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CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

# ALIANZA JOVEN REGIONAL USAID - SICA

QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 30, 2009

# **QUARTERLY REPORT**

**JANUARY– MARCH 2009**

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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 January 1st to March 31st, 2009, 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 the first quarter of 2009, AJR's efforts were focused on advancing implementation of activities agreed to with partners and establishing new partnerships; starting a new Result II advocacy phase to improve the Juvenile Justice systems in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala; and assisting SICA in holding a Donor/Project Coordinating Meeting in San Salvador. A third Outreach Center (OC) was opened in San Salvador; the first OC in Honduras was officially inaugurated; and the Desafío 100 program made advances in Tegucigalpa, where 116 former gang members went through the selection process and 33 are ready to obtain their job opportunity and in San Salvador, where 74 former gang members have been identified and will soon go through the selection process.

The AJR signed agreements this quarter with the *Ministerio Evangelico Abba Padre*, to implement an OC in Barrio Lourdes, San Salvador with Save the Children Honduras and the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa to implement two OCs in Comayaguela, greater Tegucigalpa, and with *Asociacion Amigos Para Siempre*, a prevention center in the notorious Sunceri neighborhood in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to improve their recreational facilities for vulnerable youth.

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

- Agreements with youth camp organizing groups, *Asociacion Scout de El Salvador, Conquistadores, Fe y Alegria and Exploradores del Rey*, to pilot youth violence prevention camps in El Salvador.
- Seven small grant proposal concepts that were submitted by the OCs in Guatemala.
- Agreement with *Fe y Alegria* of El Salvador to implement a OC in California II, Soyapango, El Salvador
- Agreement with *Fe y Alegria* of El Salvador to implement a OC in colonia 13 de enero, Zacamil, Mejicanos, El Salvador
- Agreement with an evangelical church to develop an OC in Chamelecon, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in partnership with Paz y Convivencia.

Due to the difficulty of operating a program in Honduras, with ongoing activities in San Pedro and the capital city of Tegucigalpa, AJR decided to open a small temporary office in Tegucigalpa. This office, is managed by a full time person that has been contracted as a consultant until September 2009. This person provides follow up to AJR's initiatives, serves as a point of contacts with partners, organizes AJR's personnel travel and appointments in Honduras. The office has been in operation since February, 2009 and has proved effective in facilitating work in that country for AJR.

## II. REGIONAL SECURITY

The security situation continues to remain delicate in Central America. In a World Bank study, comparing all 209 countries in the world in their ability to combat an insecure

environment, El Salvador occupies 118<sup>th</sup> place; Guatemala occupies 156<sup>th</sup> place; Honduras 145<sup>th</sup> place; Nicaragua 135<sup>th</sup> place; Panama 104<sup>th</sup> and Costa Rica occupies 47<sup>th</sup> place. The majority of homicides in El Salvador and Guatemala are a result of failed attempts from gangs to extort money from their victims. One of the most vulnerable groups is public transportation employees. This quarter 22,032 people were deported to Central America, the majority of which came from the United States. In El Salvador, 2,084 of the deportees that arrived this quarter had committed crimes in the United States. Crime levels have been exacerbated in Central America by the current economic crisis.

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS QUARTER

#### *Analysis of Progress*

In its first quarter of 2009, the AJR has progressed in meeting its September 2010 targets. Thus far eight communities have been assisted in crime prevention. This number has increased from five communities last quarter. This quarter the AJR has opened 1 more Outreach Center bringing the total number to four OCs. Sub grants implemented have increased by one and the total youth benefited by the Outreach Centers has increased to 1,356, an increase of 522 youth from last quarter. This quarter, through AJR's assistance, SICA carried out an initiative to improve juvenile violence prevention in the region by holding a Donor/Project coordination meeting.

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

<b>s.o.1 Ruling Justly, More Responsive, Transparent Governance</b>					
<b>IR 1 Strengthening Rule of Law</b>					
<b>Sub-IR Crime Prevention Programs Implemented</b>					
<b>Number</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline Year</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Sept 2010</b>	<b>To Dec 2008</b>
<b>Result 1 Jump Start Public Private Initiatives for Gang Prevention</b>					
1.1	Communities assisted in crime prevention	2008 0	30		8
1.2	New Outreach Centers Established	2008 0	15		4
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		1,356
1.5	Desafio 100 youths provided with jobs	2008 0	450		26
1.6	Leverage Contributions raised	2008 0	1:1		\$114,931.02 plus, pend.
<b>Result 2 Assess Regional Legal/Justice Frameworks and promote Juvenile Justice Policy Reform</b>					
2.1	Evaluation of National/Legal Frameworks/Policies and Best Practices validated by Working Groups and Regional Comparative Analysis	2008 0	3 Evaluations Validated 1 Comparative Analysis Developed		3 Evaluations validated 1 Comparative Analysis Developed

	Developed			
2.2	Advocacy Strategies to influence National/Regional Legal Frameworks/Policies designed and implemented	2008 0	3	0
<b>Result 3 Collaboration and Assistance to SICA to catalyze regional policy reform and harmonization</b>				
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

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

The third Outreach Center outside of Guatemala and the first in Honduras was inaugurated on January 21 in the notorious Rivera Hernández neighborhood of San Pedro Sula. The AJR signed a cooperative agreement to develop an OC in Barrio Lourdes, San Salvador making it the third OC in El Salvador. The OC has started its operations and its inauguration is slated for April 2, 2009. A cooperative agreement to develop two OCs in the Villafranca and Buena Nueva communities in Comayagua, was signed with Save the Children Honduras and the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa. Proposals to start additional OCs in Chamelecón, San Pedro Sula, Honduras and in Zacamil and Soyapango, El Salvador, were reviewed and are in the final approval process. The Desafío 100 program continued in Tegucigalpa, and 33 former gang members were confirmed as potential beneficiaries for job opportunities. Also a total of 74 former gang members were identified in El Salvador and their evaluation process is being prepared to start in April.

Following AJR's OC methodology tested at the Mejicanos-CFO OC, AJR's partner the Centro de Formación y Orientación (CFO), developed implemented the "Centro de Encuentro Juvenil", in the Buenos Aires neighborhood of Mejicanos, San Salvador, with funding from another international donor. This is an accomplishment that demonstrated the validity and the ability to replicate the OC methodology developed by Creative Associates in partnership with USAID.

### ***Component I: Preventing that young people enter gangs***

#### **El Salvador**

#### **Achievements**

##### ***Outreach Centers***

The implementation of the OC of Barrio Lourdes, San Salvador, is of particular significance as the implementer is Pastor Carlos Artiga, a former gang member leader. Pastor Artiga was

known by the nom de guerre “*El Flash*” and operated in the same community he now serves. The gangs respect him and he has made significant efforts to prevent gangs from recruiting youth in the neighborhood. Additionally, Pastor Artiga has been visiting schools in the community giving talks aimed at preventing youth from entering gangs. This OC is located in a highly vulnerable community that offers very little opportunities for the development, training and recreation of its youth.

From the moment this OC opened its doors, 210 children and adolescents, and 17 volunteers have registered have started to participate in its activities. The OC will offer training in computers, cooking, handcrafts, cosmetology, English, urban agriculture, baking, and welding. In the area of the creative use of free time the OC will offer chess, soccer, table tennis, art, music, Cine Forum, table games and recreational trips and camping.

The church headed by the OC implementer is recognized in the community for its prevention activities and the assistance it gives families of gang members who are in prison or have been killed. This recognition allows Pastor Artiga the possibility to be take bold prevention actions and still be safe.

During this quarter significant advances were made towards the development of the results, financial proposals and fundraising needed for the implementation of two OCs with Fe y Alegría, a Catholic organization involved in vocational training and education. These OCs will be located in 13 de Enero, Zacamil, Mejicanos and in the California II community in Soyapango. The AJR has been negotiating a donation from the private sector organization CASALCO. Fe y Alegría has been working with the Mejicanos municipal government, to repair the building where the OC will operate. This process has also helped to involve the community in the repairs, which will be good for turning them in true stakeholders in this development. In both of these OCs that will be operated by Fe y Alegría, gangs have particular strong control of the neighborhoods. Pastor Artiga has been communicating with the gangs to reach an understanding that they will allow their operation as it will benefit the children and youth of the community, including their relatives.

The two existing OCs, CFO and Lourdes Colon, have continued their activities and are achieving significant impact in the communities served. A total of 823 beneficiaries have attended both OCs (285 at CFO and 538 at Lourdes); with the participation of 67 volunteers (27 at CFO and 40 at Lourdes).

The AJR’s partner, the Centro de Formación y Orientación (CFO) of Mejicanos, implemented a new initiative during this quarter, the “Centro de Encuentro Juvenil”, using the OC methodology learned from AJR. CFO obtained funding from other donors for this initiative and has informed AJR that is looking for further funding to start new Centers. The Buenos Aires initiative is also located in a particularly violent community, riddled by gangs. Additionally, as financial contributions from AJR to the CFO OC have terminated, CFO has been able to locate additional sources of funding to continue its operation. AJR continues to monitor its activities and offers advice, feedback, and encouragement and facilitates a network of knowledge sharing with other OCs in El Salvador and in Guatemala.

The AJR has made efforts to connect the OC in Lourdes, Colón with businesses that could help sustain them beyond AJR's financial assistance. In this regard, AJR's Project Director and fundraiser visited PARTEX, an assembly company located in the neighborhood that has expressed interest in helping with the effort. No commitment has been made, but this and other companies will be asked to help. Additionally, efforts are being made to enlist the Colón municipal government's financial assistance in supporting the OCs. For this purpose, the Mayor of Colón a council member and members of the Inter-institutional Council of the Municipality were invited to visit the OCs in Guatemala that presently receive municipal support. The Mayor canceled last minute, but sent his treasurer and a council member in his place. The municipal authorities were impressed, especially after meeting with a Mayor's wife that is now a Congresswoman and a strong backer of one of the Guatemalan OCs.

### *Small Grants*

Last quarter the AJR made a small grant to the *Organización Juvenil Nueva Generación XXI* (NSXXI), to make a small library and center in *Mejicanos* more accessible to young vulnerable children and youth in the area. AJR assisted NSXXI in buying and transporting all the materials to be purchased with the donation. NSXXI could not start work, as the Mejicanos Municipality (who pays for their rent) decided to offer another building. The new building is the old municipal building of Mejicanos and is in good condition. NSXXI started activities on the 21 of February and invited AJR to the inauguration of the new locale. Workshops using the material provided by AJR have started.

### *Prevention Camps*

The AJR has been discussing the activities of a Salvadorian organization that organizes summer camps for youth. Camps are known to effectively influence the behavior of children and adolescents. In El Salvador youth camps were organized by request of the Ministry of Education with the Scout Association of El Salvador, to try to defuse an ongoing "war" between students from public High-schools ("Institutos"). Between 2001 and 2004, around 800 students a year were invited (through funding from the Ministry of Education) to the violence prevention camps organized by the Scouts, with great success. Violence among youth from warring schools that resulted in injuries and even deaths, ceased.

AJR's has organized a youth camp coalition with Exploradores del Rey (associated with the Asambleas de Dios), Club de Conquistadores (associated with the Adventist Church), Fe y Alegría (Catholic Based Organization) and Scouts (non-denominational.) This coalition will pilot a youth violence prevention methodology developed with the assistance of AJR. The members of the coalition will organize pilot youth violence prevention camps that will be named "**Aventura Joven**". Existing youth camps already incorporate important elements of prevention, such as team work and leadership. In some cases they reach vulnerable youth. The goal is to make prevention camps available to the most vulnerable youth coming from communities besieged by gang activity and include a menu of prevention activities that build resilience against crime. Some of these activities will be talks given by former gang members, who will explain to the young participants the realities of gang life, the effects on their families, friends and how most of their former gang colleagues end up dead or imprisoned.

Some of the organizations which organize these camps are associated with churches that have an impressive reach into the most vulnerable communities in El Salvador. The camps charge youth a nominal fee to cover costs. This makes the existing camps not available to the most vulnerable youth, which are usually the poorest. In “**Aventura Joven**”, in lieu of cash, youth may be required to perform some community work or errands to earn their participation in the camps.

Through the “**Aventura Joven**” pilot prevention camps, AJR also expects that the participating organization will routinely incorporate in the future more focused prevention activities in their regular camp methodology. The AJR will use the experience from these pilot prevention camps to develop a Prevention Camp Methodology that can, be incorporated in its youth violence prevention programming, not only in El Salvador, but also in Guatemala and Honduras. The AJR also plans to incorporate into these pilot prevention camps, lessons learned through the Desafío Prevención program being carried out by USAID-Creative Associates International’s in schools in Guatemala, where teams of psychologists and former gang members visits schools to give prevention talks.

Responding to an offer of a US South Command’s public information office located in Tegucigalpa, to assist in the development of material that could support gang prevention activities, the AJR has made a formal request for the development of a logo for the “Aventura Joven” program and furnishing of 480 t-shirts and 400 diaries for the youth that will be participating in the youth violence prevention camps.

The AJR has contracted a part-time fundraiser to help obtain leverage for prevention activities. The idea is to obtain support for OCs beyond AJR’s six months of funding. Presentations have been made to companies like DIGICEL, AGRISAL, Channel 12 and HSBC, which have expressed interest in supporting some of AJR’s activities.

## **Obstacles**

The election process in El Salvador proved to be a distracting element for private sector organizations, companies and individuals that work with the AJR in prevention activities.

It has proved a challenge to bring together a coalition of the four youth camp organizations operating in the country, particularly because of their institutional weaknesses and inexperience in presenting proposals. The AJR has had to spend considerable time making this possible.

The *Foro Salvadoreño de Escritores* (Salvadoran Writers Forum) also had problems in presenting a viable proposal to organize and deliver writing and *Cine Forum* workshops and other volunteer activities at the OCs in El Salvador. Lately, they decided not to pursue a grant for these activities and will concentrate in presenting the AJR a proposal to organize a Literary Contest for youth with the theme “Youth Wants A World Without Violence.”

## **Future Steps**

The AJR will double its efforts to re-engage the private sector in El Salvador. For this we will use the help of a part-time fundraiser/promoter that has been contracted for four months.

### **Guatemala:**

AJR in collaboration with USAID’s Youth Challenge Program in Guatemala has reviewed and accepted seven community focused crime prevention proposals. These new grants will be implemented in alliance with existing Outreach Centers in Guatemala. The grants will allow the Outreach Centers to become active crime prevention actors in their community and will motivate citizen participation. The table below indicates the communities and grants and leverage generated by the program.

No	Outreach Center/ Community Name	GRANT AMOUNT			MONTHS	Program Description
		USAID GRANT	LEVERAGE	TOTAL PROJECT COST		
1	Palín, Escuintla	\$2,463.00	\$3,950.00	\$6,413.00	6	Proyecto Alerta, crime prevention sessions in public and private schools
2	ciudad del Sol Villa Nueva	\$3,278.00	\$3,278.00	\$6,556.00	3	Recovery of soccer fields for crime prevention
3	Búcaro Mezquital, Villa Nueva	\$2,312.00	\$3,312.00	\$5,624.00	4	Festival For LIFE, and reduction of firearms
4	Paraíso II, Zona 18 Guatemala	\$2,406.00	\$2,406.00	\$4,812.00	6	Recovery of abandoned and high risks areas for a better community
5	San Rafael II, Zona 18 Guatemala	\$2,394.00	\$4,750.00	\$7,144.00	3	Construction of sport facility in an abandoned areas
6	Santa Catarina Pinula	\$2,331.00	\$10,875.00	\$13,206.00	6	Documentary and movie forums to create awareness about prevention of violence
7	Canton Ojo de Agua, Palencia	\$2,306.00	\$2,306.00	\$4,612.00	6	Movie Forum “Yo Decido”

### **Honduras-Tegucigalpa**

#### **Achievements**

The cooperative agreement to develop two OCs in the Villafranca and Buena Nueva communities in Comayaguela was signed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, with Save the Children Honduras, the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa and the leaders of the two communities. USAID-Honduras and representatives of the office of the Mayor of Tegucigalpa participated at the event.

Villafranca and Buena Nueva are located in Comayaguela and are part of greater Tegucigalpa. Both are neighboring communities and are part of a collection of 12 surrounding highly vulnerable areas. Save the Children has carried out important community empowerment work in the area. These are the first OC models that will not be implemented by an FBO, as we estimate that Save the Children Honduras has the proper community trust to generate very active participation. Also, Save the Children has the appropriate experience and financial management capabilities to facilitate proper implementation, as the AJR does not have complete office facilities in Tegucigalpa. Additionally, Save the Children has experience and networks that can make it feasible to obtain the financial resources that make OCs sustainable in the long term.

In addition to the AJR and Save the Children Honduras, the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa also signed as partner. The Rotary Clubs' contribution will at this stage be a symbolic of \$1,900. To fulfill the agreement signed with AJR last year to implement from 6 to 10 OCs in Tegucigalpa, the Rotary Clubs are looking for matching grants and local donations to be able to contribute to the implementation of more OCs.

Between these two OCs, AJR expects to have 700 vulnerable children and adolescents as beneficiaries and of these, 450 will receive skills and vocational training, 60 will be assisted in regaining schooling and 100 will receive homework assistance. It is expected that over 50 volunteers from the community will participate in this effort.

The AJR is making efforts to locate additional partners to develop more OCs in Tegucigalpa. In this respect, it has started talks with Red Viva, which is a network of over 30 FBOs of all Christian denominations who work with youth. Red Viva has contacted its members and will submit proposals.

## **Obstacles**

Although the Rotary Clubs of Tegucigalpa have the best intentions to partner with the AJR for the development of OCs, the present economic crisis has limited its funding sources. They hope to develop matching grants with US Rotary Clubs, but the matching grant cycle starts in June of each year. Rotary regulations do not allow the provision of funds retroactively, so they cannot fund OCs that have already started work with matching grants. Once the potential partners and sites for the remaining OCs have been located, Rotary will initiate matching grants proposals, as the cycle takes a considerable amount of time. It may be possible that funding will also not be available for the next OCs to be opened. This may result in the Rotary Clubs having to fund most of the cost of the later OCs and the AJR will only make symbolic financial contributions. If Rotary funding does not materialize, the AJR may not be able fund more than two additional OCs in Tegucigalpa. To illustrate the levels of crime and violence in Honduras, it is interesting

to note that one of the Rotary Presidents, Mr. Luis Cisneros, decided to leave the country along with his family due to extortion threats.

The AJR decided to reject a proposal by *ACOES*, a youth violence prevention program in Villa Cristina, Tegucigalpa. The reason was that their proposal would have only benefited a total of 20 children. On the other hand, *Asociación Compartir* in the Villa Nueva sector of Tegucigalpa, who had presented a project, decided not to pursue its request for a small grant, due to the work involved.

## **Future Steps**

The Coordinator of Red Viva has been invited to visit the OCs in El Salvador, to better understand their methodology and will also be at the inauguration of the OC in Barrio Lourdes, San Salvador on April 2, 2009. It is expected that Red Viva will channel several requests for the implementation OCs and small grants from their partner organizations.

### San Pedro Sula

The first OC in Honduras was inaugurated on January 21 in the notorious Rivera Hernández neighborhood of San Pedro Sula. The OC methodology will be tested for the first time in Honduras at a place where juvenile violence has achieved extremely high levels.

The Rivera Hernández OC is being implemented together with Paz y Convivencia (OPC), which is funded by IDB. Although it has started operating without all the required equipment (that was to be supplied with Paz y Convivencia) this OC has trained 187 youth in computer skills, English, beauty, hair cutting, and others. Some of the beneficiaries have acquired degrees of skills that could permit them to initiate paid work in some businesses.

An important key to the success of this OC has been the dedication of its leader, Pastor Arnold Linares, who is charismatic dedicated to his community. Although he has been involved in prevention for eleven years, he has done it with very meager resources, no methodology and lacks training in finance. This requires more follow up, that unfortunately has not been able to be provided fully by our partner OPC.

Both the USAID Director and the US Ambassador to Honduras have visited this OC in March and have expressed their satisfaction of its implementation in such a symbolic location in regards to youth violence in the country. At the same time they have seen that it is possible to achieve impact with modest investments that are creative and pertinent. The visit was reported in the local newspaper<sup>1</sup>.

After several tries to obtain proposals to implement an OC in Chemelecon, which included talks with organizations such as Unidos por la Vida (which never presented a proposal and delayed the process) and others, and the not very effective assistance of OPC to develop these partnerships, a viable proposal was finally received. This OC will be implemented in partnership with OPC,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.laprensahn.com/Ediciones/2009/04/02/Noticias/Hugo-Llorens-conocera-centro-Por-mi-barrio>

having an Evangelical church and several community organizations in the area as local partners. The AJR hopes that this OC will be operational during the second quarter of 2009.

The *Asociacion Amigos para Siempre*, recipients of a small grant to improve their recreational equipment facilities, executed to satisfaction their grant. Their playground has improved substantially. It now has new swings, patio chairs and tables for table-games and sports teams have been organized with the uniforms and equipment acquired, benefiting over 200, vulnerable children from 2 communities.

### **Obstacles**

Paz y Convivencia (OPC), our partner in San Pedro Sula, was slated to provide the Rivera Hernandez OC with some appliances and equipment needed for workshops. At the end of the quarter Paz y Convivencia had not yet delivered the needed appliances and equipment. This has delayed some of the workshops and resulting in a disappointment for the well meaning implementer. OPC cites problems with the tax exemption required for the purchase and has promised to try to solve this problem as soon as possible.

It has been difficult for Pastor Linares, to organize the management procedures and finances of the Rivera Hernandez OC. The OPC did not provide further assistance and AJR does not count with personnel in Honduras.

Even though AJR has made many efforts so that a proposal for an OC in Chamelecon materializes, the personnel assigned by the OPC have been slow in working with the potential partners/implementers.

### **Future Steps**

AJR will send its Financial and Donations Manager to San Pedro Sula in early April, to work with the Rivera Hernandez OC and train them in financial management and on how to present reports.

### **Component II: *Encouraging gang members to abandon gangs***

It is clear that both, in El Salvador and Honduras, there is need to create more awareness in society regarding the causes and solutions for youth violence and gangs. Media does not help much in a creating a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena and gears their information almost solely toward the crime and law enforcement angles. The normal thing is to publish information in numerical (number of homicides) and judicial terms (trials, etc.) It is less frequent to see information presenting a social angle.

The AJR has made substantial efforts in this regards. In El Salvador, talks with TCS, the major Network in El Salvador to organize a Reality Show are ongoing and other TV networks were contacted as no concrete results from TCS became palpable. An Executive Director of Channel 12, a progressive major network in El Salvador Has shown significant initial interest, in the

production of a Reality Show similar to the one produced in Guatemala by PAJ-USAID. An agreement with Channel 12 is expected in April.

In Honduras, the AJR Director visited Channel 10, meeting with its Executive Director, Mr. Wong Arevalo. Mr. Wong Arevalo showed little interest in the Reality Show concept. The cooperative agreement between the OPC and the AJR, calls for assistance up to \$15,000 from the OPC for the development of a Reality Show for Honduras. The Project Director met in San Pedro with Mr. Regalado and two very experienced media professionals to discuss the issue. The experts and Mr. Regalado believe and concur with Mr. Wong Arevalo, that a Reality Show about former gang members finding opportunities will not be optimal for Honduras at this point. The gang phenomena in Honduras is quite different that in El Salvador and Guatemala. Gangs in Honduras have developed a closer relationship with organized crime groups and perform paid assassination. Young gang members hardly tattoo themselves anymore and there is looser control at the neighborhood level by gangs. Most of gang members were either assassinated are in jail or migrated. Business people and society tend to accept more readily giving second chances. In a few words, they believe a Reality Show like this would not cause too much interest. The OPC is ready to hold its commitment of \$15,000, to contribute in a different type awareness raising campaign. There has been an ongoing discussion about developing and awareness campaign that will center on the value of the life of youth, to try to counteract the alarmingly and rising levels of youth killings.

Nevertheless, other activities of AJR have had significant media coverage and event participation in the region, which have permitted to show different social groups concepts about prevention, insertion through job opportunities and Juvenile Justice.

The AJR has also made some presentations to justice operators, such as the one made at the International Law Enforcement Academy in El Salvador. This presentation took place on Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Harold Sibaja, Mr. Juan Hernández and Mr. Salvador Stadthagen, volunteered to give a talk about AJR's program activities and methodologies to prosecutors, police and other justice operators coming from the countries of the region.

## **Obstacles**

The TCS TV network indecision delayed the development of the Reality Show in El Salvador. TCS may have, in purpose, delayed their decision in order to not allow the AJR to negotiate the concept with the competition.

## **Future Steps**

The AJR has been invited to make a presentation at the V Anti-Gang International Convention, which will take place on April 28<sup>th</sup> in El Salvador. The AJR will be presenting the OC methodology and the lessons learned in implementing 15 centers across the region. Some of AJR's partners will also participate in the presentation.

The AJR plans to engage private sector, religious and government leaders in Honduras, to assess the feasibility of developing an awareness campaign "for the life of youth", that will contain

several elements to encourage the public to do more for youth, including giving them a second opportunity in life.

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

The Desafío 100 program of reinserting former gang members into society by providing jobs has continued its activities in the region. This activity has been most affected by the world economic crisis, as the recession leaves very limited job opportunities available.

In the region there has been a considerable loss of employment due to the world recession, but in Honduras, the increase of 60% in the minimum salary has compounded the effect.

With difficulty, during this quarter Desafío 100 has obtained the following results:

#### **El Salvador**

The AJR started the process of receiving former gang-member candidates that fit the profile required for Desafío 100 participation and want to qualify for the job opportunities program. A total of 74 candidates have been proposed by ten organizations and churches. They belonged to ten different gangs and are between the ages of 15 and 35 years. Some of them abandoned gangs more than 5 years ago. Among these, 23 are women. This is the initial cohort with which the selection process will be started.

Although the selection process is entirely controlled by AJR, the Department of Conditional Freedom (DEPLA) of the Supreme Court of El Salvador has volunteered support for the psychological tests. DEPLA will also try to get students of Psychology to help in the testing.

The two main organizations that have contributed to proposing candidates are The School Farm (Granja Escuela) and the Tattoo Removal Program, both belonging to the National Council of Public Security of El Salvador (CNSP). Almost 50 applications have been received from this source.

#### **Obstacles**

Although some organizations that work with youth have proposed former gang-member candidates for Desafío 100, some others that were also contacted and said were going to do so, have not trusted the AJR by sending their candidates. This in part may have been caused by the cancellation of the public event at ANEP in November, where the job opportunities program was to be launched. Some of the organizations had been invited to that event. ANEP shows no interest in conversing about their involvement in obtaining job opportunities from its members.

#### **Future Steps**

The AJR is requesting the Secretary General of SICA, for a joint visit to ANEP, to talk about reengaging in the Desafío 100 program. Additionally the AJR plans to engage the incoming

Government of El Salvador authorities which are expected to be very interested in prevention, to jointly approach the private sector. This may be a good opportunity for both sectors to engage positively.

The Psychological tests for the 74 candidates for the Desafio 100 program will start in the later part of April. The testing will take place at the Human Right School of the *Procuraduria de Derechos Humanos*. The decision to use this locale has been a good one, as it inspire trust on behalf of the participants and will easily accessible to them.

## **Honduras**

### **Tegucigalpa**

The Desafio 100 program in Tegucigalpa was born out of an agreement with COHEP and CCIT including to a lesser extent the National Prevention Programs (PNPRRS). Although the process started in October 2008, it has not been possible to launch it due to the economic difficulties faced by the local business sector. In a group of 116 former gang members evaluated, 33 of them have been qualified. Nevertheless it has not been able to obtain job opportunities for them. AJR has made many efforts through COHEP and CCIT Without positive results.

The Honduran private sector does not want a publicly launch the Desafio program, as they have been lobbying the Government about revoking the hike in the minimum salary and presenting appeals at the courts. The private sector is making the argument that the increase in the minimum wage has forced them to fire personnel and they cannot be seen hiring new ones.

A public event where former gang members are being employed can even backfire on the program as the rest of society is being fired while former gang members are working. It is estimated that just in the assembly line sector Honduras lost more than 20,000 jobs. For those candidates that did not qualify for the Desafio 100 program, the PNPRRS is trying to obtain entrepreneurship opportunities, so they can obtain some income as entrepreneurs.

### **Future Steps**

The AJR has been discussing with COHEP the possibility of organizing a meeting with business and religious leaders to discuss how to obtain job opportunities. Additionally, the AJR Project Director plans to start a series of visits to individual businesses, to make individual presentations and to try to obtain some of the required job opportunities. The present economic and employment situation in Honduras warrants that the Desafio 100 program strategy is reevaluated. The program will explore other initiatives that would allow the young former gang members to obtain income and be self sufficient should.

The CADERH, an organization made of private vocational initiatives, will be visited to assess the possibility of accessing some scholarship/vocational alternatives for some of the beneficiaries.

## **San Pedro Sula**

The Desafío 100 program in San Pedro Sula was launched in the last quarter of 2008. In the first quarter of 2009 the AJR has started the second phase of the Desafío 100 program. The AJR is contacting beneficiaries that during the first phase were not placed in jobs or have since lost their jobs. Some of the participants that qualified, but did not attend the final retreat, are also being helped individually. New candidates are being identified and they will go through the selection process. Even though AJR's partner OPC has vowed to get some of the needed jobs, they have not been able to do so due to the economic climate. The OPC has stated that they want to have a second Desafío 100 launch during the month of May, but the job availability may render this impossible.

## **Obstacles**

The recession has also hit San Pedro Sula and thousands of jobs are being lost. Entire assembly factories have shut down. The OPC employees that have been collaborating in this process have had problems in obtaining transportation and calling cards to carry out related activities. The AJR has had to assist them with some of the basic need to carry on. Some of the OPC employees have not been paid in three months.

## **Future Steps**

The AJR will request its partner OPC to redouble its efforts to get some of the needed jobs and when in San Pedro will also visit some individual business owners to make individual presentations.

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

Significant efforts were made to identify consultants, experts, Juvenile Justice Operators and relevant civil society involved in the issue youth violence and policy reform. In the months of June through November, the AJR carried out evaluation processes of the juvenile justice systems in the North Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), culminating with the successful completion of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. As a result of this process concrete recommendations at both national and regional levels aimed at improving the juvenile justice systems and the treatment of youth in conflict with the law were concluded.

The evaluation process started with initial workshops held in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where main issues and problems facing each individual juvenile justice system were determined. Having initially identified priorities and main concerns facing the systems, AJR proceeded in setting up Working Groups in each country attended by juvenile justice sector actors and experts. These experts carried out evaluations of the systems further analyzing issues highlighted during the Workshops. Several Working Group meetings were held in each country. The main findings, best practices and recommendations were systematized and documented in individual country evaluations that serve as the basis for a comparative analysis of the three

systems. Finally, the findings and recommendations of all the analyses were presented in the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum held on November 20 and 21, 2008 in Tegucigalpa Honduras.

The Declaration of San Pedro Sula, 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, provided a special congratulatory mention regarding the celebration of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum signifying the importance the region is giving the problem of juvenile violence and delinquency.

## **ACHIEVED RESULTS**

- ***Evaluations of the Juvenile Justice Systems in the North Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) carried out and results systematized in country evaluation documents.*** Experts in an interactive process with Working Group members carried out individual country evaluations of the Juvenile Justice Systems during the months of August through November 2008. Discussions carried out in several Working Group meetings in each country allowed for the validation of feasible and specific recommendations for the improvement of the individual juvenile justice systems. These findings and recommendations have been systematized.
- ***Comparative analysis of the juvenile justice systems in the North Triangle countries carried out and results systematized.*** Taking as a basis the individual country evaluations, a comparative analysis of the three countries was carried out during the months of October and November. This comparison allowed determining both similar and diverging elements in each country. As a result of the comparative analysis, best practices, major difficulties, obstacles and recommendations were established, which helped serve as a basis for the discussions that later took place in the workshops carried out during the second day of the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum. The comparative analysis was finalized and systematized during the second week of November.
- ***The First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum entitled "Juvenile Justice Systems in Central America: Current Situation and Challenges", carried out in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras on November 20 and 21, 2008.*** More than 175 juvenile justice sector actors, experts and stakeholders participated in this important regional event and were able to exchange knowledge, views and best practices.

The Forum took place over two days of intense work, where a series of key 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. On the second day of the event workshops were carried out where participants were able to discuss in detail the main problems facing the region. By the end of the Forum possible recommendations aimed at improving juvenile justice in the region were provided.

The presence and active participation of representatives from the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA), Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), the Central American Court of Justice, the Foreign Ministry of Honduras, the European Union and the United States, in the opening and closing ceremonies, was very important in providing a message of support to build regional consensus on the issue of juvenile justice and the improvement of the conditions of youth in conflict with the law in Central America.

- ***Recommendations from the Regional Juvenile Justice Forum systematized and presented to SG-SICA and other Central American Integration institutions.*** In the month of December, the AJR systematized the recommendations of the Regional Forum and elaborated the official document entitled "*Documento de Tegucigalpa*". These important recommendations were sent to all Forum participants and provided to relevant stakeholders such as the Central American integration institutions; national government institutions and actors, as well as international organizations, in order to be prioritized and considered in decision-making process at both national and regional levels, aimed at improving the treatment, rehabilitation, reinsertion and inclusion of children and adolescents in conflict with the law. Actions taken towards that effect will have a direct impact in the reduction of juvenile violence and delinquency in the region.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- AJR expects that during 2009 the recommendations of the Forum as well as those made in the individual country evaluations will be considered in order to support advocacy processes at both national and regional levels through relevant stakeholders, which lead to an improvement in the situation of youth in conflict with the law in Central America.
- It is expected that Juvenile Justice Coalitions will be formed in each country (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) made up of juvenile justice sector actors and civil society working in this important issue, who will coordinate efforts and support advocacy processes moving forward an agenda which includes the recommendations made in the Regional Forum, as well as those made during the evaluation processes carried out in each country.

In order to achieve this, AJR intends to develop Terms of Reference for advocacy grants for each Juvenile Justice Coalition in order to assist them in carrying out advocacy processes. Technical assistance will also be provided by the AJR in the design of an advocacy strategy.

- Also, an advocacy process at the regional level could be carried out through SG-SICA. It is important to consider that representatives from the Central American Integration institutions present at the Regional Forum reiterated their commitment in supporting actions aimed at improving and strengthening juvenile justice in the region.

In this regard, the “Documento de Tegucigalpa” reflects some strategic recommendations which could be supported through the integration institutions, such as the creation of the Central American Association of Juvenile Justice Operators.

- Now that the lessons from the country evaluations, comparative analysis and Regional Juvenile Justice Forum are ready, the AJR is concentrating efforts in the creation of a Web Portal where this and other Juvenile Justice information will be made available to actors working in the field.

**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***

On February 15, 2008, the AJR made presentations of the program to the Technical Sub-Commission of the Security Commission of Central America and the Security Commission of Central America (CSCA). Present were the Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Security Defense and senior representatives of the police and militaries of the countries in the region. The initial meeting/presentations also included the Regional Director to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador and Guatemala and the Project Director to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, who at the time headed the Security Commission of Central America. This secured support for the AJR within SICA’s framework.

The AJR made significant efforts throughout the year to maintain regular communication with SICA’s personnel, in particular with Dr. Erich Vílchez and the officers in charge of security issues. The AJR provided substantial assistance to SICA’s team in charge of organizing the International Central American Conference on Violence and Security. This assistance included the production of a video of AJR’s regional program that was shown at the closing of the conference and the arranging of a short never aired before film explaining the plague of gang youth violence in poor neighborhoods of Guatemala. AJR also aided in formulating the list of participants and arranged that USAID DG Directors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala be invited to the Conference. AJR’s Regional Director made the central presentation at the Gangs Prevention panel held during the Conference.

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, provides a congratulatory mention of the International Central American Conference on Violence and Security. The AJR obtained the support of SG-SICA for the organization of the First Regional Forum of Juvenile Justice, lobbied PAIRCA (program for integration funded by the European Union) for collaboration and obtained \$25,000 in donations for the organization of the Forum. The AJR worked closely with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Honduras, who co-hosted the event. The AJR arranged the program and all logistics for the Forum.

As a result of the intensive work carried out by the AJR team, the First Regional Juvenile Justice Forum was held in Tegucigalpa on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. 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. The participation of the Central American Court of Justice's representative in the Forum, opened concrete possibilities for collaboration with the Court in promoting initiatives that could lead to the formation of a Central American Juvenile Justice Operator Association recognized by the Court and to harmonization of Juvenile Justice Legislation and policies at the regional level.

The AJR and SICA have discussed the possibility of forming a regional level youth violence prevention donor/project coordinating working mechanism. There has been an increase by donors working through SICA in violence prevention and security programs at the regional level. As a first step for this coordination effort, the AJR agreed to assist SICA in the organization of a regional juvenile violence prevention donor/project meeting. The AJR will help SICA draft a program, invitation letters and gather a list of possible invitees and contact information. The AJR made initial contacts with possible attendees and sounded their interest to participate. The AJR's Project Director has continued talks with Mr. Erich Vilchez, who estimates that the meeting, with help from AJR, will take place in February or March of 2009. AJR's Project Director has established a good working relation with Mr. Juan Daniel Alemán the Guatemalan candidate who will likely be elected Secretary General of SICA. Mr. Alemán is interested in security and violence prevention and will be supportive of AJR's efforts.

### **Problems Encountered**

- Although the AJR Director visits with SICA on a regular basis, the constant travel of the few officers that are in charge of security issues, who are AJR's counterparts, makes it difficult to establish more frequent exchanges and to schedule meetings.
- SG-SICA has advanced little in contracting the officers of the new Security Unit that will be paid with funds provided by Spain, which are already available.
- There are other projects related to the prevention of juvenile justice that are being carried out in conjunction with SICA, such as INTERPEACE, but little effort is done on behalf of SG-SICA to establish coordination between projects.

### **Next Steps**

- Continue to develop a good working relationship with all in SICA, including the new Secretary General, when elected, and the members of the Security Unit, when appointed.
- Take steps to be ready to organize the donor/project coordinating meeting, including the joint development with SG-SICA of its concept and participants.
- Continue to coordinate with other projects and donors in the field of Juvenile Justice and use the upcoming donor/project meeting to assist SICA in the so much needed coordination of efforts, reaffirming the willingness of USAID to assist in this endeavor.
- Start negotiating with SG-SICA its support for a Second Forum of Juvenile Justice, which would be partially funded by PAIRCA II (the continuation of PAIRCA) and perhaps by the organization Terre des Hommes, who participated enthusiastically in the First Forum and is interested in extending Restorative Justice concepts throughout the Juvenile Justice Systems in Central America.

- This Second Forum will be an important instrument to rally and showcase the efforts of the advocacy coalitions for the improvement of Juvenile Justice that are being supported by AJR in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.
- Further contacts with the Central American Court of Justice to promote the formation of a Central American Juvenile Justice Operator Association recognized by the Court and to explore opportunities for the harmonization of Juvenile Justice Legislation and policies at the regional level.

#### ANNEX

Reports of the inauguration of the Rivera Hernández OC in San Pedro Sula

<http://www.laprensahn.com/San%20Pedro%20Sula/Ediciones/2009/01/22/Noticias/Abren-centro-para-ninos-y-jovenes-en-riesgo-social>

<http://www.tiempo.hn/index.php/secciones/el-pais/8282?task=view>