CLUBS OF TEGUCIGALPA IN AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH DURING THE SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT WITH AJR-USAID-SICA

SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AJR, PAZ Y CONVIVENCIA AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF CORTES AND THE MAQUILA ASSOCIATION OF HONDURAS, WITH IDB VICE-PRESIDENT AS HONOR WITNESS, TO IMPLEMENT A *DESAFIO 100* PROGRAM IN SAN PEDRO SULA



MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AJR, PAZ Y CONVIVENCIA AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF SAN PEDRO SULA FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A *DESAFIO 100* PROGRAM



Mr LUIS LARACH, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF CORTES GIVES AN STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA THE DAY OF THE SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT WITH AJR



POSSIBLE FIRST SITE FOR THE OUTREACH CENTER IN SAN PEDRO SULA

News About the Regional Youth Alliance

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<http://www.elsalvador.usembassy.gov/news/2008/04/11s.html>
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http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:isikPyrk1XMJ:www.elsalvador.com/mwedh/nota/nota_completa.asp%3FidCat%3D6342%26idArt%3D2267621+%22alianza+joven+regional%22&hl=es&ct=clnk&cd=2&gl=sv
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<http://www.proceso.hn/2008/06/11/Metr%C3%B3poli/Organismos.impulsar.C/6544.html>
http://www.tiempo.hn/mostrar_noticia.php?id=64681&seccion=1
http://www.laprensahn.com/ediciones/2008/06/18/ex_miembros_de_maras_ahora_son_productivos
http://www.laprensahn.com/ediciones/2008/06/19/ex_pandilleros_logran_su_gran_sueno_un_trabajo_bajo
http://www.laprensahn.com/index.php/ediciones/2008/06/19/ex_pandilleros_logran_su_gran_sueno_un_trabajo
http://la1313.blogspot.com/2006_12_01_archive.html
http://www.tiempo.hn/mostrar_noticia.php?id=64576&seccion=1
<http://www.hondudiario.com/sps=0070.php>
<http://www.latribuna.hn/news/47/ARTICLE/36308/2008-06-18.html>
http://www.maya-tv.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3862&Itemid=115
http://www.ccichonduras.org/boletin/boletin_180608.html
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