



USAID
DEL PUEBLO DE LOS ESTADOS
UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

ALIANZA JOVEN REGIONAL USAID - SICA

QUARTERLY REPORT

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 30, 2008



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL



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Prepared by
CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC. (CREATIVE)
for
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El Salvador

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I. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ADVANCES THIS QUARTER

This report covers the period of activities from October 1st to December 31st, 2008, for the Regional Youth Alliance USAID-SICA (*Alianza Joven Regional USAID-SICA* (AJR) also referred to as the Gangs Prevention Alliance for Central America. In this fourth quarter, our efforts were focused on advancing implementation of activities agreed to with allies and finding new partners; consolidating Result II (Juvenile Justice Component) by concluding the working group processes and country evaluations in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala; and, by holding a major Juvenile Justice Regional Forum. A second Outreach Center (OC) was opened in San Salvador; the first OC in Honduras commenced; and the Desafio 100 program made significant advances in Tegucigalpa, where 103 former gang members went through the selection process.

The AJR signed agreements this quarter with the *Iglesia del Camino Filial Lourdes*, to implement an OC in Lourdes, Colon; one with the Baptist Church in Rivera Hernandez, San Pedro Sula, to implement the first OC in Honduras; one with Nuevo Siglo XXI, to improve access of vulnerable youth to their library; and, resource center in *Mejicanos*, El Salvador.

The AJR reviewed proposals and the following agreements are in process:

- *Asociacion Amigos Para Siempre*, a prevention center in the notorious Sunceri neighborhood in San Pedro Sula, to improve their recreational facilities for vulnerable youth;
- *Asociación Compartir* in the Villa Nueva sector of Tegucigalpa, to improve their recreational/sports programs;
- *Foro Salvadoreño de Escritores* (Salvadoran Writers Forum) to organize and deliver writing and Cine Forum workshops and other volunteer activities at the OCs in El Salvador.
- *ACOES*, a youth violence prevention program in Villa Cristina, Tegucigalpa, to organize serigraphy, making fruit preserves and other workshops that will develop productive skills and income for youth at risk.

Additionally, the AJR is working with Guatemala OC partners to develop seven small grant proposal concepts submitted by them.

Through a public solicitation for proposals, the AJR received and evaluated seven proposals to implement OCs in Tegucigalpa (to be co-financed by the six Rotary Clubs in that city). Only the one presented by Save the Children/Honduras fulfilled the requirements and its implementation is being discussed. The other potential grantees were visited and some are expected to either resubmit their proposals or apply to small grants.

The AJR assisted in the organization of and actively participated in the Central American Integration System (SICA's) *International Conference on Violence and Security in Central America* which took place in Tegucigalpa on October 2-3. The AJR made the central presentation on the Youth Violence Prevention Panel and arranged two video presentations: one at the conference opening on gang violence in Guatemala and another on the AJR's regional program at the closing.

The AJR fundraised for and organized the Regional Forum of Juvenile Justice, a major event which gathered 175 participants and speakers from seven countries, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and which received significant attention from the press - through radio, TV and print coverage (Attachments, 1, 2.)

Finally, the AJR distributed issues No. 06 of our one-page electronic monthly program newsletter (Attachment 3). This newsletter provides timely information to relevant AJR stakeholders and other audiences in the field of prevention.

II. ANALYSIS OF SECURITY IN THE REGION

The *North Triangle* Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras experienced 12,827 homicides during 2008. Of these, 3,175 occurred in El Salvador, showing a decrease of 322 homicides in comparison with 2007. Honduras experienced 3,418 homicides, showing an increase of 156 homicides from 2007. Also Guatemala experienced an alarming 6,234 killings for the year, an increase of 530 homicides from the previous year. The data demonstrates the high levels of violence affecting the people of the region and is a clear indication that more needs to be done to prevent this indiscriminate violence.¹

In Central America, the justice sector continues to suffer from impunity and general inefficiency. In 2008, the Guatemalan Prosecutor's Office filed only 1,804 criminal cases in the face of 6,234 homicides. Only 257 judicial sentences were handed out, of those only 169 were condemnatory. The inability to process cases is alarming.²

During 2008, the Salvadoran Attorney General's Office held 1490 public hearings, of which 690 were condemnatory and the remaining 799 were absolutory. The relatively small number of sentences is also alarming given the universe of crimes committed.³ In El Salvador, some 6 - 8 percent of all crimes are committed by juveniles between 12 and 17 years of age. The most common crime is belonging to illegal groups.⁴

In Guatemala, the most dangerous profession is that of bus driver. During 2008, some 138 bus drivers were murdered. These homicides are usually linked to gang extortion. For similar reasons, 52 bus driver's assistants were also murdered. In addition, 51 police officers were slain in the line of duty. Also three drug related massacres occurred, which indicates the inroads drug cartels have made in Guatemala. In March at the *Rio Hondo* in Zacapa, two groups of drug traffickers clashed killing 12 people. In November, on the route to the Atlantic, Km. 131, a Nicaraguan bus was found with 14 Nicaraguans and a Dutch citizen burned to death. In December, in Santa Ana Huista, Huehuetenango, disputes among drug cartels left 26 dead. Some

¹ <http://www.listindiario.com/app/article.aspx?id=86509>
http://www.soitu.es/soitu/2008/09/11/info/1221092194_313776.html
<http://www.laprensagrafica.com/index.php/el-salvador/judicial/1-judicial/9390--2008-cierra-con-ocho-asesinatos-cada-dia.html>
<http://www.elheraldo.hn/Sucesos/Ediciones/2009/01/02/Noticias/3-418-muertes-violentas-dejo-2008-en-Honduras>

² <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20090106/pais/85216/>

³ <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/index.php/el-salvador/judicial/8230.html>

⁴ <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/index.php/el-salvador/judicial/6731.html>;
<http://www.lahora.com.gt/notas.php?key=42173&fch=2009-01-06>

of those involved had entered from Mexico. Also, 213 kidnapping cases were reported, 98 more than in 2007. However, authorities managed to rescue 173 people who had been kidnapped and captured 50 kidnappers. They also confiscated 2,214 pounds of drugs, some 5500 pounds more than in 2007. Total arrests numbered 38,878, not necessarily a direct consequence of police efficiency. But, these numbers do reflect attempts at curbing violence in the country.

The costs generated by violence in the region are huge. In El Salvador, violence related costs reach almost 11 percent of GDP. In Guatemala, it is estimated at 7.7 percent of GDP and in Honduras it reaches 9.6 percent. In Costa Rica the cost of violence is 3.6 percent of GDP. This economic burden prevents the allocation of more resources to stimulate growth.⁵ This is combined with related costs of medical and hospital care, life insurance policies, and the processing of offenders through the justice system. There are also those intangible costs, difficult to quantify such as the pain and suffering of the victims and their relatives, the long-term effects of violence against children (as victims or perpetrators), violence against women, and insecurity among the general population.

The increase in *sicariatos* (paid assassinations) as a form of criminal behavior in Honduras is very troubling. According to the Violence Observatory of the UNAH (National University of Honduras), which monitors criminal behavior, more than 43 percent of homicides were related to organized crime. Organized crime groups recruit common criminals, and even minors to become paid assassins. The *sicariatos* have had a particularly negative impact in San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, Colón, Copan and Santa Barbara. The victims are usually high-profile personalities such as businessmen, government officials, members of mafia or organized crime groups and enemies of the *sicarios*. Assassins from Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia have been detected.⁶

Within the past year, there were 78,877 deportees from the United States that arrived in the region by air. Some 20,516 arrived in El Salvador; 30,017 in Honduras; and 28,344 arrived in Guatemala. In the past year alone, there were 10,124 more deportations than in 2007. The Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Honduran deportees coming by land from Mexico totalled 77,896, that is, 25,450 less than in 2007.⁷ In Guatemala, the number of minors deported between the ages of four and 17 reached 2,000, with 888 arriving by air.

The deportation phenomenon presents serious problems for the *North Triangle* countries, in particular Honduras and Guatemala. At least 60 percent of the deportees were apprehended before they reached their final destiny, while the rest were already working in the United States illegally and were arrested at work or as a result of committing a minor crime. Some of them had already been in the U.S. for as long as 12 years.⁸

⁵ http://www.elsalvador.com/mwedh/nota/nota_completa.asp?idCat=6342&idArt=3130981

⁶ <http://www.laprensa.hn/Apertura/Ediciones/2008/10/27/Noticias/Negocio-del-sicariato-sin-freno-y-plena-impunidad>

⁷ <http://www.lahora.com.gt/notas.php?key=42069&fch=2009-01-03>;
<http://www.laprensahn.com/Pa%C3%ADs/Ediciones/2008/12/31/Noticias/Ultimos-deportados-llegan-hoy-a-Honduras>;
<http://www.lahora.com.gt/notas.php?key=41939&fch=2008-12-30>;
<http://www.lahora.com.gt/notas.php?key=42069&fch=2009-01-03>

⁸ http://www.ritla.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4795&Itemid=261

A recent report *Map of Violence: Young people of Latin America* from RITLA (Network of Latin American Technological Information) drew significant attention for stating that the probability of a young Latin American (between the ages of 15-24 years) to be a homicide victim is 30 times higher than that of a European youth and 70 times higher than a youth living in Greece, Hungary, England, Austria, Japan and Ireland. This probability increases in countries like El Salvador, with a rate of 92.3 youth homicides for every 10,000 inhabitants, followed by Colombia with 73.4, Venezuela 64.2, Guatemala 55.4, and Brazil with 51.6. Two of the most violent countries in the world are in the *North Triangle* where the AJR operates.⁹

The gang phenomenon is very much linked to the problem of juvenile mortality and has grown more complex with an undetermined number of gang members becoming involved in organized crime. The institutions responsible for security and justice have had to carry out various strategies to combat these organized groups. Often times these strategies have criminalized youth living in more marginalized areas.

According to the UNODC World Report on Drugs for 2007¹⁰, the new generations of gangs are trying to keep a lower profile by ridding themselves of tattoos in order to go unnoticed outside the country. Gangs are no longer a Central American problem; they have now become a global phenomenon. Between 2007 and 2008, UNODC detected about 211 gang cells. Major Mexican cartels are recruiting Central American and Caribbean gang members to send to different European cities like Barcelona, Madrid, and Oslo. Among the most recruited are members of the *Mara Salvatrucha*, mainly from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. In Guatemala, the recruits are also former *Kaibiles* - former Army Green Berets of the Guatemalan Army.

According to UNODC, the recruits are being trained by the *Zetas*, which are the operational criminal arm of the Mexican Gulf Cartel. *Los Zetas* are a group of former soldiers who deserted the *Aeromóvil* Special Forces Group (GAFE) and the Amphibian Special Forces Group (Ganfe) of the Mexican Army. The *Zetas* were founded in 1994 in connection with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico. Also forming part of the *Zetas* is an undetermined number of former soldiers of the Guatemalan Special Forces. The *Zetas* have entered Guatemalan territory to fight with local cartels.

Significant effort has also been made to deal with corrupt police forces. In Guatemala, in 2008, 62 police officers were captured and brought to trial for various offenses.¹¹ In Honduras, the government offered up the list of police officers linked to organized crime. While this offer raised concern in some sectors in Honduras, the list was never disclosed. The list involves public security and police officials. Many of them are linked to kidnapping; drug trafficking, murder and extortion. In El Salvador, regular purging of the police force avoids high-profile scandals.¹²

Information provided to AJR by the Honduran Ministry of Security, points to a recent wave of kidnappings against foreign officials working in Honduras. One was perpetrated against a

⁹ <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20081208/investigacion/82341/>

¹⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

¹¹ <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20081217/pais/83535/>

¹² <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Sucesos/Ediciones/2008/12/09/Noticias/Revelaran-lista-de-policias-vinculados-a-actos-criminales>

Spanish commercial officer (who has since left the country) and the son of a German official (for whom a ransom apparently was paid.)

Finally, there were elections in both Honduras and El Salvador. During 2008, there were at least 62 election related incidents, most of them violent confrontations between political activists. In Honduras, some candidates were murdered.¹³

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS QUARTER

The chart below demonstrates AJR's performance based on defined results, indicators, targets and achievements to date.

| S.O.1 Ruling Justly, More Responsive, Transparent Governance | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|---|---|
| IR 1 Strengthening Rule of Law | | | | |
| Sub-IR Crime Prevention Programs Implemented | | | | |
| Number | Indicator | Baseline Year | Target Sept 2010 | To Dec 2008 |
| Result 1 Jump Start Public Private Initiatives for Gang Prevention | | | | |
| 1.1 | Communities assisted in crime prevention | 2008 0 | 30 | 5 |
| 1.2 | New Outreach Centers Established | 2008 0 | 15 | 3 |
| 1.3 | Sub-Grants Implemented (other than Outreach Centers) | 2008 0 | 7 mid-size grants 27 small grants | 3 |
| 1.4 | Youth benefited by Outreach Centers | 2008 0 | 3750 | 834 |
| 1.5 | Desafio 100 youths provided with jobs | 2008 0 | 450 | 26 |
| 1.6 | Leverage Contributions raised | 2008 0 | 1:1 | \$114,931.02 |
| Result 2 Assess Regional Legal/Justice Frameworks and promote Juvenile Justice Policy Reform | | | | |
| 2.1 | Evaluation of National/Legal Frameworks/Policies and Best Practices validated by Working Groups and Regional Comparative Analysis Developed | 2008 0 | 3 Evaluations Validated 1 Comparative Analysis Developed | 3 Evaluations validated 1 Comparative Analysis Developed |
| 2.2 | Advocacy Strategies to influence National/Regional Legal Frameworks/Policies designed and implemented | 2008 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Result 3 Collaboration and Assistance to SICA to catalyze regional policy reform and harmonization | | | | |
| 3.1 | Number of reforms and initiatives promoted by SICA to improve the juvenile justice system and juvenile violence prevention through assistance by AJR | 2008 0 | 5 | 1 |

¹³ <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/index.php/el-salvador/politica/10258.html>

Below is a description by results of the activities for the quarter, achievements and obstacles.

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

During this fourth quarter on October 21st, the second OC outside Guatemala, was inaugurated in the Lourdes, Colon, in El Salvador, and during the first week of December the OC in Rivera Hernandez, San Pedro Sula, Honduras initiated activities. Another OC is set to open next quarter in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Also, seven proposals for funding of OCs (joint program with the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa) were received and reviewed. The implementation of two eligible proposals should start during the first quarter of 2009. The Desafio 100 program had significant advances in Tegucigalpa, where 103 former gang members are already part of the selection process.

Component I: Preventing that young people enter gangs

Activities

El Salvador

- From August, the CFO/*Mejicanos* OC, reported 344 beneficiaries, of which 64 percent assisted regularly to the different trainings and activities.
- The recreational activities offered by this OC included guitar, keyboard and break dance classes. Additionally, visits were organized for the beneficiaries to artistic functions at the National Theater (free passes) and the beach, providing an important break for these kids from marginalized and violent neighborhoods. The participants were particularly impressed with the visit to the National Theater. Some parents accompanied their children, which helps build important community links to the OC.
- AJR financial assistance to the CFO/*Mejicanos* is for a six month period through January 2009. As such, CFO doubled their efforts to secure other funding for the OC which led to them securing assistance from Spanish Catholic FBOs for the next couple of years. CFO is interested in developing other OCs with AJR's jumpstart assistance.
- The Lourdes, Colon OC located in one of the areas with the highest juvenile violence was inaugurated on October 21. Some of those attending the inauguration included: Ms. Jennifer Link, USAID/DG; Dr. Cesar Salazar, Legal Advisor of SICA; a Councilman from the Municipality of Colon; and community and religious leaders. Another two hundred people from the community participated in the inauguration (press report, Attachment 4).
- From its inception, the Lourdes, Colon OC, has had a visible impact on the area youth. In the first five weeks of operation, 540 children and adolescents registered as beneficiaries with 71 receiving IT classes. Some 200 safely enjoyed recreational time by participating in activities such as dramatization, break dance classes, table games, and film nights.. The conclusion is that prevention programs have to have innovative initiatives such as the OCs to be able attract youth accordingly.

- The Lourdes OC offers training in computers, English, and handicrafts. Computer classes have been very popular, though there are not enough to meet the demand. The OC was able to accommodate more students by shortening the class time. The AJR should increase the IT offerings at OCs to provide more employable skills.
- The Lourdes community has responded extremely well to the OC. In less than three months, a total of 58 volunteers registered to serve and 29 of have been involved in the OC's activities producing 1,283 volunteer hours .
- However, volunteers and beneficiaries have had some difficulties in adapting to the OC norms and procedures despite the success of OCs in El Salvador. Also, many of the beneficiaries do not have parental support and the OCs have had to fill that void.
- Not surprisingly, some of the beneficiaries have learning disabilities and lack social skills.
- Both OCs in El Salvador have reached acceptable levels of volunteers, though more efforts are needed to ensure that all participate in activities to help youth..
- AJR has made some efforts to involve the Colon (Lourdes) Municipality in providing assistance to the OC. A visit is planned to Guatemala by the Mayor and at least one councilperson to observe how some municipal governments are supporting the more developed OCs.
- Our partner in *Mejicanos*, CFO (Father Antonio Rodriguez), is sold on the OC model and is interested in opening other OCs during 2009, even with resources coming from other donors.
- The AJR Director along with Father Antonio Rodriguez visited a potential site for an OC, close to the Tinnetti Market. It was evident that there was strong gang control in the area. This *barrio* has a communal house built with assistance from GTZ which to date is completely abandoned. The AJR will evaluate with CFO the possibility of prevention work in this area.
- The AJR is working with potential partners to finalize details for the possible implementation of two additional OCs during the first quarter of 2009, this apart from the two existing OCs in El Salvador,. One is being developed in Soyapango with *Fe y Alegría*, a Catholic FBO, and one in Barrio Lourdes of San Salvador with the Abba Padre Evangelical Church.
- Soyapango and Barrio Lourdes are ideal for establishing OCs given the significant presence of gangs, vulnerable youth, and availability of reliable partners with previous experience in community work and with existing infrastructure.
- The AJR expects to present the Soyapango OC model to *Agrisal*, a local Salvadoran company for possible co-financing to assist its future sustainability.
- In May, in response to our call for proposals, the offers from CFO and from *Fe y Alegria* were the first to be selected. The *Fe y Alegria*'s OC proposal for the *13 de enero* community in *Sacamil* (different than the new proposal for *Soyapango*), was also expected to open during this year. Unfortunately the *Mejicanos* municipality did not come through with expected commitments. The municipal elections complicated the opening of this OC, but the potential partner informed that the community has made some repairs to the infrastructure and that it hopes to move forward.
- A small grant of \$2,408.65 was made to *Organización Juvenil Nueva Generación XXI* (NSXXI), to make the small library NSXXI operating in *Mejicanos* more accessible for young vulnerable children and youth in the area, particularly by the *Escuela Japon* there.

As the organization is run by part time volunteers, they have little administrative capacity and resources. The municipality of *Mejicanos* pays the rent of a house where they operate. As NSXXI has no bank account and no regular administrative procedures, AJR purchased the material directly and delivered to the organization. The AJR expects to assist and monitor NSXXI and encourage them to professionalize their activities.

- The AJR Project Director arranged for OC partners, Father Antonio Rodriguez and Pastor Jaime Guatemala to visit Mr. Joel Moran, the Executive Director INSAFORP (Salvadoran Institute for Professional Development). INSAFORP is the government institution in charge of vocational education in El Salvador. The idea was to explore possible ways in which INSAFORP could support the beneficiaries of the OCs. Several possibilities exist for future cooperation.
- The AJR received a visit from US General Accounting Office (GAO) on December 3rd. Arrangements were made for a visit to the *Mejicanos* OC and to the AJR's office for further discussions, with USAID's DG officials.
- On December 5th, a visit to the Lourdes, Colon, OC was made with the Salvadoran Writer Forum (FSE) directives and the director of the Salvadoran Volunteer Initiative (INV) along with AJR Project Director. As a result, we received an offer by the INV to give workshops on volunteerism to members of the OC targeted communities. The INV will organize free workshops when a volunteer group is formed and a request made. The FSE offered to donate some posters of famous Salvadoran writers to the Lourdes OC (which were framed and are now decorating the OC's small library/reading room.) FSE presented a proposal under discussion for a small grant to cover some of the costs associated with a volunteer reading/writing and Cine Forum workshops program for the OCs.

Guatemala:

Asociacion Alianza Joven (AAJ)

The AAJ continues to take over the responsibilities of the PDJ/USAID program. This quarter, the AAJ supported by the PDJ/USAID, launched Desafio 200,. Since then, the AAJ has taken full responsibility of the Desafio Initiative. The AAJ has also been able to secure funding from IBIS Denmark to open two new OCs in Guatemala and is in conversations with two Rotary Clubs in the US, a Spanish NGO and Tigo to get additional funding for new OCs. Next quarter, with the support of PDJ/USAID, AAJ will be locating its own office and will continue to become more independent.

Small Grants

The AJR requested proposals for small grants to develop crime prevention programs in seven communities in Guatemala. The PDJ/USAID supported the communities with the development of their proposals. The proposals are being reviewed and are expected to be funded next quarter. These crime prevention grants encourage community mobilization and involvement of key local actors such as municipalities, churches, private sector and others to address the issue of youth violence through creating awareness campaigns, festivals and videos, and by rescuing community green areas to reduce crime.

Honduras

Tegucigalpa

- The AJR visited all the sites where potential partners that presented proposals want to open OCs in Tegucigalpa. This meant establishing contacts with many of the organizations doing prevention work in Tegucigalpa, and getting a better sense of their capacity and the challenges in their communities. This permitted AJR to better evaluate the feasibility of their proposals.
- Among these visits, the areas of work proposed by Save the Children Honduras stood out and influenced AJR to consider opening two OCs in partnership with Save the Children - one in the Buena Nueva community and one at the Villa Franca community.. Both OCs will complement one another given their close proximity. Save the Children has a long history of work with these communities and has some equipment that will be made available. Their modified proposal is expected to be completed and approved in January 2009.
- The proposals received from *Ministerios Cristianos de Mayordomía* (an Evangelical FBO) in *Nueva Suyapa* and the one from *COMPARTIR* (a Honduran NGO) do not initially qualify to develop OCs. Both organizations have fairly large operations already and starting up OCs may not be feasible. In both cases, the organizations value consideration and are interested in pursuing the OC methodology. It was agreed that they may apply for a small grant to improve or reinforce some of their prevention activities and perhaps in the future look to implement an OC in a neighboring community (such as CFO has done in *Mejicanos*).
- The *ACOES* is another strong institution working near *Villa Cristina*. Their methodology tends to concentrate on a smaller number of children (60), accompanying them until they graduate from school. As a result, the open OC methodology does not fit with theirs. They have submitted a small grant proposal to support their income generation workshops that provide assistance to vulnerable children and their families and their own operation.
- The AJR's partner – the Rotary Clubs - continues to fundraise and is targeting US Rotary Clubs for the development of the OCs in Tegucigalpa.

San Pedro Sula

- The establishment of the first OC in Honduras is important, as it will be the showcase to convince and train other implementing partners.
- Pastor Arnold Linares (a very committed community leader to helping at-risk youth from the violent Rivera Hernandez area of San Pedro Sula), and implementing partner for this first OC in Honduras, was invited and brought to San Salvador in October, along with Elia Cáceres and Salvador Villeda (who assist the AJR's effort in San Pedro Sula through our local partner *Paz y Convivencia*.) This allowed them to observe the operational OCs in El Salvador and participate in the inauguration of the OC in Lourdes, Colon. This visit helped their understanding of the OC model and in the presentation of the Rivera Hernandez proposal.

- This first OC in Honduras has already received a commitment of 50 percent co-financing from our partner *Paz y Convivencia* and follow-up support from personnel hired by the partner to assist AJR.
- Pastor Linares received assistance from AJR and *Paz y Convivencia* to design the OC, open bank accounts and understand the procurement procedures. Pastor Linares has limited formal training and resources. However, AJR is confident of his leadership potential, commitment and good will. With the proper assistance, he can become a major force to reduce crime in his community.
- Pastor Linares decided to initiate registration of beneficiaries and some training activities, even without all the equipment in place. A total of 98 volunteers contributed with over 1,800 volunteer hours to help fix the OC modest installations. In the first weeks of operation, even without the computers, some 200 adolescents and 100 children registered with the OC. The formal inauguration will take place in January 2009 and arrangements are being made with USAID/Honduras to ensure their participation.
- The equipment was not purchased on time due to the complicated IDB procurement procedures (who finances *Paz y Convivencia*). The *Rivera Hernández* OC opened with the basics provided through the \$9,000 of AJR's portion of the grant.
- At the same time of the equipment purchase for the *Rivera Hernández* OC, *Paz y Convivencia* also purchased the computers and the rest of equipment (of their \$9,000 share) for the implementation of a second OC, which is expected to be developed with the NGO *Unidos por la Vida*, which is associated with the San Pedro Sula Diocese. This second OC will be located at Chemelecon, one of the most dangerous areas in San Pedro Sula. The OC will probably be created by *Unidos por la Vida* in collaboration with the Citizen's Network of Chemelecon. One of the recurring challenges is the lack of capacity of local organizations to present proposals. AJR hopes that this OC will be operational during the first quarter of 2009.
- A formal proposal for a small \$3,000 grant was received from *Amigos para Siempre*, a youth violence prevention effort associated with the Catholic Church, located in the Sunceri district of the city. This grant would improve their recreational program, making it more useful and attractive for the 258 vulnerable adolescents and children they serve in three communities. The grant proposal was reviewed and is pending some clarifications before approval and disbursement of funds.
- The AJR hopes to support *Amigos para Siempre* as a potential partner to develop an OC in one of the high risk communities where they work.

Component II: Encouraging gang members to abandon gangs

- The AJR had limited results in 2008 in encouraging gang members to abandon gangs. It was not possible to develop reality TV shows in either Honduras or El Salvador. In the case of El Salvador, we had reached some preliminary agreement with TCS, though they backed off temporarily due to the production of their popular shows *Bailando por un Sueño* and *Cantando por un Sueño*. The AJR expects to reinstate talks during January 2009, when the network will have more time available. At the same time, AJR plans to hire a part time fund-raiser in San Salvador, to pursue sponsors for the production of the show. The same may be done in Tegucigalpa.

- In the case of Honduras, the reality show is to be developed with the financial assistance of AJR's partner *Paz y Convivencia*. Mr. Jacobo Regalado, the head of *Paz y Convivencia*, has been particularly busy due to his campaign to become Liberal Party pre-candidate for Congress. This limited his time to work on Desafío 10, but he vowed to resume efforts during 2009.
- The video showing the AJR regional program, produced toward the end of last quarter, has been very useful for educating stakeholders on prevention efforts.
- The AJR arranged to make a presentation at the annual Social Responsibility Awards of COHEP (Honduran Private Sector's umbrella organization) - *Galardón de la Concordia*. The AJR arranged that USAID's Mission Director be part of the VIP table at the ceremony. The AJR video was shown and both Mr. Harold Sibaja and Mr. William Brands spoke at the event. An award was presented by AJR to Mr. Jesús Canahuati, for his contribution in offering job opportunities to former gang members in San Pedro Sula through Desafío 100. The event generated significant media coverage and contributed to more awareness raising on the importance of private sector involvement in prevention programs. There are ongoing discussions with COHEP to create a prevention category in the annual prizes that are awarded in this competition.
- This video has also been instrumental for presentations to Rotary Clubs, community organizations and others.
- Additionally some initial contacts were made with another TV channel in El Salvador that may lead to participation in interviews and other programs, to communicate the urgency of prevention to the public.

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

Desafío 100 was launched in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on September 30th. During this quarter, the beneficiary selection process for Desafío 100 was initiated in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and has already involved 103 former gang member participants.

In El Salvador, the Desafío 100 experienced a major roadblock, when ANEP (the private sector umbrella organization in this country), decided to postpone public announcement of the program. Meanwhile, the AJR has been working to reach agreements with some government organizations like CNSP and DEPLA, which will be valuable sources of candidates to the program.

During the present quarter AJR has obtained the following results:

El Salvador

- The AJR had organized a public event to solidify a prevention agreement with ANEP, which was scheduled for November 26th. The event was to be attended by the US Ambassador in El Salvador. The AJR made all arrangements for the event, including

printing and distribution of invitations. Unfortunately, the event was called off by ANEP, citing a problem with the minimum salary negotiations. There was no opportunity to reschedule, given the Christmas holiday and conflicting schedules.

- Re-scheduling this event is a priority as it is part of the awareness strategy to send a strong signal to gang members contemplating desertion that there are other opportunities for them. At the same time it will encourage organizations that work on rehabilitation to present candidates to the AJR.
- AJR has been working with the Department of Conditional Freedom (Departamento de Prueba y Libertad Asistida, DEPLA) to identify candidates for the Desafío 100 program.
- DEPLA works at the national level and can be an important source for former gang member candidates.
- There have been ongoing discussions with several evangelical churches that are supporting former gang members to propose candidates.
- In part, the pace of the program in El Salvador was slowed by the two elections (January and March.)

Honduras

Tegucigalpa

- Desafío 100 in Tegucigalpa was born out of an agreement with the private sector (COHEP and CCIT), but also has (at the initiative of AJR) the PNPRRS (National Prevention Program) as a partner. PNPRRS supplies candidates that have been identified through their laser removal program and through institutions involved in rehabilitation. This private/public partnership brokered by AJR has been positive in bringing the private sector closer to the government's prevention efforts.
- The PNPRRS has been instrumental in supplying the 103 candidates for Desafío 100. Of these, 15 have already been selected, passing all the tests and interview. These 15 candidates are ready to receive a job opportunity, but will have to wait until there are enough candidates for the launch, which will take place during the first quarter of 2009.
- In coordination with Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa, the AJR organized a conference directed at employers and human resource managers, to talk about the Desafío 100 program. The talk was attended by businesspeople, some managers and employees of CCIT, including its Executive Director, and achieved better understanding about the program.
- Unfortunately, there is concern among the Honduran private sector by the 60 percent hike in minimum salary, mandated by the Government without their consensus. This may result in further delays in the launch of Desafío 100 in Tegucigalpa, as the private sector is sending a message that such a hike (that would equate the Honduran minimum salary to that of more developed Costa Rica) will result in massive layoffs. In this context, COHEP and CCIT say they cannot afford to be seen now promoting a job opportunities program.
- The actual launch will probably have to wait until things settle down between the Honduran private sector and government over the minimum salary issue. Meanwhile, the AJR will continue the selection process and lobby business and religious leaders to

support the program. Additionally, the AJR is going to continue working with CCIT's job bank, to identify job opportunities before the launch.

- The PNRRS is continuing its contacts with the rehabilitation organizations that presented candidates for Desafío 100. Some of these organizations have been disappointed that some of the candidates do not qualify for Desafío 100. The AJR has strict selection criteria and only chooses the most qualified candidates, since these are the ones that will open doors with the private sector. These rehabilitation institutions sometimes present candidates that are former drug-addicts, but not necessarily gang members.
- Another challenge in the Desafío 100 process in Tegucigalpa is that many of the candidates evaluated have not come to their required scheduled interview. Some have also hesitated to fill in the part of the questionnaire that discusses their former involvement with gangs (which can either signal that they did not actually participate in gangs or are afraid to admit being a former gang members) The AJR is working to dispel some of these fears, stressing the confidentiality of their paperwork.
- The initial selected group of 15 former gang members has promise and demonstrates the qualities that will make Desafío 100 a success in Tegucigalpa.

San Pedro Sula

- The first launch of a Desafío 100 program outside of Guatemala took place on September 30th. A total of 26 former gang members were matched with an employer.
- The launch is only the beginning of a reintegration process that has many ups and downs and requires significant follow-up. The latest information collected from the 26 participants, shows that only 12 are actually working and 14 abandoned their job. This highlights the need for closer monitoring which was not possible as the process is managed by our local partner *Paz y Convivencia*. The psychologist hired initially by *Paz y Convivencia* did not perform adequately and left. The organization had problems with the IDB (the funder) related to hiring, and those hired have had different problems related to their working conditions, such as lack of transportation, lack of desks, lack of reimbursement for calls or cellular phone expenses, and late payment of salaries (several months of delay). For this reason, another psychologist trained by AJR resigned in December.
- It is important that Desafío 100 beneficiaries not currently working can be found another employer through the program. The challenge is to have in San Pedro Sula the necessary support of professionals that can assist both youth and the businesses (particularly the human resource personnel) in coping with the challenges.
- *Paz y Convivencia* hired a new psychologist on January 12 to lead Desafío 100 follow up. The AJR will train this person and fix some of the operational difficulties that the two persons hired by *Paz y Convivencia* may face. The AJR is looking to hire a program coordinator in San Pedro Sula, as the original agreement requests. We have not found a qualified person for this assignment.
- With these new persons on board, a second launch of Desafío 100 should take place in the middle of 2009. Also, the AJR will have to use petty cash for reimbursing some of

the costs these persons incur in the Desafío 100 and OC activities and that *Paz y Convivencia* cannot cover.

- Desafío 100 in San Pedro Sula has had the challenge of increasing the pool of companies that offer jobs to former gang members. It is important to place the former gang members in many companies to create more awareness that they can become productive employees even though ELCATEX, a large company in the *maquila* business, offered to absorb many of the beneficiaries.,
- The doping test applied by ELCATEX to the beneficiaries (as a regular practice) has proven to be a lesson learned for Desafío 100 in San Pedro. Six of the potential beneficiaries tested positive and were let go from the company, although some were hired in others (after a serious talk with the participants.) There are now plans for Desafío 100 to conduct a doping test to all the participants that qualify to emphasize our seriousness. .
- The experience in San Pedro Sula gives important lessons for Tegucigalpa. Even with the PNPRRS, the AJR must have a local office in Tegucigalpa and hire a person in San Pedro Sula.
- In this regard, AJR has hired Ms. Hilda Landaverde as a consultant to give administrative support to the program in Tegucigalpa, and is considering hiring Mr. Rigoberto Portillo, who worked as the national consultant for the evaluation of juvenile justice system in Honduras (and has experience in the field of job opportunities), to provide support for the program as interim coordinator. The AJR is also considering renting some temporary office space in Tegucigalpa.

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

In October, the juvenile justice consultants continued their respective country evaluations for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, analyzing certain areas and current issues which had been highlighted during the working group meetings. Drafts of findings and recommendations were provided to working group members to get their feedback.

After an exhaustive evaluation process, final validation meetings were carried out in each country in October and November. The consultants presented their findings, recommendations and best practices which were discussed and later validated by the working group members. The consultants were able to finalize the individual country evaluations by the first week of November.

Also, as the country evaluations were being finalized, the AJR with the assistance of consultant Mrs. Elisa Gomez carried out a comparative analysis of all three juvenile justice systems (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), building upon the work carried out by the consultants and working groups during the participatory evaluation process.

During the first weeks of November, the AJR team concentrated its efforts on finalizing the organization of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. Meetings were carried out regarding the planning and organization of the Forum with SG-SICA, European Union Program to Support Central American Regional Integration (PAIRCA) and the Pro-tempore Presidency of SICA Honduras 2008, through their Office of Foreign Policy.

In October, official letters were sent to the Central American Parliament, SG-SICA, the Central American Court of Justice, and PAIRCA, inviting them to participate in the Regional Forum. Given the relevance of these important institutions, they were invited to provide remarks in the opening and closing ceremonies. Invitation cards were also sent to regional juvenile justice sector actors and institutions, important stakeholders, international community members, CSOs, and working group members in the *North Triangle* countries.

This involved a considerable amount of time and logistics on the part of the AJR team. The AJR Liaison Officer held several follow-up meetings with Mrs. Beatriz Torres, PAIRCA's Administrative Officer and Mrs. Janet Hernandez, Logistics Consultant to coordinate all logistical aspects of the Forum in order to ensure its complete success.

A final preparatory meeting to discuss the presentations and make final preparations before the event was carried out in Honduras on November 19 with the international speakers, discussion panel members, key note speakers from the working groups in each of the three countries, consultants, and the AJR team, along with the Forum facilitator Mr. Xavier Hernandez.

As a result of the intensive work carried out by the AJR team,, the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum was finally held in Tegucigalpa on November 20th and 21st. More than 175 juvenile justice sector actors, experts and civil society representatives participated in this important regional event. The presence and active participation in the opening and closing ceremonies of representatives from the Central American Parliament, the Central American Court of Justice, the Foreign Ministry of Honduras, the European Union and the United States was important in building regional consensus on the issue of juvenile justice and the need for improvement.

During December, AJR with assistance from consultant Elisa Gomez, systematized the recommendations of the Regional Forum and drafted the official document titled *Documento de Tegucigalpa*. These important recommendations have already been sent to all Forum participants and to relevant stakeholders in order to be prioritized and considered in decision-making processes at both national and regional levels that improve the treatment, rehabilitation, reinsertion and inclusion of children and adolescents in conflict with the law. Resulting actions will have a direct impact in the reduction of juvenile violence and delinquency in the region. The *Declaration of San Pedro Sula*¹⁴ provides special congratulatory mention regarding the celebration of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. The fact that the Forum is mentioned at this high political level reflects the importance the region is giving to juvenile violence and delinquency, and is an important step in the consideration and inclusion of recommendations that aim to reduce the problem in the region.

The AJR expects that during 2009, the Forum's valuable recommendations will be used to support advocacy processes at both national and regional levels through relevant stakeholders,

The AJR will create a web portal to make all this information available to the public and other stakeholders.

¹⁴ The official document of the XXXIII Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SICA member countries, held in San Pedro Sula on December 5, 2008.

Activities:

Regional

In the month of October, AJR consultant Elisa Gomez conducted a comparative analysis of the *North Triangle* countries comparing frameworks, policies and current practices. The final evaluations of the juvenile justice systems in each country served as an important input for this comparative analysis. As a result, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations were identified which served as a basis for workshop discussions during the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. The comparative analysis was finalized the second week of November.

The comparative analysis provides a solid understanding of the problems facing juvenile justice in the *North Triangle* countries. Findings will serve as a basis for recommendations at both national and regional levels and will also allow to better target future interventions in order to ultimately achieve more efficient juvenile justice systems.

- During the second week of October, the AJR Director held a follow-up meeting regarding the planning of the Regional Forum with Erich Vílchez, Director of Foreign and Political Affairs of SG-SICA. The AJR Director explained how the structure and methodology of the event was progressing, including all administrative and logistical aspects. The participation of the Pro-tempore Presidency, SG-SICA and other integration institutions in the opening and closing ceremonies was also discussed. A final list of invitees from the region, including important stakeholders and international organizations was also defined.
- During the month of October, AJR held several meetings with consultant Xavier Hernández, economist, sociologist and expert facilitator, who will facilitate the two day Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. Discussions were held with Mr. Hernández regarding the appropriate format for the two day event, including the strategy, composition of the discussion panels and methodology of the second day workshops.
- Also in October, the AJR held follow-up meetings with PAIRCA regarding administrative and logistical aspects of the Regional Forum. AJR Liaison Officer was in direct contact and communication with Mrs. Beatriz Torres, Administrative Officer of PAIRCA, as well as Mrs. Janet Hernandez, logistics consultant.

At a technical meeting held on October 16, the structure of the two day event was briefly explained to PAIRCA and a discussion was held regarding formal letters to be sent, as well as other administrative and logistical aspects. Some of the logistics handled by AJR included soliciting quotes from hotels; making accommodations for the international speakers and consultants; ensuring international travel for the speakers from Spain, Argentina, Costa Rica and Nicaragua; preparing ground transportation and lodging for over 40 Forum participants from Guatemala and El Salvador; and ensuring the high-visibility of partners supporting the Forum, such as USAID and the European Union through PAIRCA. Documentation needed for the disbursement of funds for the event by PAIRCA was also discussed in detail, as well as logistics and protocol aspects. Mrs. Hernandez's support during the preparations and execution of the two day event were greatly appreciated.

As agreed at during the meeting, AJR presented the PAIRCA with quotes for hotels, ground transportation, air travel and advertising materials for the Forum. . The quotes with all the necessary administrative documentation were correctly presented in the month of November, and funding for the Forum was provided as agreed upon. The PAIRCA's total direct funding for the Forum exceeded \$25,000.

- Honduras which held the rotating Presidency of SICA this past semester (June-December 2008) was the host of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. As such, the AJR Director kept constant communication with Ambassador Eduardo Rosales, Honduran Director of Foreign Policy.

At a meeting held on October 30th at the Foreign Ministry of Honduras in Tegucigalpa with Ambassador Rosales and his team, the AJR Director explained the progress made in the organization and planning of the Forum and details such as the opening and closing ceremonies and involvement of important Government actors, international donors and integration institutions. Also the structure of the two day event was explained and discussed, including participation of speakers, conferences/workshops to be provided as well as other logistical aspects.

Ambassador Rosales emphasized the importance of the Forum and offered logistical assistance before and during the event, including ushers and a Master of Ceremonies, delivery of invitation cards, and assistance and transportation for the international speakers.

The AJR Director mentioned that a significant number of juvenile justice sector actors from El Salvador and Guatemala, who had been involved in the working groups, should participate in the Forum. Consequently, PAIRCA provided support for a charter bus and hotel accommodations for the duration of the event for 40 participants.

The support provided by Ambassador Rosales and his staff in the Honduran Office of Foreign Policy, was key in making the Regional Forum a success. The juvenile justice sector actors and other important government institutions in Honduras were very willing to support the Forum. Holding the event there was a strategic opportunity to highlight the problems facing the juvenile justice system in the country and recommend possible solutions. The high number of Honduran juvenile justice sector actors participating in the Forum, including those with decision making capacity such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was a perfect example of the importance that some sectors in Honduras are paying to the problem.

- The First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum titled *Juvenile Justice Systems in Central America: Current Situation and Challenges* was carried out in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras on November 20-21, 2008. It was organized as a joint effort between the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA), the Pro tempore presidency of SICA Honduras-2008, the Central American Court of Justice (CCJ), the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), with assistance from the PAIRCA and under the technical coordination of AJR USAID-SICA. The Forum provided an important space for dialogue in which over 175 experts and stakeholders in juvenile justice systems throughout

the region were able to exchange knowledge, views and best practices in order to start building upon and coordinating efforts towards improving the juvenile justice systems in the region.

The Forum took place over two days of intense work, where a series of lectures were provided by renowned international experts, and presentations of the results of the country evaluations were made by Working Group representatives from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, ending with the presentation of the comparative analysis by AJR consultant Elisa Gomez. Presentations were also made by experts regarding the juvenile justice systems of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. During the second day of the Forum, workshops were established, where simultaneous discussions and recommendations on juvenile justice took place.

The event was inaugurated by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, Mr. Angel Edmundo Orellana. During the opening ceremony, a welcome message was read by Anibal Quiñonez, Secretary General of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA). Remarks were also given by the Mr. William Brands, USAID Director; Mr. Tom Massie, the First Counsel Head of the European Union Cooperation; Mr. Harold Sibaja, the Regional Director of the AJR USAID-SICA; and, Attorney Martha Roque Castro, Supreme Court Magistrate of Honduras.

The conference began with a presentation by Dr. Mary Beloff¹⁵, on *A Foresight of the Juvenile Justice Systems in Latin America*. Dr. Beloff spoke on the current response of the Latin American systems to crimes committed by children and adolescents. The second lecture was given by Dr. Victor Herrero¹⁶ who focused his speech on *Judicial Measures in Modern Juvenile Justice Systems*. Dr. John Orlando¹⁷, presented on *Towards a Juvenile Justice Restorative Model*, highlighting the experience of the Foundation. At the conclusion of these lectures, Dr. Gary Amador, Criminal Judge of Costa Rica and juvenile justice expert, and Dr. Juan Pablo Sanchez, Criminal Judge for Adolescents in Nicaragua presented a vision of the Juvenile Justice Systems in their respective countries.

Present at the closing ceremony were: the Mr. Milton Jimenez Puerto, Minister Counselor of the President of Honduras; Mr. David Thompson, the Director of the Office of Municipal Development and the Democratic Initiatives for USAID; Mr. Alejandro Solórzano, President of the International Relations Committee of the Central American Parliament; Dr. Ricardo Acevedo Peralta, Magistrate of the Central American Court of Justice; and, Mrs. Claudia Castro, on behalf of the Secretary General of SICA.

Minister Counselor Jimenez Puerto recognized that the solution for juvenile violence is difficult considering the role of organized crime in recruiting youth. He did think that application of restorative justice measures, as those proposed by the participants, could improve the situation. Both representatives from the Central American Parliament and the

¹⁵ Leading Latin American expert on the topic of juvenile justice, and Attorney General for Criminal Policy, Human Rights and Community Service of Argentina.

¹⁶ Head of Alternative Measures of the Ministry of Justice and Interior of Spain.

¹⁷ Director of *Terre des Hommes* Foundation project in Nicaragua.

Central American Court of Justice also stated the commitment of their respective institutions in supporting and promoting actions that improve juvenile justice systems in the region.

At the closing ceremony and on behalf of the Forum participants, Mrs. Elizabeth Rodríguez, Working Group member, Attorney and Coordinator for Children and Adolescents for the Prosecutor's Office in San Pedro Sula, delivered a preliminary set of recommendations emphasizing prevention as the primary tool for overcoming juvenile violence and delinquency in the region. This declaration was addressed to the representatives of the Pro-tempore Presidency of the SICA Honduras-2008, SG-SICA, the Central American Court of Justice, the Central American Parliament and the United States.

Results by Country

El Salvador

On October 24, a third Working Group meeting was carried out in San Salvador. During the meeting, the AJR consultant Oscar Alirio Campos presented final findings and recommendations to be considered for their inclusion in the country evaluation. Participants had a chance during this meeting to discuss in detail the findings. Additional concerns were also raised during this meeting by participants such as Magistrate Doris Luz Rivas. Considering the additional concerns and input received during the meeting, a final validation meeting was agreed upon and set for November 4. With the additional input provided, Mr. Campos sent a redrafted document with conclusions and recommendations that included the input from participants.

On November 4, the final validation meeting took place in San Salvador where consultant Oscar Alirio Campos presented the final conclusions and recommendations including final input from participants at the previous meeting. A consensus was reached on the final conclusions and recommendations on who to improve the juvenile justice system in the country.

This validation meeting was followed by a joint meeting with representatives of the three working groups of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Consultant Elisa Gomez made a brief presentation of the findings and recommendations of the comparative analysis. Working group members had the opportunity to briefly discuss differences and similarities found in the three juvenile justice systems. There were discussions on the methodology, participation of each working group, and presentation of the country evaluation at the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum.

Guatemala

During the first weeks of October, as the evaluation process was proceeding in Guatemala, the AJR consultant Estuardo Sanchez sent the working team members a first draft of the country evaluation which provided a comprehensive view on the juvenile justice system, its main problems and possible solutions, including those mentioned by the working group at previous meetings.

On October 17th, a third meeting of the working group was held at Clarion Suites Hotel in Guatemala City. During this meeting, Mr. Sanchez made a presentation of the conclusions and good practices found during the evaluation process, as well as recommendations. Participants had a chance to discuss the findings and recommendations. Also, discussion was had on the preliminary program and participation of the working group members in the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. It was agreed that a second meeting would be held in order to validate the recommendations.

On October 28th, a final validation meeting of the working group was held at the offices of *Desafío Joven* in Guatemala. A presentation was made by consultant Estuardo Sanchez and a detailed discussion of the findings and recommendations took place. A consensus was reached and the conclusions and recommendations were validated by those present. Mr. Sanchez finalized the country evaluation and presented it to the AJR in November.

Honduras

A final validation meeting of the Juvenile Justice Working Group was held on October 31st at the Marriot Hotel in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The AJR consultant Rigoberto Portillo gave a brief outline of the findings which highlighted a series of deficiencies and problems present in various institutions. These were acknowledged and agreed upon by the participants that changes needed to be made in order to improve the juvenile justice system. A consensus was reached and a concrete set of recommendations were validated by the working group.

The preliminary program of the First Juvenile Justice Forum was also briefly discussed and the participation of the working group at the Forum was also explained.

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

- The AJR continues efforts to keep regular communication with SICA's personnel and in particular with Dr. Erich Vilchez and the officers in charge of security issues.
- As requested by the SICA Secretary General, the AJR provided substantial assistance to SICA's team in charge of organizing the International Central American Conference on Violence and Security. This included the production of a video of the AJR regional program that was shown at the closing of the conference. Travel arrangements were also made for Ms. Ana Carpio, *Telemundo's* TV anchorperson in Guatemala and her husband Mr. Walter Cruz, a professional TV/Movie producer, to present an 18 minute short film (that had never been aired) explaining the drama of gang youth violence in the poor neighborhoods of Guatemala. The short film was presented at the opening of the conference. Ms. Carpio and Mr. Cruz also participated in the Media and Violence Panel. The AJR also advised on the list of participants, provided contacts and arranged that

USAID DG Directors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala receive invitations to the conference.

- The AJR's Regional Director gave the main presentation at the Gangs Prevention panel held during the Conference. The panel received substantial attention and its conclusions were to be included in recommendations that SICA was to present to the Presidents of Central America. The recommendations document has not been made available, however the *Declaration of San Pedro Sula*, the official document result of the XXXIII Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SICA member countries, held in San Pedro Sula on December 5, 2008, provides a congratulatory mention of the International Central American Conference on Violence and Security.
- The First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum also received an official special congratulatory mention by the Presidents of Central America in *Declaration of San Pedro Sula*, as mentioned above.
- The details of the organization of the First Regional Forum of Juvenile Justice with SICA are described in Result II.
- At the request of the AJR, the SICA placed on its web page the announcement and afterwards the proceedings of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum prominently.
- The AJR did not give a small grant as originally agreed to the Central American Observatory on Violence (OCAVI) for the realization of the second meeting of its Regional Advisory Council (which was discussed and agreed upon with CTO Ms. Jennifer Link). The National Council for Public Security (CNSP) of El Salvador (with whom AJR signed a cooperation agreement and who has under its mandate the oversight of OCAVI) secured another source of financing. It was agreed that CNSP will present a future grant proposal to AJR for similar support of OCAVI's activities.
- The AJR Project Director continued talks with Mr. Erich Vílchez regarding the organization of a regional level juvenile violence prevention donor/project coordination working meeting, but at his request the meeting will have to be organized after the new Secretary of SICA is elected.. This may take place in February or March of 2009.
- Anticipating the possible election of Mr. Juan Daniel Alemán, the candidate of Guatemala to become Secretary General of SICA, the AJR's Project Director, who has known Mr. Alemán for a while, has established a good working relation with him. Because of his participation as member of the Presidential Commission for Citizen's Security and Social Peace of El Salvador, Mr. Alemán is expected to be very interested in security and violence prevention and to be particularly supportive of AJR.

IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- The SICA has not enlarged its Security Unit and is not expected to do so before the election of the new Secretary General, complicating the desired level of contact with the organization.
- The long wait for a new “signing” event date with ANEP is causing a serious delay in the start up of the Desafío 100 program in El Salvador. The AJR will continue to work in parallel with other components of the program, while waiting for the event to take place.
- It is becoming increasingly more difficult to focus attention on long term violence prevention solutions in the two countries given the upcoming electoral period in El Salvador, problems regarding the election of new Judicial Branch authorities, and minimum salary issues in Honduras,.
- The AJR is considering scrapping the possible partnership with Gupo Ceiba given their less than efficient response and we are proactively looking for another IT alliance.
- The AJR Finance and Donations Manager resigned in October, so another replacement had to be found. Since Creative Associates’ financial computer system requires training, a former Finance Manager took over temporarily and trained the new Finance and Donations Manager.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

- Additional long term personnel are needed to run programs in both Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula to ensure timely implementation. The AJR’s budget has been readjusted to include additional personnel and an office in Honduras.

VI. NEXT STEPS

- Create an AJR web portal focusing on Juvenile Justice.
- Arrange the “signing” event with ANEP.
- Accelerate the development and review of proposals for small grants and OCs.
- Open a temporary office in Tegucigalpa, equip it and hire the necessary personnel as consultants. Open a bank account.
- Prioritize efforts in collecting leverage reports from partners.
-

ANNEX

Una voluntad al servicio de la Patria
La Tribuna

[Inicio](#) | [Quienes Somos](#) | [Moneda](#) | [Clima](#) | [Contacto](#)

Usted está viendo las noticias actualizadas al **25 de Enero del 2009** ([Ediciones anteriores](#))

Nacionales

Organismos regionales proponen disminuir la violencia juvenil

Sábado 22 Noviembre 2008

****Prevención, la mejor herramienta
 Entregan propuestas al gobierno



Expertos en justicia penal de menores y participantes entregaron al gobierno un documento conteniendo seis propuestas para enfrentar la creciente ola de violencia juvenil en los países de la región.

TEGUCIGALPA. Los participantes del primer foro sobre justicia penal juvenil que se desarrolló en esta ciudad, entregaron ayer al gobierno un documento con seis propuestas para reducir la participación de menores en actos delictivos en el país.

Los expertos recomendaron utilizar programas de prevención como una medida efectiva para superar la problemática que debe ser acompañada con políticas sociales que reduzcan los factores de riesgo que orillan a los niños a delinquir.

También, la revisión inmediata de los sistemas de justicia penal juvenil como elemento determinante en la solución del problema por que se han quedado cortos ante la creciente ola de menores infractores.

Además, que el Estado debe asumir una posición preponderante en la creación e implementación de sistemas de rehabilitación, reinserción de la juventud en riesgo social.

Igualmente que las instituciones de la integración

regional de Centroamérica deben liderar y estimular políticas estatales que prioricen la prevención y trabajen conjuntamente por la consolidación de los sistemas de justicia penal de menores.

Los organizadores del foro confían en que las recomendaciones sean, además de útiles, también implementadas por los respectivos gobiernos del área, especialmente los países de Guatemala, El Salvador y Honduras donde el problema se ha agudizado por factores como la pobreza, la emigración, el crimen organizado y las pandillas.

Otra de las recomendaciones, es que se realice una segunda actividad para evaluar la aplicación de las recomendaciones entregadas ayer a los gobiernos del área.

La Secretaría General del Sistema para la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) hará llegar el documento a los demás presidentes del área por medio de los cancilleres de los respectivos países. El foro fue clausurado por el ministro asesor del Presidente Manuel Zelaya, Milton Jiménez Puerto, quien afirmó que las políticas de "mano dura" implementadas en el pasado reciente en contra de los menores infractores, más bien potenciaron el problema porque radicalizaron la delincuencia juvenil en el país.

En el sentido de las propuestas presentadas por los participantes del foro, Jiménez Puerto dijo que eran un reto no sólo para la actual administración sino también para los futuros gobiernos, pero que en la actualidad existen programas orientados al rescate de la juventud.

Reconoció que la solución de la violencia juvenil es difícil a raíz de la utilización de los mismos por el crimen organizado, pero confió en que la aplicación de medidas de justicia restaurativa

como las propuestas por los participantes se puede mejorar.

El director de Desarrollo Municipal e Iniciativas Democráticas de la Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional, (USAID), David Thompson, expresó que es necesario que todos los sectores sociales se unan para enfrentar la problemática.

"Necesitamos un esfuerzo unido del gobierno, la sociedad y la empresa privada" destacó el funcionario.

Una de las opciones que ve factible Thompson, es la creación de programas masivos de empleo para jóvenes en los que la empresa privada debe jugar un papel preponderante.

Asimismo, dijo que la USAID está trabajando con las instituciones que imparten justicia y otras organizaciones que atienden a los menores en el país.



Las políticas de mano dura contra pandilleros no han dado resultados.

El foro inició el jueves y finalizó ayer con la entrega del documento, en ese tiempo, expertos sobre el tema impartieron conferencias en un hotel capitalino a más de 175 operadores de justicia, también jueces, fiscales, procuradores, policías, representantes de los gobiernos centroamericanos, de la sociedad civil y delegados de los países de la región y cooperantes.

El cónclave fue patrocinado la (SICA), La Corte Centroamericana de Justicia (CCJ), el Parlamento Centroamericano (PARLACEN), por la USAID y la Unión Europea, por medio del Programa de Apoyo a la Integración Regional Centroamericana, (PAIRCA).

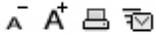


El ministro asesor de la Presidencia de la República, fue el encargado de clausurar el foro.

Crean centro contra la violencia juvenil

Departamentos

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Fecha de actualización: 10/23/2008

Lourdes, en Colón (La Libertad), es la sede del segundo Centro de Alcance Por mi Barrio en el país.

El proyecto surgió del acuerdo entre la filial local de la iglesia El Camino y el programa Alianza Joven, en el que participan la Agencia de Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo (USAID) y el Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (SICA).

Los centros de alcance forman parte de un proyecto que pretende dar un abordaje integral a jóvenes que viven en peligro de ser reclutados por pandillas. A escala regional, hay una inversión de \$2.8 millones.

Otro plan a desarrollar busca establecer alianzas con empresas privadas para ofrecer trabajo a los jóvenes integrantes de pandillas que han decidido reincorporarse a la sociedad.

Alianza Joven se encuentra examinando la legislación penal juvenil y los programas de reinserción que existen en la región.

Actualmente, en Centroamérica hay 10 centros. Se espera que "por sus condiciones de vulnerabilidad" en El Salvador se abran más centros, de acuerdo con los organizadores.

La inauguración del recinto de Lourdes fue presidida por Jaime Guatemala, pastor de la iglesia El Camino; Jennifer Link, directora de gobernabilidad y democracia de USAID; César Salazar, asesor legal del SICA; Salvador Stadhagen, director del programa Alianza Joven; y miembros de la comunidad.



Foto de LA PRENSA/Cortesía SICA