



USAID
DEL PUEBLO DE LOS ESTADOS
UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

ALIANZA JOVEN REGIONAL USAID - SICA

QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY - MARCH 2010

April 2010

This report was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Creative Associates International, Inc.

QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY-MARCH 2010

Prepared by
CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC. (CREATIVE)
For the
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
El Salvador

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ADVANCES THIS QUARTER 3

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS QUARTER 4

Analysis of Progress 4

Result I: *Jump Start Public-Private Initiatives for Gang Prevention Awareness, Rehabilitation and Reinsertion 6*

Component 1: *Preventing that young people enter gangs 6*

Component 2: *Encouraging gang members to abandon gangs 13*

Component 3: *Job opportunities for rehabilitated former gang members 14*

RESULT II: *Assess regional legal/justice frameworks and practices and multi-country policy and legal reforms to improve the treatment and rehabilitation of youth. 14*

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 17*

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT ADVANCES THIS QUARTER

This report covers activities from January 1 to March 31, 2010 for the Regional Youth Alliance USAID-SICA (*Alianza Joven Regional* USAID-SICA (AJR) program also referred to as the Gangs Prevention Alliance for Central America and Mexico. This quarter the AJR resumed

operations in Honduras for the first time since the political crisis of 2009. Initiatives started by the AJR in Honduras continue to be operational despite minimal program supervision. In collaboration with USAID, the AJR concentrated its efforts in starting Crime Prevention Committee processes in the municipalities of Chalchuapa, El Congo and Santa Ana, El Salvador. The AJR made significant efforts to develop and implement additional Outreach Centers (OCs) in Apopa, El Salvador, Lopez Arellano (Choloma), and Chamelecón (San Pedro Sula), Honduras, as well as to reinforce existing OCs in El Salvador. In Guatemala, the AJR opened a small program office to support activities to demobilize five active gangs in the city of Peronia and to support the Youth Movement against Violence. This quarter the AJR also worked with the Advocacy Committees in Guatemala and El Salvador, and produced two grant proposals for USAID's consideration and approval.

The AJR has signed or is working on finalizing the following agreements and proposals:

- Agreement with the Mayor of Apopa and ADESCO (a local development organization) to implement an OC in Chintuc II
- The López Arellano (Choloma) OC agreement was signed and the OC is now operational.
- The AJR has received and is currently reviewing a proposal to implement an OC in Chamelecon, San Pedro Sula.
- USAID approved a grant to facilitate the reintegration process of former gang members in Peronia, Guatemala.
- The AJR has submitted grant proposals from the Guatemalan and Salvadoran Juvenile Justice Advocacy groups to USAID for review and approval.
- The AJR has submitted a proposal to establish an internet café in the Barrio Lourdes OC to USAID for review and approval.
- USAID approved a small grant to fund a street soccer league in Las Ayestas. Activities are due to start in April.
- The AJR is finalizing a grant proposal to support Youth Movement against Violence in Guatemala and will submit to USAID for approval.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS QUARTER

Analysis of Progress

In the first quarter of 2010, the AJR progressed in meeting its September 2010 targets. To date 41 communities have been assisted in crime prevention including Peronia, López Arellano and Chintuc II. This quarter the AJR is in the process of establishing two additional OCs bringing the total number to ten in El Salvador and Honduras. The number of youth benefiting from the OCs increased by 892 beneficiaries, from 3,411 to 4,303, this quarter. The AJR is implementing a program in Peronia, Guatemala, which will integrate former gang members into society. The demobilization of these gangs has decreased the level of violence in Peronia. The AJR is organizing a television panel with TCS/TELEVISA on reinsertion activities in the Central American region, with the goal of raising awareness on the need to create job opportunities for former gang members.

OC coordinators and volunteers have received computer training from volunteers at Francisco Gavidia University. University volunteers are also training beneficiaries in five OCs.

The AJR has initiated work with the Crime Prevention Committees in Santa Ana, Chalchuapa and El Congo and assisted Vanderbilt University in the community selection process in Chalchuapa and Santa Ana.

IR 1 Strengthening Rule of Law					
Sub-IR Crime Prevention Programs Implemented					
Number	Indicator	Baseline Year		Target Sept 2010	To March 2010
Result 1 Jump Start Public Private Initiatives for Gang Prevention					
1.1	Communities assisted in crime prevention	2008	0	30	40
1.2	New Outreach Centers Established	2008	0	15	10
1.3	Sub-Grants Implemented (other than Outreach Centers)	2008	0	7 mid-size grants 27 small grants	16 small grants
1.4	Youth benefited by Outreach Centers	2008	0	3750	4,303
1.5	Desafio 100 youths provided with jobs	2008	0	450	40
1.6	Leverage Contributions raised	2008	0	1:1	1.95/0.59
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	3

MAIN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

There continue to be challenges in finding job placement opportunities for former gang members, despite the substantial efforts made in El Salvador to promote the Desafio 100 program. The AJR has started to redesign its strategy moving forward, which will be implemented under the extension period.

The AJR has determined a need for additional staff members as activities in Honduras have resumed and the team has started to focus on furthering the Crime Prevention Committees throughout the region.

The assessment of juvenile violence in El Salvador has experienced some delays due to the need to incorporate the latest 2009 figures. It is expected to be ready by early May.

Next Steps

Pending USAID approval, Regional Director Harold Sibaja will work full time under the AJR and will relocate to San Salvador. Project Director Salvador Stadthagen will focus his efforts in bolstering the Honduran component of the program. The AJR expects to hire Mr. Jonathan Claros in the next quarter to coordinate the municipal crime prevention process.

The AJR has started talks with FUNDASALVA and has received a proposal that will be incorporated into the program in the upcoming months. The AJR is training FUNDASALVA to implement the Desafío 100 program in El Salvador.

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

Component 1: Preventing that young people enter gangs

This quarter the AJR established two new OCs in Chintuc II, Apopa, El Salvador and in López Arellano, Choloma, Honduras which are located in high risk areas and have financial support from their respective municipalities. There are now a total of 10 OCs in Honduras and El Salvador.

The AJR resumed its program activities in Honduras. The first visit to the country took place after the Presidential inauguration in February 2010. AJR personnel traveling to Honduras met with program partners and potential partners to discuss future initiatives in crime prevention.

Francisco Gavidia University (UFG) volunteers initiated IT trainings with OC Coordinators and volunteers in El Salvador. The first group to complete the training received Certificates of “Grado Digital” at UFG on March 12th. The AJR expects to improve the OC’s educational offerings through these trainings,. UFG students have also started training beneficiaries at the OCs resulting in closer ties between the university and the community. The university volunteers have been welcomed by the communities reducing their initial reservations about working in these high risk areas.

The AJR’s partner in El Salvador, Fe y Alegría, has decided to enter the Kriete Foundation Project Competition. The organization will present its experience implementing OCs in partnership with the AJR as an example of innovation that brings their work closer to the communities. Based on the outcome, Fe y Alegria will open additional OCs in high risk communities in and around San Salvador.

The OCs continue to attract volunteers who are essential to the successful implementation and sustainability of the model. This quarter volunteer work hours totaled 5,746. Volunteerism is not only vital to the operation of the OCs but also brings the community together around the issue of prevention.

El Salvador

The AJR signed an agreement with Dr. Luz Estrella Rodriguez, the Mayor of Apopa and the Association for Community Development (ADESCO) to implement an OC in Chintuc II on March 22, 2010. The AJR worked throughout 2009 with municipal officials to adopt the OC model. This included inviting councilmen, community leaders and city employees to observe established OCs in Guatemala and in El Salvador. The Municipality of Apopa and ADESCO have made a firm commitment to support the OC. In addition, municipal leaders and the community are eager to establish a second OC in the area.

This quarter the AJR supported *Fe y Alegría*, in preparing a video presentation for the Kriete Foundation project competition titled “Helping those who Help”. If successful, Fe y Alegria will use the prize money of \$100,000 to implement two new OCs and support existing ones. The video was produced at no cost by a member of “Trípode”, an innovative audiovisuals company that has produced award winning short films.

The 13 de enero, Zacamil OC has been experiencing numerous problems, due to the vulnerable nature of the community. The OC has had three Coordinators in its short existence and none of them have been able to adapt to the community. The AJR had several meetings with Fe y Alegría to find ways to solve these problems. The AJR and Fe y Alegria decided to link the OC with the Fe y Alegría implemented Centro de Capacitación in the area. Both the AJR and Fe y Alegria will work to assist the community in conflict resolution.

The IT trainings provided by Francisco Gavidia University student volunteers have been very successful in the OCs and communities. The AJR will negotiate additional agreements with this and other universities to assist OCs by teaching English and providing psychological services through student volunteers.

As part of the sustainability effort, the AJR reached out to businesses such as Laboratorios López, AGRISAL, Banco Agrícola and made a presentation to the Rotary Club. No concrete results have been achieved through these meetings or other similar efforts, highlighting the need to improve the fundraising capabilities of the OC partners.

This quarter the AJR worked with the Barrio Lourdes and Lourdes, Colón, OCs to develop potential micro-enterprises for income generation. The Barrio Lourdes OC presented a proposal to establish a Cyber Café. The Lourdes Colón OC is presently working on a grant proposal to establish a small bakery.

Although the Mejicanos OC began the process of distancing itself from the OC network, the AJR and CFO decided that it would belong to the network while looking for additional partners and funding sources. The Mejicanos OC will continue to serve youth using the established OC methodology.

Honduras

This quarter program activities to Honduras have resumed. AJR staff visited Tegucigalpa to meet with partners and restart technical discussion about ongoing and future activities. Save the

Children Honduras believes that the OC methodology has been very useful in revitalizing their work in high risk communities. They would like to develop additional OCs in partnership with the AJR. The AJR visited several universities to explore potential alliances in implementing future OCs. Universities were receptive to the OC model and the AJR hopes to establish a relationship similar to the one with Francisco Gavidia University in El Salvador. Involving universities and university students in prevention activities provides mentorship opportunities for beneficiaries as well as raises awareness among the university population of the needs of youth at risk.

The AJR signed a small grant agreement with a network of faith based organizations that works with youth (Red Viva) to fund a street soccer league in Las Ayestas. Activities will start in April 2010.

Although the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa have expressed interest in continuing to support OCs, the gap in programming resulting from the political and economic crisis in Honduras, as well as the one experienced by the Rotary Clubs due to the economic crisis in the USA, have resulted in an impasse. The AJR will work to overcome these issues by solidifying its programmatic presence in the country.

The AJR also met with Mr. Tony Brand, director of the INL Prevention Program in Honduras. INL may support the OC's IT courses by the purchasing more computers. The AJR hopes that an increase in the number of computers in the OCs will lead to a higher number of beneficiaries participating in OC activities. Furthermore the AJR will identify other prevention projects and interventions for potential INL funding.

In Tegucigalpa the AJR has partnered with FUNAVI, a Catholic group that operate 6 centers for at risk youth. The AJR will train this organization in the OC methodology. Their president, Jorge Mahomar wants to develop 2 OCs. The organization receives support from the private sector.

San Pedro Sula

The AJR signed a cooperative agreement with Oficina Paz y Convivencia (OPC), the Municipality of Choloma and the Catholic Church to implement an OC in López Arellano. The López Arellano community is notorious for its levels of violence and high internal migration from other parts of Honduras. The implementing partner has been very active in soliciting materials and services from the municipality to repair the building. The OC is located across from a basketball court, soccer field and library. There is an active pool of volunteers in the area from the local Catholic Church. The OC will start operations in April and its formal inauguration is slated for late May or early June.

AJR personnel met with the new Director of OPC, Mr. Gustavo Valenzuela. Mr. Valenzuela will continue to work with the AJR and co-finance the development of two or three additional OCs; the first one in Chamelecon. Additionally OPC is interested in re-launching the Desafío 100 program in San Pedro Sula.

After many failed efforts to find a solid partner to develop an OC in Chamelecon, the AJR met with the *Ministerio Internacional Cristo es La Roca*, whose pastor is also the director of one of



the main public schools in the area. The pastor and his wife have presented an OC proposal that includes funding a small business. The AJR is evaluating the proposal and will submit it to USAID for review and approval. The OC will be housed in the former church

headquarters.

The Rivera Hernandez OC continues to provide services to youth in the area. Pastor Arnold Linares has repaired a soccer field with remaining grant funds and has initiated a promising young adults soccer league. With very few resources, this OC is providing protection and care to hundreds of youth. The OC lacks funding and in the last few months has had to suspend internet services. An AJR representative in San Pedro Sula is helping the OC organize a raffle to raise funds and linking them with the municipality.

Guatemala

Small Crime Prevention Grants in Outreach Centers

Grants awarded to the Ciudad del Sol and Bucaro, Mezquital OCs were successfully closed this quarter. The San Rafael II; Santa Catarina Pinula; Palín, Escuintla; and Palencia OC grants will continue to be operational until the next quarter. All small grants are expected to close by June 2010.

Funds awarded to the Ciudad del Sol and San Rafael OCs were used to purchase construction materials to restore public recreation areas. Funds awarded to the Palín, Escuintla; Búcaro, Mezquital, Santa Catarina Pinula and Palencia OCs were invested on creating violence prevention and awareness programs. The activities included festivals, concerts, talks, visits to schools and community discussions. Grant funds were also used to purchase laptops, projectors, sound systems, t-shirts and other materials. Materials purchased will be used to strengthen OC course offerings for beneficiaries.

Below are some of the activities funded by the small grants.

Ciudad del Sol Outreach Center “Sports against Violence”

Funds awarded to the Ciudad del Sol OC were used to restore a soccer field. The OC mobilized the community around this project to raise their awareness of safe public spaces in preventing violence in the community. The OC organized a soccer tournament with slogans promoting harmony among youth and adults, sharing values and preventing self destructive behaviors. The project and soccer tournament started on February 6, 2010. Approximately 300 people including Municipal representatives, the Neighborhood Association, tournament participants and players, as well as community members attended. Thirty eight teams participated in the tournament. The OC received a donation of 100 tires to divide the field. The tires were painted by OC volunteers and other community members. The two OC Coordinators, a husband and wife team, have been



attending the tournament as an example of a rehabilitated married couple in the community. One of the Coordinators is a former gang member and the other a former drug dealer.



Over 500 people have benefited from the tournament. The tournament served as an opportunity to inform beneficiaries on the importance of maintaining clean public spaces and respecting public property. The Municipality of Villa Nueva plans to cover the soccer field with synthetic grass, build public stairs and benches, as well as improved public lighting. These improvements are expected to be completed in the following months.

Under the guidance of the OC, the community also recuperated a public space that was being used as a garbage dump. Pepsi donated painting materials as well as paid labor to refurbish a kiosk, tables and benches, and the Neighborhood Association donated labor to build toilets and faucets.

Photographs of the recuperation of the public space in Ciudad del Sol, Villa Nueva



Búcaro Mezquital Outreach Center “Festival against Violence”

The AJR provided a small grant to organize a Concert against Violence at the Bucaro, Mezquital OC. Over 1000 people attended the concert. The objective of the concert was to raise awareness of the leading factors of violence and focused on modifying behaviors and habits that lead to violence in the community, including threats and carrying fire arms.



OC volunteers organized 10 talks with youth related to the consequences of using of fire arms. They presented a video highlighting deaths in Mezquital and neighboring areas due to the use of firearms. Approximately 350 youth attended the talks and over 500 youth attended Concert against Violence activities which included music, theater, poetry as well as messages of hope related to building a less violent community. Messages included promoting the use of less violent and more educational games and toys and the risks of buying and using fire arms. Many local bands donated their time to participate at the concert including local recording artist Tavo Barcenás.



Photographs of Bucaro Festival, awareness talks and concert

Outreach Center San Rafael, zone 18 “Public Space to Reduce Violence”

The San Rafael OC focused also on recuperating a public park as a recreational area for youth. The Project is currently being implemented and is expected to be completed in the next quarter. The OC received material and financial support from the municipality which contributed cement and trucks. The OC organized a neighborhood committee to donate unskilled labor. The municipality is committed to level the land and landscape the park. As a result of this project the OC recruited a new volunteer who is training 40 youth in karate techniques.

Outreach Center Santa Catarina Pinula “Movie Discussions against Violence”

The grant to the Santa Catarina Pinula OC supports the video production of three short documentaries involving 12 community actors. Next quarter the OC will produce the three documentaries and will organize 10 public presentations to discuss and raise awareness against violence. The production of the short films will involve many hours of rehearsal and production time for many volunteers.

Outreach Center Palencia “I decide against violence”

The use of alcohol and drugs and intra familial violence are known causes of violence in communities. The Palencia OC organized a concert at the Serapio Cruz Municipal Park in December 2009 to raise awareness of these issues. The OC invites community members to watch movies related to the consequences of the use of alcohol, drugs, family violence and involvement in gangs.

*más Difícil,
Desafío a
youth
what*



*share
community*

The movies shown thus far include: *La Decisión Sin Nombre*, *Peleadores Callejeros*, *Cicatrices*, and *los Gigante*. At the end of each movie parents and discuss the themes presented and how they relate to happens in Palencia. Participants offer recommendations on dealing with these issues and personal testimonies that helped build ties among members. Approximately 1500 people, including

500 youth participate in the discussions. Also approximately 500 youth worked as volunteers in the organization of the concert and movie discussions.

A series of talks at neighboring schools are now being organized and are expected to benefit 600 youth (150 students per school). The schools include: Aldea Pie del Cerro, Escuela Rincón de la Piedra, Escuela Aldea Yerba Buena, and Escuela Agua Tibia.

Outreach Center Palin, Escuintla “Alerting against Violence”

This small grant involves the development of awareness activities against the consumption of illegal substances at 12 schools. The schools include: Santidad y Poder, Escuela Jose Domingo Guzman, Escuela Arturo Paiz, Colegio Jardin de Jesus, Colegio Bethania, Colegio Panamericano, Colegio Luz Vida, Colegio San Carlos, and Instituto Inpal. Six schools were served this quarter. In the next quarter the OCs will reach all 12 schools. There have been delays this quarter due to the teachers strike.

Public Policy to Prevent Crime- Youth Movement against Violence:

The Guatemalan Youth Movement proposal: “WE DO WHAT WE PROPOSE” was submitted to USAID for approval this quarter. The grant will fund the following:

1. Implementation of the recommendations for a public policy to prevent youth violence, in two marginalized high risk communities in Guatemala.
2. Promote discussions and advocacy efforts for the approval of the public policy for the prevention of youth violence.
3. Strengthen the Youth Movement against Violence.

The grant of \$30,000 will raise approximately \$83,557.00 in leverage. The Youth Movement was formed in July 2009 with assistance provided by the USAID Youth Challenge Program. The Movement is part of the *Coalition for a Dignified Life for Youth (Coalicion por una Vida Digna para la Juventud)*, which was supported by the USAID funded Youth Challenge Program (YCP).

The activities planned by the Youth Movement for 2010 are aimed at promoting the public policy recommendations for the prevention of youth violence, the implementation of these recommendations and strengthening the Youth Movement.

The project will combine a series of activities and promote partnerships in the chosen high risk communities, and will include visits to government officials, the presence in the media and events. The program will start by identifying the communities, developing a baseline and working with community leaders. The Youth Movement will work with mayors to invest in the community and by training and educating youth in leadership and develop conflict resolution programs.

Component 2: *Encouraging gang members to abandon gangs*

The phenomenon of violence continues to be one of the main preoccupations for the citizens in the region that generates conflicting and opposing reactions. The issue of reintegration of former gang members is divisive in the region and differing opinions make it difficult to raise awareness among the general population of the needs of youth at risk and former gang members.

This quarter the AJR has started talks with the TCS TV network. The television network has offered to organize a panel in the Espacio 2010 debate that will televise controversial issues such as the reintegration of former gang members in the region. The new President of El Salvador and Honduras will participate in some of these debates. The AJR will organize a panel in Espacio 2010 that will include three prominent businessmen from the Northern Triangle who have hired

former gang members as well as some former gang members. The AJR hopes that this panel will generate a debate and raise awareness particularly in El Salvador of the importance of insertion and reintegration.

In Honduras, Ms. Suyapa Nuñez was appointed as Executive Director of Instituto Hondureño de Niñez, Familia y Adolescencia (IHNFA). Ms. Nuñez has been involved in the Desafío 100 program and she is seen as a “mother” to former gang members. She supports a group called “Evangelismo Explosivo” that gives support to marginalized youth. We believe there will be great chances to work the job opportunities program in association with her and IHNFA. The AJR believes that in collaboration with IHNFA, it will be able to revitalize the Desafío 100 program in Honduras.

Component 3: Job opportunities for rehabilitated former gang members

The AJR has developed an alliance with FUNDASALVA in El Salvador. FUNDASALVA is widely recognized as a leader in drug prevention and rehabilitation in the country. Its Board of Directors includes some of the most prominent business leaders in El Salvador. The AJR has been assisting FUNDASALVA in developing a proposal that will be presented to USAID in the upcoming months for review and approval. The AJR expects that through an alliance with FUNDASALVA, it will be able to generate the job opportunities for former gang members. By partnering with this institution, the AJR hopes that future job placement efforts will be carried out through this local entity securing the sustainability of the program.

In San Pedro Sula, OPC will continue to support the Desafío 100 program and possibly re-launch it in the first half of the year.

As a way to improve the Desafío 100 methodology, the AJR has met with several organizations to explore opportunities for integration such as micro-lending, vocational training and youth entrepreneurship to create greater opportunities for the integration of vulnerable youth, including former gang members. As such the AJR has been working with the Metamorfosis Project in Santa Ana. Metamorphosis employs former gang members and inmates in a shoe making small business. It is currently developing a proposal to be funded by the AJR in the upcoming months.

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

During the first quarter of 2010, the *Intersectional Commission for the Reform of the Juvenile Justice System* in El Salvador continued to advocate for changes in the juvenile justice system and as a result its recommendations are being implemented by the Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Children and Adolescents (Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia-ISNA). Efforts were also concentrated on stopping the passing of reforms aimed at increasing the penalties for juvenile offenders.

In Guatemala, the *Sub-commission for Comprehensive Protection Policies for Adolescents in Conflict with the Law*, established under the National Commission for Childhood and Adolescence (Comisión Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia – CNNA), presented an advocacy project proposal based on previously defined key advocacy areas. This small project was later submitted to USAID for approval. The juvenile justice advocacy activities in both El Salvador and Guatemala have come to a near stand-still, as both activities previously prioritized by commission members and presented to the AJR, are still pending USAID approval.

In Honduras, the newly elected President took office in January 2010. Under the new government, changes in key government institutions such as INHFA seem positive for future advocacy work in juvenile justice. Activities with the Juvenile Justice Advocacy Coalition are still on stand-by, however, the AJR expects to resume activities during the next quarter, validate the draft advocacy project proposal presented in December with Coalition members, and restart advocacy work.

The Intersectoral Commission for the Reform of the Juvenile Justice System in El Salvador continues their advocacy work.

During the past quarter, members of the Intersectoral Commission continued to move forward their advocacy agenda and as a result important changes have been made at ISNA, such as the establishment of an Alternative Measures Unit at the institution, and the resumption of the management of the administrative detention centers which were under the administration of municipalities in Santa Ana, Ahuachapán and San Miguel. ISNA is starting to make changes at these centers, however, they still lack the proper conditions to function and ensure the respect of the rights of youth which are held in administrative detention (for up to 72 hours). Having considered this, the Intersectoral Commission approached the AJR and asked for assistance in contracting an expert consultant who could help them develop, in collaboration with ISNA, an *administrative detention center model*, which would later be implemented as a pilot. Accordingly, Terms of Reference for a consultancy were developed and presented to USAID, and are awaiting approval.

Another important advance at ISNA, has been the assessment to identify problems and institutional needs, including rehabilitation. ISNA's Executive Director, Luis Salazar has been very active in looking for ways to improve the institution in order to ensure the proper care and improve the condition of youth in conflict with the law.

During the first months of the year, the Intersectoral Commission members advocated for the non passing of reforms of the Juvenile Criminal Law aimed at increasing the maximum penalty for juvenile offenders from 7 to 15 years in a juvenile detention center. Intersectoral Commission members presented position papers on this issue, stating the special legal system established in the constitution, which sets juvenile justice apart from the purposes and objectives of the ordinary criminal law; as well as international standards set out in legal international instruments ratified by El Salvador, such as the Convention for the Rights of the Child. Commission members, including judges and members from the Juvenile Justice Unit of the Supreme Court lobbied against this bill. As a result of their strong advocacy work, the President vetoed the reform bill, sending it back to the Assembly for further consideration in the month of February.

However, due to constant public pressure, on March 24 the reform was passed by the Legislative Assembly.

The Intersectoral Commission has proved to be an important platform for the discussion of key initiatives in this sector, and for the improvement of the coordination between juvenile justice operators and civil society. The Commission will be key in ensuring support for the next phase of the juvenile justice component, especially in carrying out the advocacy strategy aimed at the implementation of recommendations included in a draft Regional Juvenile Justice Policy, which will be drafted by the AJR in collaboration with SICA.

Advocacy Project proposal presented by the Sub-commission for Comprehensive Protection Policies for Adolescents in Conflict with the Law of Guatemala.

The Sub-commission for Comprehensive Protection Policies for Adolescents in Conflict with the Law (Advocacy Commission) formed under the National Commission of Childhood and Adolescence (Comisión Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia – CNNA), presented through the CNNA, an advocacy proposal aimed at improving and strengthening the juvenile justice system and creating comprehensive intervention of adolescents in conflict with the law.

Through the project, the sub-commission intends to promote changes in the following three advocacy areas:

- 1) Support the development of a Prevention of Youth Violence Public Policy;
- 2) Promote the establishment of the Social Welfare Secretariat (Secretaria de Bienestar Social –SBS) a comprehensive and sustainable intervention model for youth in conflict with the law; and
- 3) Develop a media focused advocacy process aimed at achieving an objective opinion about adolescents in conflict with the law.

The AJR reviewed and presented USAID the project proposal for its approval during the first week of March. At this time, the small project is still pending approval and a grant has still not been awarded to the CNNA to start implementation of activities under the sub-commission.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The newly elected government in Honduras took office in January 2010, though activities of the Coalition are still on stand-by. The AJR expects to continue to support advocacy activities of the coalition in Honduras as soon as the amendment for the current cooperative agreement is approved and signed.

Juvenile justice activities have come to a near stand-still in El Salvador and Guatemala, as both small activities with these advocacy commissions have not yet been approved by USAID.

The assistance that the AJR intends to provide under both small advocacy projects will not be used to support the police, prisons or their personnel. It will be used to support activities of the

Advocacy Committees aimed at improving the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth in conflict with the law, and will involve working with ISNA and SBS (which are not prisons). Both government institutions provide oversight to children and youth, and have as a mandate the establishment of socio-educational programs for juvenile offenders and monitoring of sanctions imposed on youth by the juvenile courts.

The AJR intends to request USAID approval for the two small advocacy initiatives, to continue crucial support to the juvenile justice advocacy initiatives in each country.

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

This quarter the AJR engaged SICA in its activities through several planning sessions for future collaboration pending a program extension. Project Director, Salvador Stadthagen held a planning session with the Executive Director, the Political and Legal Director and members of the Security Unit, to discuss SICA's priorities. These were incorporated in AJR's extension proposal to USAID.

Regional Director, Harold Sibaja and Project Director Salvador Stadthagen met with the Political and Legal Director, Dr. Erich Vílchez to discuss further collaboration and coordination of efforts. Dr. Vílchez invited the AJR to ongoing participate in future activities of the Central American Prevention Commission.

SICA's priorities focus on assistance for the consolidation of a Crime Observatory and support for the design a Culture of Lawfulness program. The Culture of Lawfulness program includes an assessment of police education in the Northern Triangle countries and a meeting of the region's private sector to discuss and involve them in improving security in the region. SICA has established Crime Prevention Committees/Mesas as a Regional priority.

The Secretary General invited the Project Director to be present in a meeting with the President of ANEP and encouraged them to collaborate with the AJR in the area of integration/reintegration of former gang members into society.

Next Steps

SICA will organize a meeting of regional security/prevention projects next month to improve coordination at the insistence of the AJR.