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**Youth Violence Prevention through Audiovisual Media
EJEMPLAR**

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FINAL REPORT

**Project Period:
September 17, 2012 – September 17, 2015**

Implemented by:

**ALIANZA
HEARTLAND
MÉXICO**

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Project Overview

Project Title: Youth Violence Prevention through Audiovisual Media EJEMPLAR

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Project Summary

Alianza Heartland Mexico (AHM) implemented the Empoderamiento de la Juventud y Educación en Monterrey por la Legalidad, Avance y Respeto/Empowering Youth and Education in Monterrey for Legality, Advancement and Respect (EJEMPLAR) project from September 2012 to September 2015 with local partner, Villas Asistenciales (VA). The project provided services to children and youth aged 6-18 in the Monterrey Metropolitan Region (MMR). AHM and VA received technical support for the EJEMPLAR project from Heartland Alliance International (HAI).

The EJEMPLAR Project utilized two service delivery models to accomplish project goals: the Villas Club (VC) model targeted pre-adolescents aged 6-12, and the Leadership and Media Program (LMP) model targeted teenagers aged 12-18. In addition, the project provided services to parents/guardians of project participants.

EJEMPLAR implemented activities that improve after school opportunities for at-risk youth in order to improve their understanding and respect for the law. At the same time, EJEMPLAR strengthened protective factors as a means of reducing risky behavior. EJEMPLAR also collaborated with local institutions, actively supporting the Merida Initiative Pillar IV goal of preventing violence by building stronger and more resilient communities.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AHM	Alianza Heartland México
CIDAC	Centro de Investigación para el Desarrollo, A.C.
CONAPO	Consejo Nacional de Población
CVPP	Crime and Violence Prevention Program
DIF	Desarrollo Integral de la Familia
EJEMPLAR	Empoderamiento de la Juventud y Educación en Monterrey por la Legalidad, Avance y Respeto
ENVIPE	Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública
FOG	Fixed Obligation Grant Agreement
HAI	Heartland Alliance International
GOM	Government of Mexico
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía
ITESM	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey
LMP	Leadership and Media Program
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMR	Monterrey Metropolitan Region
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP's	Priority Attention Polygons
PRONAPRED	Programa Nacional de Prevención del Delito
PSA	Public Service Announcements

SEGOB	Secretaría de Gobernación
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VA	Villas Asistenciales
VC	Villas Club
VE	Villas Escuelas

Executive Summary

In the past three years, the EJEMPLAR Project worked with 8,914 girls, boys and teenagers in the Monterrey Metropolitan Region (MMR). After three years of successfully implementing the EJEMPLAR Project, this initiative is now regarded as one of the most important, innovative youth empowerment programs in the northern region of the country.

Alianza Heartland Mexico (AHM) and partner Villas Asistenciales (VA) developed intervention models based on integrated care approaches that consider biological, psychological and social elements as part of human development. These models of care incorporate extracurricular activities for at-risk children and youth, along with their families and neighbors, to strengthen the sense of belonging to the community and promote positive and proactive change.

VA's model focused on serving children and their families through workshops on effective communication, art, and social skills, in addition to sports and other recreational activities. The second area of intervention, developed by AHM, focused on adolescents and youth empowerment through audiovisual tools as a means of expression to promote leadership, social participation and community commitment.

The project increased its community outreach by creating the [EJEMPLAR website](#) and the [EJEMPLAR Facebook page](#). These communication strategies generated indispensable media tools for participants and provided a means to disseminate positive and motivational messages to their communities. At the same time, the youth products were presented in the 2014 and 2015 Monterrey International Film Festival (FIC Monterrey) while the photography exhibit Retrato de Mi Comunidad was featured in a traveling exhibit in November 2014 and February 2015.

Over the course of the project, both implementing partners designed workshops to increase community participation and leadership. As a result of the audio-visual workshops, participants in the Leadership and Media Program (LMP) workshop series produced a total of 70 public service announcements and 18 short films which were screened at the Monterrey International Film Festival in 2014 and 2015.

This final report includes best practices and lessons learned throughout the three years of the EJEMPLAR project, including the strengthening of its community presence and impact through radio, TV, print and social networks. Throughout the three years, AHM and VA carried out various activities to empower children, adolescents and youth resulting in the creation of positive change in their communities.

Introduction

Nuevo Leon is one of the most important states of Mexico. The Monterrey Metropolitan Region (MMR) has a population of 4,089,962 inhabitants (INEGI, 2011)¹. However, despite being one of the most economically active regions of the country, it has also presented high rates of violence.

The government agency tasked with national security², cites the most frequent crimes in Nuevo Leon, in descending order as: rape, extortion, robbery, kidnapping and homicides. From 2012 to 2013, the public's perception on insecurity levels in Nuevo Leon was higher than the national average level and reduced to average in 2014.

According to a 2014 study published by the World Bank³, violence in Mexico has increased since 2008; the homicide rate per 100 thousand inhabitants went from 8.4 to 23.8 between 2007 and 2010. Young people are among the main victims of drug cartels and organized crime, and constitute the segment of the population most vulnerable to joining criminal groups, particularly in the northern states in Mexico. The youth homicide rate has been on the rise since 2007 with 7.8 to 25.5 in 2010; in 2010, young people were responsible for half of the crimes committed. One out of every four Mexicans executed in the "war on drugs" was a youth⁴.

The youth population in Mexico has increased in recent years, reaching a historical level in 2011, according to CONAPO⁵. In Nuevo Leon, there are 1,259,509 people between 4 and 18 years old, which represents 26% of the state's total population. Of these, 180,000 between the ages of 12 and 18 live in the municipalities of Garcia, Guadalupe and Monterrey (INEGI, 2011)⁶.

Nuevo Leon is one of the states with the highest school drop-out rates in the country. San Pedro Garza García, one of the wealthiest municipalities in the state, has 8.2% of its young population who cannot read or write and have not completed middle school education. In comparison, 14.2% of young people in García, 13.1% in Monterrey and 12% in Guadalupe have no reading or writing skills⁷. Another school completion obstacle is the growing rates of violence in school settings. Students have reported being pressured to pay dues to student-led groups imitating organized crime tactics, including bullying and other forms of abuse⁸.

¹ Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística (INEGI), 2011. "Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010: Tabulados del Cuestionario Básico". INEGI Information System. Available in: <http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/Default.aspx?c=27302&s=est>

² Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública. Information System. Retrieved from: <http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/incidencia-delictiva/incidencia-delictiva-fuero-comun.php>

³ The World Bank, 2014. "La violencia juvenil en México: reporte de la situación, el marco legal y los programas gubernamentales. Retrieved from: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/11/29/000356161_20121129060725/Rendered/PDF/NonAsciiFileName0.pdf

⁴ Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO), 2012. "La situación actual de los jóvenes en México". Retrieved from: http://www.imjuventud.gob.mx/imgs/uploads/Diagnostico_Sobre_Jovenes_En_Mexico.pdf

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística (INEGI), 2011. "Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010: Tabulados del Cuestionario Básico". INEGI Information System. Available in: <http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/Default.aspx?c=27302&s=est>

⁷ Consejo Nacional de Población (CONEVAL), 2012. CONAPO Information System. Retrieved from: <http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Medicion/Paginas/Medici%C3%B3n/Informacion-por-Municipio.aspx>

⁸ CNN México, 2013. "Organización alerta por *bullying* con *cobro de piso* en escuelas. Retrieved from: <http://mexico.cnn.com/nacional/2013/06/27/organizacion-alerta-por-bullying-con-cobro-de-piso-en-escuelas>

Project Description

Alianza Heartland Mexico (AHM) implemented the EJEMPLAR Project from September 2012 to September 2015 with local partner, Villas Asistenciales (VA) for children and youth aged 6-18 in the Monterrey Metropolitan Region (MMR), in areas affected by violence perpetrated by organized crime and drug trafficking. Based on the priority neighborhoods identified by the National Crime Prevention Program (PRONAPRED), EJEMPLAR focused on the communities of La Independencia and La Alianza in the municipality of Monterrey, Nueva Almaguer in the municipality of Guadalupe, and neighborhoods in the municipality of García.

The EJEMPLAR Project utilized two service delivery models to accomplish project goals. In addition, the project provided services and outreach to parents/guardians of project participants and the wider community.

The Villas Club (VC) model targeted pre-adolescents aged 6-12. The project also provided services and outreach to parents/guardians of project participants and the wider community. The project focused on this population since initial field research showed that at-risk children and youth had a mismatch between their after-school time and the time available to their parents to strengthen family bonds. Thus, VA offered targeted workshops and activities to support the development of families and strengthen the social fabric of the local communities.

The Leadership and Media Program (LMP) model targeted teenagers aged 12-18. The first LMP workshops, from March 2013 to August 2014, were held in community centers within priority neighborhoods established by USAID. In 2014, EJEMPLAR secured formal agreements with the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) State Coordination of Care Counseling (CEAP, abbreviation in Spanish) to offer workshops on bullying and cybercrime prevention, addiction prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, in addition to sessions on social responsibility. The workshops address youth interests and concerns through video production training and social media management. Youth also received individual help in their personal development from AHM counselors, including face-to-face coaching and technical support for social projects and strategic planning. Youth have reported positive effects from receiving this individualized attention, noting stronger self-esteem and confidence in public speaking. The results of these efforts have resulted in new youth initiatives, designed and implemented by EJEMPLAR participants.

Key Partners

AHM originally planned to partner with Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) state and municipal authorities as key government participants in the project. Yet, restricting the partnership to DIF was not the most comprehensive platform to reach key public individuals and foment replicable capacities (“training of trainers”) since the DIF system covers only a small proportion of personnel that work with youth in vulnerable conditions. The EJEMPLAR staff expanded the list of key partners to encompass collaborations with education bodies (Secretaría de Educación Pública); the social development government agency (SEDESOL) and the MARCO museum which is part of the governmental agency for culture and arts (CONARTE).

In order to increase the reach of the youth’s artistic creations, AHM secured partnerships with the Monterrey International Film Festival (FIC Monterrey), Radio Nuevo Leon radio station, Radioteca and FRISA. AHM also received support from Colegio Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica (CONALEP) and Universidad de Nueva Extremadura (UVNE) which lended spaces for EJEMPLAR activities and promoted internships among their college students.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Since the beginning of the project, AHM and VA monitored the progress of project activities and data collection on project indicators. Each yeah, AHM presented USAID with an M&E table and work plan guiding the upcoming activities. The following table summarizes progress toward each of the project’s SOs, IRs, project activities, and associated indicators and targets. Targets listed were for the entirety of the project. Data was continually analyzed through the project’s ongoing monitoring and evaluation and learning tool. AHM utilized a mixed-methods approach to collecting indicator data that captured both qualitative and quantitative results. AHM conducted a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) from March to May 2014, whose main findings and recommendations are summarized below. AHM staff continually assessed the project’s effectiveness, relevancy, efficiency, and potential for sustainability and impact. For challenges that implied changes to the timeline, budget, or M&E methodology, AHM consulted with USAID.

Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendations

AHM:

- Develop a strategy to better disseminate LMP-produced media products, including photos and PSAs, and increase the use of media and social networks across participant populations to increase engagement with other, non-participant youth audiences
- Further analyze the gender gap regarding female and male LMP enrollment, and develop specific strategies to address and increase enrollment of male participants in the program
- Develop different strategies to increase recruitment and retention of LMP program participants
- Review psychosocial component of LMP services to increase the delivery of psychosocial services to project participants

VA:

- Review the VC model to adapt activities and implementation to correspond with EJEMPLAR project goals and targets with a specific focus on improving permanence
- Increase the data collection capacity of staff and organization to further analyze trends in participant data, in order to make appropriate adjustments to the VC model
- Work to significantly improve internal communications processes within VA to socialize EJEMPLAR project goals and responsibilities with the staff and insure adherence to results-based programming
- Prioritize accepting and diffusing feedback within the VA team regarding project implementation from AHM and other partners, and involve the full participation of VA staff in necessary training, capacity building, and team-building exercises

PROJECT ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON MID-TERM EVALUATION

- Project targets were adjusted for total number of beneficiaries, based on a technical carrying capacity estimate of each partner in order to guarantee high quality implementation and sustainability.
- M&E system was consolidated through corrective actions with a specific focus on data collection and implementation of metrics.
- Networking and establishing connections with new partners were prioritized in order to replicate the EJEMPLAR model.

Progress Toward Objectives

Project Participants

Over the course of the EJEMPLAR's three years of implementation, the project reached a total of 8,914 participants. Table 1 contains the number of participants enrolled in each activity per quarter of the year as well as the cumulative number of participants in the project. Figure A depicts the distribution of participants per activity in each quarter of the year, while Figure B provides a comparison of the total enrollment rate for the project against the cumulative number of participants throughout the project life.

Table 1. EJEMPLAR Project quarterly enrollment rate by activity

Quarter	Enrollment in Villas Club	Enrollment in Villa Escolar	Enrollment in LMP	Enrollment in Summer Program	Total Enrollment rate	Cumulative Number of Participants
2012 Q4	85				85	0
2013 Q1	164		14		178	263
2013 Q2	186		35		221	484
2013 Q3	343		121		464	948
2013 Q4	233		32		265	1213
2014 Q1	246	500	112		858	2071
2014 Q2	218	1047	96		1361	3432
2014 Q3	321	69	1015	802	2207	5639
2014 Q4	177	1270	808		2255	7894
2015 Q1	206	376	105		581	8475
2015 Q2	126				127	8704
2015 Q3				210	210	8914

The boxes in gray indicate there were either no activities offered during that quarter (project start-up or summer timing) or activities were offered to previous participants.

Figure A. Quarterly enrollment figures, by activity

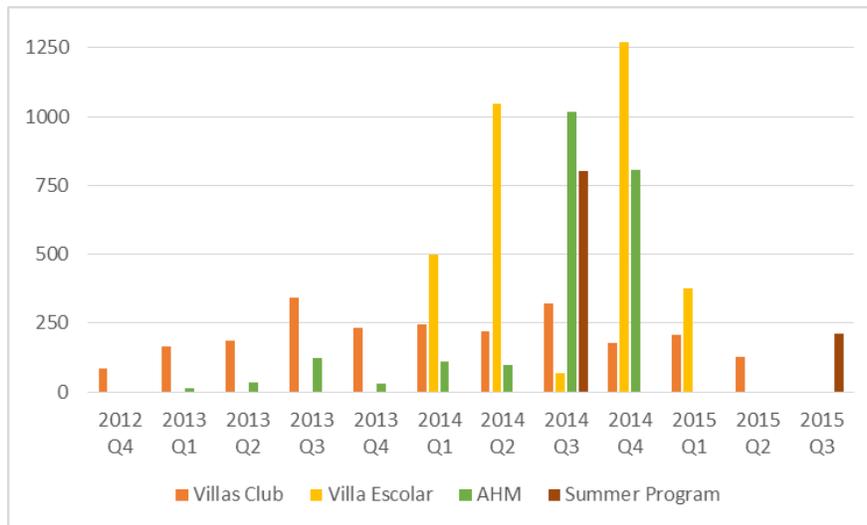


Figure B. Cumulative participants trends over time

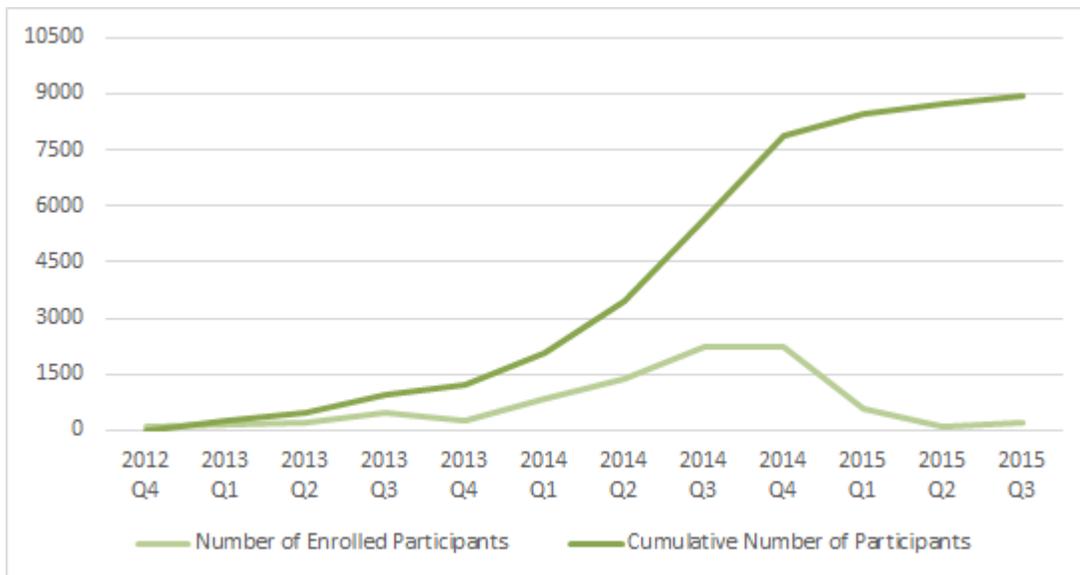
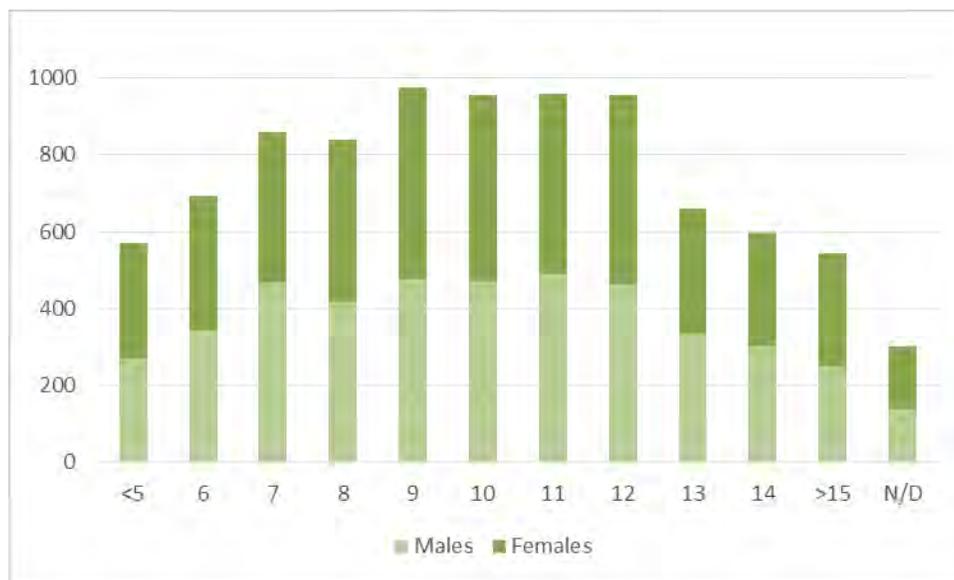


Table 2. EJEMPLAR participants, disaggregated by age and sex

Age	Males	Females
<5	273	296
6	346	348
7	469	391
8	418	421
9	479	498
10	471	485
11	490	469
12	465	491
13	334	327
14	300	297
>15	253	291
N/D	138	164
Total	4436	4478
Grand Total	8914	

Figure C. EJEMPLAR participants disaggregated by sex



Strategic Objective 1: Low-income families of pre-adolescents prevent school desertion and promote healthy lifestyles

The EJEMPLAR Project operated in eight Villas Clubs (VCs) in USAID target neighborhoods and expanded to include a Villas Escuelas (VE) model based in schools. VC activities were offered after school, addressing issues both at an individual and family level to help youth ages 6-14 avoid gang recruitment, participate in sports, arts, sciences and learn how to use computers. Through the USAID grant, Villas increased its community presence to include programming in García through two buildings owned by VA, while the activities in Guadalupe and Monterrey was made possible through loaned spaces by the municipal government and/or local churches.

Participants were exposed to lessons and materials to help them understand how to improve the quality of life for their communities and prevent crime. VA hosted monthly excursions around the area for participants to meet with representatives from the media, sports teams, artists, and others, to reinforce messages of community responsibility and present alternative visions of a future free of crime and violence.

In order to strengthen their roles as providers and parents, VA also included parent workshops for parents to learn skills to address the needs and problems experienced by participating families. The monthly sessions included discussions on family values, how to encourage children’s skills, and effective communication, among others.

Table 3. Final values achieved for SO1

COMPONENT	INDICATOR	PROJECT TARGET	ACHIEVED	
SO1	Low-income families of pre-adolescents prevent school desertion and promote healthy lifestyles			
IR 1.1	Youth ages 6 – 14 learn non-violence, community responsibility, and strengthen academic skills.	Percent of youth 6 – 14 enrolled at the Villas that have increased their academic performance, as compared to academic performance levels at the baseline	60%	81.17%
		Percent of youth 6 – 14 enrolled at the Villas that have increased their VC attendance, as compared to VC attendance levels at the baseline	60%	69.92%
		Percent of youth 6-14 meeting minimum attendance requirement that show an increase in understanding of	80%	63.82% ⁹

⁹ This value represents the percentage of youth 6-14 meeting minimum attendance requirement (80%).

COMPONENT		INDICATOR	PROJECT TARGET	ACHIEVED
		basic government and civics facts and community responsibilities		
Act 1.1.1	Provide after-school activities for youth 6 – 14 through social, moral, recreational, literary, computer and art modules that support ROL principles	Number of youth 6-14 that have been enrolled at the VC	5,200	6,026
Act. 1.1.2	Monthly visits for youth ages 6 – 14 to Universities, sports clubs and TV and radio sets	Number of visits conducted	N/A	115
IR 1.2	Parents actively participate and promote a safe environment for their children, and delegitimize organized criminal violence	Percent increase in parent attendance at monthly sessions	25%	23.57%
Act. 1.2.1	Provide monthly weekend meetings with parents of youth 6 – 14 enrolled at the Villas.	Number of parents of enrolled youth attending monthly meetings	1,800	2,233

IR 1.1. Youth ages 6 – 14 learn non-violence, community responsibility, and strengthen academic skills.

The Villas Club (VC) model has a focus on increasing student academic performance by providing



Villas Club children learn teamwork through art

homework assistance and academic skills-building activities. VA attributes the high number of participants with increased school performance to its accompaniment model through the VC. All VCs are staffed by a psychologist and facilitator who dedicate three hours for students each weekday, assisting them with homework and individual psychosocial issues. Most of the children do not have such support at home since parents often work long shifts that keep them away for the majority of the day.

AHM used recreational activities to foster values on cooperation, nonviolence and tolerance during structured VC time. All activities - from sports events to dance festivals - were based on promoting respectful dialogue, sharing and inclusive language. Facilitators also used the spaces to strengthen children’s resiliency by building in lessons on teamwork, learning how to support others and accepting losses as growth opportunities.

Following the MTE's recommendations to readjust operational plans in order to meet projected participant numbers, VA adopted a school-based approach called Villas Escuelas (VE). While this allowed VA to significantly exceed the quantitative goals originally outlined for EJEMPLAR, the limited school time segments posed challenges for VA staff to implement the full scope of the VC model. Following careful analysis of the settings, time availability and child needs, VA staff concluded that promoting civic participation and teamwork through sports provided the best approach to working with the VE children. This change, however, limited VA staff's capacities to fully meet the indicator on government and civics that had been part of the original curriculum.

After three years of working with children in at-risk communities, VA has documented a wide array of successful interventions, including a group of approximately 10 boys who turned over their weapons and committed to live a life free of drugs, another child who admitted he was being recruited for a criminal group but instead sought support from the Villas community, and a young girl with narcissist tendencies slowly learned to value others' ideas and contributions.

Villas Club Success Stories

Villas Club CAVIDA Student 1

Student 1 was 13 years old when he first joined Villas. His mother works as a housekeeper, his father is a painter and he has an older sister who is married. When he joined Villas he struggled to interact with his peers and had a poor performance in school. Villas staff worked with him to respect schedule rules and respect others. For a time he refused to follow instructions, but over time he began participating in activities and collaborated with others. He also raised his school grades. During summer camp a year later, Student 1 demonstrated a marked change in attitude. He began this school year with more eagerness to improve his academic performance. His mother is very grateful to the institution, noting that Student 1 has also improved communication with family members.

Villas Club Students 2 and 3 (siblings)

Student 2 was 13 years old and Student 3 was 10 years old when they registered for Villas programming a year ago. Their mother is a housekeeper. Student 2 had considerable difficulties interacting with his peers, and had low academic achievement which placed him at risk of being thrown out of school. Villas staff worked with him to build communication skills and respect for others. The process took several months, including a pause when he was absent for a few weeks. He eventually returned with a willingness to adapt and improve the treatment of his peers. Whereas Student 2 once only communicated by screaming and through physical aggression, he has now learned to moderate his voice and maintain a calmer temperament. He is now accepted by his peers and he values the importance of his education. Football has been a great tool for Student 2, as well. His brother Student 3 was very introverted when he joined Villas and did not communicate with anyone. Today, he is a very kind and helpful child. He has improved his verbal communication with the help of Villas facilitators and now frequently interacts with his peers. Both brothers are now recognized for their sports abilities.

IR 1.2. Parents actively participate and promote a safe environment for their children, and delegitimize organized criminal violence.

As part of its intake process, VA interviewed all participants and their families to develop tailored accompaniment methods. The integral VA service model necessitated parent involvement to reinforce the children's values and skills fostered during their time in the VC.

In general, Mexico does not have a strong culture in which parents play an active role in their child's development. There is an expectation that educators and administrators provide school-related support. Many students' parents in these communities work long hours and often juggle multiple jobs in order to meet their basic household needs. Very few can afford to reduce their work hours or obtain permission to leave work early in order to participate in child-related activities. On the other hand, stay-at-home mothers often lack the psychosocial tools to create positive nurturing environments.

VA offered monthly workshops for parents and guardians, called Villas Familias, which mirrored many of the same content that was offered for children. The parent/tutor programming had a focus on strengthening the family nucleus for the child and the sense of community in their neighborhoods.



A Villas Familia meeting

At the beginning of the project, VA staff had difficulties in making progress towards meeting parent attendance projections. Staff found that many parents in these neighborhoods work long shifts or carried household responsibilities during the day that presented attendance difficulties. In response, VA staff extended their work shifts to better accommodate the parent schedules and offer meeting times outside of their work and family obligations. VA also completed workshops regardless of the number of participants in attendance, whereas they originally canceled meetings if these did not meet certain quotas. Over the years, VA has observed perception changes in the target communities by the parents to increase their involvement in their child's development.

Strategic Objective 2: Teenagers develop productive alternatives to gang membership

In order to help teenagers develop productive alternatives to gang membership, AHM provided training to



youth ages 12 – 18 through the LMP model on the role and use of traditional and new media. The LMP model used audiovisual instruments to invite young people to embark on a "journey" through their own eyes, developing an

ability to listen and analyze, reflecting on themselves and their community, and being stimulated by the

landscapes and the social dynamics found in their own environments. By learning how to use audiovisual tools, they rediscovered their surroundings and were equipped with a tool to create social messages.

The LMP model is built around four axes. The first is an analysis of their contexts and themselves through a review of local community news coverage in mass and independent media outlets, analyzing how they describe people from the community. The second axis is a technical training on audiovisual tools including photography, public service announcements, and short films regarding issues affecting local communities and young people. The LMP model simultaneously seeks to develop a third axis - youth's social commitment to improving their immediate environments, prompting young people to perform one or more volunteer actions aimed at improving an issue identified in the context analysis or any other subject they considered important for their communities. The final axis is based on accompanying each youth in developing an individual Life Plan in which each participant outlines the life they wish to live, making short and medium-term goals to reach their objectives.

The focus on online media platforms works to bridge the gap between the predominant usage of online media and current models of youth education in the school system that do not provide students with the tools they need to access and critically evaluate online information.

Table 4. Final values achieved for SO2

	COMPONENT	INDICATOR	PROJECT TARGET	ACHIEVED
SO2	Teenagers develop productive alternatives to gang membership			
IR 2.1	Youth ages 12 – 18 engage in youth leadership activities focusing on alternatives to gang membership	Percent of youth 12 – 18 enrolled at the Youth Media and Leadership program with increased knowledge on how media can encourage citizen participation by the end of each program cycle	80%	42%
Act. 2.1.1	Provide training for youth ages 12 - 18 on the role and use of traditional and new media in a participatory society	Number of youth 12-18 that participate in LMP activities	800	2,335
Act. 2.1.2	Each enrolled youth completes 20 hours of approved community-service work	Percent of enrolled youth completing 20 hours of community service work	80%	25.1%
Act. 2.1.3	Each Villa youth program produces at least one radio PSA per quarter, focusing on community responsibility and non-violence	Number of PSAs produced	20	73
		Number of PSAs broadcast	5	20
IR 2.2	Youth 12 – 18 network with each other through the	Percent of target youth who increase their online	N/A	88%

	project's web venues for learning, communication, and collaboration	collaboration with other youth		
Act. 2.2.1	Develop online platform for youth communication	Number of websites developed for the program project.	1	1
Act. 2.2.2	Develop social-networking platform to bring together youth from all Villas	Percent of enrolled target youth that publish online content in the program platforms	30%	82%

IR. 2.1 Youth ages 12 – 18 engage in youth leadership activities focusing on alternatives to gang membership

LMP participants developed technical audiovisual abilities and critical analysis capacities to examine their social contexts. Youth either implemented information campaigns on bullying, violence, environmental protection, while others organized volunteer events such as food drives, book clubs, public space cleanups and activities for older adults. By exposing them to a variety of social change opportunities, young people used their newly developed skills and knowledge for the benefit of their communities.



An EJEMPLAR student's community project for older adults

In order to meet the participant target numbers, the implementation strategy change of going from community centers to school-based interventions, led to some curriculum readjustments. While content was originally covered in 2-hour sessions, the move to schools meant that EJEMPLAR staff only had 40-minute periods to cover materials, with much larger group sizes and insufficient equipment, affecting audiovisual learning opportunities. Furthermore, AHM staff had to incorporate new themes requested by the SEP as a condition to working in the schools, including cyberbullying, teenage pregnancy and unhealthy relationships, which had not been part of the original

curriculum plans. The EJEMPLAR staff thus focused its school activities on building protective factors and addressing the most common stressors and risks faced by the students. Thus, the time and space reductions, along with curriculum readjustments, affected the staff's ability to meet the final projected indicators on citizen participation.

As part of the objective, students were also encouraged to develop community service projects, to gain a better understanding of their capacities and to contribute to their own communities. Youth created PSAs which were disseminated via social media platforms and radio broadcasts. The Radio Nuevo Leon radio station broadcasted 20 PSAs, and the full library of all the youth pieces are available online at Radioteca, EJEMPLAR and YouTube websites. In addition to creating PSAs, youth also created short films on social issues affecting their communities, which were screened at the FIC Monterrey in 2014 and 2015.

All youth completed at least 10 hours of community service, but had difficulty completing more hours due to other extra-curricular commitments, part-time jobs and/or not having transportation support to move around the city without adult supervision. Most youth from the school-based intervention were only able complete their service hours within school schedules, during breaks, recess and class time. When the EJEMPLAR project was originally designed, the community service component was conceptualized

under the assumption that youth would go through a traditional, structured process in which they could individually choose their own volunteer project and make their own arrangements with local nonprofits. However, since most of the youth were under the age of 16, parents were not willing to give them permission to travel around by themselves around the MMR. Additionally, AHM found that youth in the MMR were more interested in participating in sporadic events that did not require ample advance planning.

IR 2.2. Youth 12- 18 network with each other through the project’s web venues for learning, communication, collaboration.

AHM staff designed activities based on a collaborative approach, forming teams in which all participants had to identify and build upon individual strengths. They learned how to navigate varying opinions and interests in order to arrive at common results. Youth participants note that the project helped them shape their identity as members of a larger community of social change agents. Participants speak about their peers as their “EJEMPLAR family,” always seeking to celebrate each other’s work rather than their own. Not only do they promote upcoming volunteer events organized by their peers, but they assist in planning and executing the event and encourage their friends and family to do the same. Their social media postings on current events are not mere retweets or shares, but they are accompanied by thoughtful analysis about human rights and invite others to join in an online discussion. Their ideas are based on empathy, inclusive language and respectful dialogue.

Graduates of the LMP program continue to seek positive activities to continue their personal growth, including French courses, book clubs, taekwon do, dance, music and theater classes. Others joined debate and politics networks, served as mentors to other youth in summer courses, and started small photography and clothing businesses. All of the youth are seeking ways to continue their studies, including researching undergraduate programs in the arts, graphic design, social work and communication.

As part of their social commitment, project alumni continue to gather frequently to plan volunteer events aimed at benefitting their community. The youth from García see each other twice per week, while the youth from Monterrey and Guadalupe see each other once a month. All youth across all three municipalities meet approximately every two months. In order to increase the interaction between youth and strengthen their relationships, AHM created Facebook groups where youth could contact AHM staff, and share the audiovisual material they created in the workshops, as another way to foster their sense of belonging to a healthy group. The end result was that 88% of target youth increased their online collaboration with peers.



Trash pick-up volunteer event planned by EJEMPLAR youth

Since the initial design stages, AHM focused on audiovisual media as a means for youth empowerment. Today, the power of audiovisual tools reach beyond the EJEMPLAR youth to include their families, friends, and residents from non-participant communities, who have heard and begun to absorb the youth messages of building healthy and non-violent relationships. The following projects show the lasting impact of the leadership and collaboration skills that stem from youth’s EJEMPLAR participation.

The Monterrey International Film Festival (FICM)

The short films produced by EJEMPLAR youth express and share the issues they observe in their communities, writing scripts and undertaking acting and production roles. The skills developed in the LMP workshops strengthened youth’s potential as storytellers and community ethnographers. In 2014 and 2015, the FICM opened a space to celebrate their perspective and invite the community to reflect on the social, cultural and economic context of the MMR.

Table 5. Short films exhibited in the Monterrey International Film Festival.

2014	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Celos (Jealousy) •Nunca estuve sola (I Was Never Alone) •El Pianista (The Pianist) •Te odio (I Hate You) •Realidad en línea (Online Reality) •Graffiti •Making of, EJEMPLAR •No es juego (It Is Not a Game) •Sin Final Feliz (Without a Happy Ending) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rosangela •Las prácticas (Internships) •Sin medir Distancia (Without Measuring Distance) •Realidad fuera de foco (Reality Out of Focus) •No es normal (It’s Not Normal) •Reflexiona (Think About It) •Lección aprendida (Lesson Learned) •Algo en común (Something In Common)

García Diferente



Edgar Osvaldo and Gustavo Angel Torres formed the group Contraluz, which uses photography to expose a different image of the municipality of García from the one usually portrayed in the media. The two former EJEMPLAR participants aim to gradually change the image of an insecure and violent municipality that is so commonly attributed to García. Through a Facebook page, the two young men, along with friends and community members, publish photographs that show a “different García,” highlighting a lively and beautiful community as a means of countering the city’s negative stereotype. Youth point to this initiative as a project that strengthens the sense of belonging among García inhabitants. Youth from García state that photography is now a trend among peers, as evidenced by the many teenagers who are constantly capturing images of their community. As of September 2015, the page has more than 1,000 followers¹⁰.

¹⁰ The García Diferente Facebook page link is <https://es-es.facebook.com/pages/García-Diferente/1449582495259297>

Vagar TV



In October 2014 youth from the LMP and AHM's leadership network Soy Cambio en mi Comunidad,¹¹ created their own TV show to portray a more positive image of the García municipality. Youth prepare features on local individuals and events in the community. The Vagar TV team is fully responsible for the show, writing each feature script, filming segments and arranging pre- and post-production edits; AHM staff only assist with certain operations logistics.

The show is aired in Monterrey's local channel 41, broadcasted in García and Santa Catarina, and widely shared through social media. The weekly youth-produced television show reaches hundreds of viewers per week and their work was recently selected as a featured community project in the Habitat for Humanity Latin America Forum on Housing in May 2015¹².

Strategic Objective 3: Youth affected by gang and domestic violence receive context-specific, replicable, and effective community psychosocial services.

Participant youth and parents were provided individual and family psychosocial services, with special attention given to families victimized by crime. AHM and VA developed training materials and psychosocial protocols to ensure that all project staff receives training in child abuse and neglect, sexual exploitation of children, domestic violence, addictions, crisis management and referrals, and self-care. Additionally, AHM developed a psychosocial training curriculum to train local elementary and middle school staff and DIF staff during the final year of project implementation. AHM and VA have built ties with schools and DIF, with the purpose of engaging them in the design process and to conduct participatory needs assessments. The participation of local entities in the design of the trainings results in models that directly address areas of opportunity identified and generated buy-in from those receiving the training.

¹¹ Soy Cambio en Mi Comunidad was an initiative by AHM to train teenagers in designing and implementing social projects. For further information, refer to <http://www.alianzaheartlandmex.org/jovenes-lideres/>

¹² The Vagar TV Facebook page link is <https://www.facebook.com/VagarTvOficial?fref=ts> and the YouTube Channel is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUnenZJNpI10Fwp9crfi2uQ>.

Table 6. Final values achieved for SO3

	COMPONENT	INDICATOR	PROJECT TARGET	ACHIEVED
SO3	Youth affected by gang and domestic violence receive context-specific, replicable and effective community psychological services			
IR 3.1	Assess the consequences of gang and domestic violence on youth, and develop specific interventions and psychosocial processes	Consequences of gang and domestic violence on youth assessed and monitored throughout the project	N/A	Consequences of gang involvement assessed throughout the project and analyzed to inform interventions
Act. 3.1.1	Conduct qualitative study of the psychological consequences of gang and domestic violence on youths comparing boys and girls.	Qualitative study completed	N/A	Qualitative study completed in Year 1
Act. 3.1.2	Develop and validate psychological assessment tools based on qualitative study	Psychological assessment developed and validated	N/A	Psychological assessment developed and validated in Year 1
Act. 3.1.3	Conduct a baseline screening and measurement using validated tools	Baseline screening conducted	N/A	Baseline screening conducted in Year 1
Act. 3.1.4	Develop mental health and psychosocial intervention	Number of psychosocial interventions developed	1	2
IR 3.2	Improve the capacity of mental health professionals to provide trauma-informed services to teenagers and parents	Percent of individuals trained that report an increased knowledge of psychosocial models	90%	80% ¹³
Act. 3.2.1	Elementary and middle school faculty and social workers are trained in group psychosocial interventions	Number of school faculty members and social workers trained in group psychosocial interventions	50	100
Act. 3.2.2	DIF staff is trained in group psychosocial interventions	Number of DIF staff trained in cognitive-behavioral and groups	30	32

¹³ Given the workshop attendees' professional background as treatment providers, AHM asked participants to rate the effectiveness and relevance of the workshop for their jobs.

COMPONENT		INDICATOR	PROJECT TARGET	ACHIEVED
		psychosocial interventions.		
IR 3.3	Youth and parents have better access to community psychological services	Percent of youth ages 6 – 18 and/or parents receiving psychosocial services that have a decrease in symptoms or greater sense of community ties	80%	55.45%
Act. 3.3.1	Youth ages 6 - 18 participate in group and/or individual mental health and psychosocial services	Number of youth receiving psychosocial services	450	840
Act. 3.3.2	Provide psychosocial services to parents of youth enrolled at in the Villas	Number of parents receiving psychosocial services	250	758

IR 3.1 Assess the consequences of gang and domestic violence on youth, and develop specific interventions and psychosocial processes.

The psychosocial services offered by both partner agencies emphasized building children and youth’s protective factors by addressing individual characteristics, situational conditions and environmental contexts, which inhibit, reduce, or attenuate the likelihood of a disorder or problem. Both services monitor indicators on biological, psychological and social indicators.

Table 7. Protective factors assessed for EJEMPLAR participants

Family	Identify limits, norms and behavior patterns of family interaction.
Individual / Personal	Personal characteristics, personality traits, use of leisure time, community involvement.
School	Importance of having good school performance.
Peers and Community	Identify the influence of peers, peer pressure, inadequate search of autonomy, trends on transgressor behaviors.

The counseling approach used by VA focuses on physical and emotional development, providing vulnerable children with tools for a more stable and satisfactory family and social life. In 2013, VA implemented a new series of instruments to better measure their psychosocial model impact across various locations¹⁴. VA developed specialized tests on anger, depression and anxiety, including a

¹⁴ In October/November 2013, data collection tools were redesigned, including data validation and systematization, as a result of data inconsistencies observed in Y1. This delay reduced the number of data points available for many of the monitoring tools, resulting in small data sets that may not be representative of the total participant population. Data quality was also a constraint, particularly among data for VA participants, due to problems and delays in initial data collection and data systematization, and problems in data management capacity.

modified approach to family interventions, which had not been previously applied. VA develops a monthly report of all cases in which each of the nine biological, psychological and social elements which is monitored by the Villas psychology department and results in adjustments to the treatment received by the child and family. This methodology was presented to USAID during Y1, as indicated in Table 6.

IR 3.2 Improve the capacity of mental health professionals to provide trauma-informed services to teenagers and parents.

In the project's final year, AHM focused on creating spaces for dialogue and sharing of experiences to strengthen skills for public servants who focus on child and youth services. The EJEMPLAR model was shared with staff from the Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), Ministry of Education (SEP) and other social workers working on the frontlines with children and youth at risk of exposure to violence. The training shared best practices identified in the EJEMPLAR project, along with providing service providers with tools to better respond and protect vulnerable children and youth.

DIF Nuevo Leon participants included representatives from various municipalities in Nuevo Leon. Other government agencies were also included, such as representatives from the Institute of Women, Centro de Atención Integral para Adolescentes (CAIPA), the Ministry of Social Development, the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime, Legal Department and the Social Integration.

Trainings for Public Servants in Nuevo Leon

Applied Psychosocial Skills for School Environments Workshop

With support from an expert from HAI's Kovler Center, AHM conducted a workshop for frontline personnel to develop self-care skills to prevent and respond to potential burnout or vicarious trauma. As part of their job responsibilities, social workers and psychologists are exposed to the traumas of the entire school community: students, teachers, administrators and parents in challenging situations. In addition to treating fatigue and secondary trauma, AHM focused on detecting other external factors create stress in their daily work. A total of 100 psychosocial attention staff addressing bullying and cybercrime threats learned effective prevention and care tools. Psychosocial care staff, directors and teachers also learned about self-care and stress management skills to prevent and detect personnel burnout.

Mechanisms for Quality Care for Children and Adolescents Workshop

The agenda for this workshop targeted DIF personnel and was divided into three sections. The first section was focused on the review of the previous state law and current federal law on children's and adolescent's rights (General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, LGDNNA) and a brief discussion on advances concerning the protection and distribution of rights for children and adolescents in Mexico. AHM facilitated a discussion for 93 DIF representatives from across the state of Nuevo Leon in regards to the implementation of new requirements under the LGDNNA. This workshop served to map all actors, including an assessment of each municipal strengths and opportunities to fulfill the LGDNNA (technical, human, financial and linking).

The original trainings for public servants were only projected for approximately 30 public servants each. However, when AHM staff learned of the high interest levels, the team made accommodations.

Public Servants Trained by AHM, by municipality

Region	Municipalities within Region
Metropolitan	Apodaca, General Escobedo, García, Guadalupe, Cd. Benito Juárez, Monterrey, San Pedro and San Nicolás
North II	General Bravo, Los Aldamas, Dr. Coss, Los Ramones, Cerralvo and China
Citrícola	Allende, Rayones, Montemorelos, General Terán, Hualahuises y Linares
South	Galeana, General Zaragoza and Dr. Arroyo
Periférica	Hidalgo, El Carmen, Salinas Victoria, Cadereyta Jiménez, Dr. González, Marín, Higuera, General Zuazua and Mina

The experience and inputs obtained from this exercise was systematized by AHM in a confidential document regarding the institutional concerns, needs and areas of opportunity in regards to strengthened child and youth services. This document will be submitted by mid-September 2015 to the DIF executive leadership for further analysis and reflection in regards to the LGDNNA.

IR 3.3. Youth and parents have better access to community psychological services.

VA works on both individual and family levels, on three areas of development (biological, psychological and social). VA has a strong psychological team that effectively supported EJEMPLAR participants. The Villas psychosocial staff uses several tools for individual assessment and track progress, including:

Table 8. VA monitoring tools for bio-psycho-social intervention

Youth and Children	Parents
Childhood development survey	Diagnostic interview
Bender test	DFH (Stick Figure Drawings)
DFH (Stick Figure Drawings)	HTP (House-Tree-Person)
HTP (House-Tree-Person)	Figure of person under the rain
Figure of person under the rain	TAT (Thematic Perception Test)
Family drawings	RIAS (Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales)
RIAS (Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales)	EFY test (Evaluation of functions of self)
WISC-R (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children)	
EDAH (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Scale)	
Survey about TDAH	
SNAP-IV Teacher and Parent Rating Scale	
DIVISA (A visual discernment test based on trees)	
CDS (Children's Depression Scale)	
STAXI-NA (State Trait Anger Expression	

Youth and Children	Parents
and Control Inventory on children and adolescences) CMAS-R2 (Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale)	

VA does not provide psychosocial therapies to all participants, but rather identifies the psychological needs of each participant through VA staff’s regular interaction and onsite activities. All participants in VCs go through an intake process that includes in-depth family interviews with parents and a trained psychologist in order to understand each child’s family circumstances and create tailored intervention strategies for each family.

The most common psychosocial problems encountered by VA participants revolved around needs that are not being covered by the parents, including: absence of interpersonal and social boundaries (recognizing individual needs and the needs of others), a lack of safe spaces for healthy emotional development and resiliency, poor emotional support from parents, deficient problem-solving capacity, low levels of self-esteem and identity.

AHM staff psychologists evaluated each project participant who was administered the Risk Factors Survey based on their responses to questionnaire items. To facilitate analysis of the responses, survey questions were grouped along three categories of risk type: protective factors, risk factors, and risk behaviors.



Group-based therapy session

This analysis enabled the psychologists to assign a risk level to each project participant using the ranking system. The majority of AHM’s psychosocial intervention was group-based, since it was the best method to apply in the school settings. This group method helped to strengthen youth’s protective factors and teenagers formed their own support networks based on shared difficulties, mainly between pairs. Individual therapy services were limited since AHM staff did not have access to adequate, private space and some schools did not allow such intervention with students.

The most common issues affecting the young people AHM worked with included: violence and bullying, poor family communication, and a lack of sensitivity by teachers. Additionally, AHM staff identified cases of dating violence, self-esteem issues, teenage pregnancies and the challenges of overcrowded housing and lack of personal space that inhibits creativity. In order to strengthen resiliency and protective factors, AHM staff emphasized the youth’s vision for the future and creating a life plan.

VA’s direct membership registration process through its VC system and the schedule modifications previously described allowed VA to meet the qualitative therapy indicators. Yet, VA did not count with the proper tracking instruments to adequately monitor therapy session impact until halfway through the project. In terms of AHM’s school-based intervention, student and family privacy concerns meant that

school administrators were the only medium by which AHM staff had to reach them for psychology services. However, the heavy workloads carried by most administration staff meant that they often had very little, if any, time to devote to support external group events. AHM also faced challenges in providing individual therapy sessions for youth since schools required prior parental approval or denied such services. AHM made every effort to promote the psychology activities and services but the third-party approach limited the staff's ability to meet and properly monitor child, youth and parent mental health progress as was originally conceived.

Challenges and Limitations

The EJEMPLAR Project was the first USAID-funded initiative of Heartland Alliance in Mexico. HAI provided intensive technical and administrative support to AHM over the life of the project, including project and financial reports, and ensuring compliance with USAID regulations. Through this support, the local AHM staff has strengthened its technical expertise in project and financial management, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and program development.

As is common with organizations that are new to USAID/USG data quality and deliverables requirements, AHM and HAI implemented a series of corrective actions over the course of the implementation in order to ensure rigor in project deliverables and evaluation, including:

Partnership Capacity: One challenge AHM addressed was the issue of standardizing an integral attention model that would satisfy the varying geographic settings, ages and interests of the children and youth served by both organizations. During the second year, project management was reoriented to address implementation challenges observed as a result of a lack of capacities in partner VA in an effort to standardize and streamline data collection processes. AHM conducted a training workshop on effective communications and M&E requirements for the Villas coordinator and psychosocial services staff. AHM staff also redesigned flowcharts and developed M&E tools and communication procedures in order to clarify project responsibilities across both partner organizations.

Reaching High-Risk Youth: During project start-up, staff encountered difficulties reaching youth involved in or at high risk of joining gangs. The geographic areas selected for this population, along with challenging extreme climate conditions and high-risk youth's tendency to meet late at night presented schedule and security challenges for the staff. The formal agreements to work in schools within the Ministry of Education necessitated a modification in the target youth towards mid-risk students, since high-risk youth rarely attend school.

Target Population Adjustments: The MTE found that project targets for the total number of beneficiaries needed readjustments based on each partner's technical capacity in order to guarantee high-quality implementation and sustainability. AHM and Villas designed a new strategy to reach youth through school agreements, which resulted in dramatic participation rate increases. However, the formal agreements with the Ministry of Education necessitated a modification in the target youth profile to one that not only focused on high-risk youth but rather offered a universal program available to a mixed-group population. Through its screening process, AHM and Villas identified those youth and families at higher risk and provided specialized follow-up services.

Consistent Curriculum Application: As a project that involved work in different communities throughout the MMR, the AHM staff had to readjust activities to the spaces and time segments available. While the agreement with the Ministry of Education (SEP) allowed the project to meet its quantitative goals, this carried implications for the project's qualitative delivery. The AHM staff faced complications covering content normally covered during two hours down to the forty minute sessions permitted by the school. Furthermore, EJEMPLAR staff had to match its own curricula with SEP's interests, which asked that the intervention include bullying, cyber, harassment, drug prevention and teenage pregnancy prevention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The EJEMPLAR project successfully met qualitative projections and target populations. Yet, its true impact lies in the new community of youth change agents who remain in Nuevo Leon's MMR. An informed, responsible and committed group of children and teenagers have actively raised their voices and continue to participate in initiatives aimed to benefit their communities. Equipped with the tools to promote positive alternatives, the municipalities of García, Guadalupe and Monterrey have been transformed by the EJEMPLAR youth.

Success Stories

LMP: Eunice Delgado

In May 2013, Eunice Delgado joined the Leadership and Media Program workshop at the Ampliación Nogales Community Center in the municipality of García. Eunice was very kind, friendly, caring and sensitive and throughout the sessions, was a committed participant who was genuinely interested in contributing potential solutions to problems faced by her community.

Eunice went on to participate in the photo exhibit "A Portrait of My Community" along with other peers. She continued to assist in EJEMPLAR summer activities as a volunteer at the Community Center. Once the summer was finished, she got a job to support her family and the EJEMPLAR team was sad to say goodbye to her, thinking she would never come back.



Eunice reviews a screenplay with a fellow actor

Yet, the EJEMPLAR staff invited her to return for EJEMPLAR 2.0 as a mentor to new participants. Eunice was able to find an arrangement with her job, and served as a strong, energetic and dedicated role model. She continued to immerse herself in EJEMPLAR activities, including as Casting Manager and Makeup and Costume Designer for the production of the EJEMPLAR youth film "Te Odio" (*I Hate You*). This film was screened in the 2014 FIC Monterrey.

In September 2014, Eunice was selected to take part in AHM's national network of young leaders "Soy Cambio." As part of the network, she attended a workshop in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco where she learned about child labor, a topic close to her heart since it is a widespread problem in her community.

In the following months, Eunice and her partner Lizzie Vazquez, jointly designed a community project aimed at raising awareness among children, teens and parents about the consequences of child labor, particularly in García. Both students held a school conference with videos and information about national and local trends. Over 75 parents, children, adolescents, and civil servants attended the event. A representative from the local Ministry of Social Prevention was interested in their efforts and invited them to give the presentation to families served by his ministry.

During this time, Eunice also joined the Vagar TV youth group, where she writes news reports and administers the TV show's social media. Eunice continued to be an active volunteer for EJEMPLAR workshops, while balancing part-time work. She is a clear example of the inner strength, self-improvement and social commitment that EJEMPLAR encourages.

Monterrey International Film Festival

The Festival Internacional de Cine de Monterrey (*Monterrey International Film Festival*) was a generous EJEMPLAR supporter for the project's last two years. They provided a variety of in-kind assistance, including movie tickets, publicity costs and event logistics, worth at least \$14,000 MXN each year.

This year the film festival showcased 14 short films during their Open Screening event, 9 of which were EJEMPLAR youth-produced films. Youth from the neighborhood San Pedro 400 were sponsored by the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), Cineteca Nuevo Leon and a government youth program from the state Tamaulipas received special invitations to the event in an effort to bring the transforming cinema experience to a wider audience of girls, boys, adolescents and youth. This year, FIC Monterrey asked AHM to film segments of the screening event in order to develop a PSA

EJEMPLAR Project Final Report
Alianza Heartland México/Heartland Alliance

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Te Invitan a:

Pantalla Ejemplar

Durante la proyección de la "Pantalla Abierta" del
11º Festival Internacional de Cine de Monterrey

En el que se proyectarán nueve producciones
 creadas por jóvenes de las comunidades de
 García, Monterrey y Guadalupe, Nuevo León.

Lugar: Cinépolis Garza Sada,
 (Avenida Eugenio Garza Sada No. 3367 (Monterrey, NL)
30 de agosto de 2015 Horario: 1:30 pm
 Entrada Libre
 Pide tus pases en los módulos del Festival
Cupo limitado

Cinefesta Garza
 Proyecto EJEMPLAR

alianzaheartlandmex.org
 Alianza Heartland México
 Oficina Monterrey
 (T) 19716643
 odelamora heartlandalliance.org

for future FICs and increase these types of spaces for children and youth.

EJEMPLAR's relationship with FIC Monterrey began in February 2014 when staff were seeking opportunities to increase the impact of the participants' creations through tangible outcomes of their social commitment. AHM staff asked FIC Executive Director Janeth Aguirre, for the possibility of being sponsored for a Cineminuto (a public service announcement) of the young people's work, either through a radio or video segment. FIC instead invited the EJEMPLAR youth to submit their films for a new initiative called Open Screen in which children and youth that were not formal professional filmmakers could highlight a social theme through a short film. A total of 9 films were screened that year. The previous year, the nonprofit Enlaces con Tacto, supported the screening event of "Stop Motion," a short film produced by girls living in a shelter.



EJEMPLAR film writers and producers during the FIC Monterrey 2015

The second year, EJEMPLAR students were able to showcase another nine short films that addressed issues of violence, bullying, migration, poor housing, healthy relationships and community identity. The screening event was held on August 30, 2015 at the Cinépolis Garza Sada theater, filling all 279 seats, with family, friends and community members. Approximately 60 youth from schools in the municipalities of Monterrey, Guadalupe Garcia and Santa Catarina also attended the event.

The FIC Monterrey, will open its doors to AHM and young people to continue to showcasing their use film as a tool develop their creative potential and transform their consciousness.

Recommendations

Strengths-based approach: The AHM staff created activities based on the youth's interests, finding creative ways to amplify their skills in the workshops, short films and group activities. The social cohesion, participant ownership and group integration evidenced in the project participants reflects the values and social awareness the project activities aimed to instill in the youth.

Amplifying youth voices: One of EJEMPLAR's greatest accomplishments was the youth's participation in the Monterrey International Film Festival. The opportunity to screen their films during one of the country's most important art events showed the youth the power of film as a tool to share social messages. The teenagers' continued positive community engagement and thriving private initiatives are indicative of the lasting power of the skills and values shared in EJEMPLAR that have shaped their worldviews.

Targeting unattended youth: The EJEMPLAR project served as an empowerment platform for unattended youth – those who are neither the star students nor the difficult students. These "average" or "invisible" youth, who are either stigmatized or in the process of being stigmatized, are on the margins of joining illicit activities and are often ignored in specialized academic and extracurricular programming. By

targeting these mid-risk children and youth, they learn they too have agency, and eagerly apply newly developed skills to become active, responsible, solution-driven citizens.

Training of Trainers: A key area of opportunity for the project was to train governmental and non-governmental institutions as a way to transferring knowledge and opening EJEMPLAR replication opportunities. The combined participation of social workers, psychologists and teachers are critical in youth risk detection and reduction of risk factors. By analyzing the factors that determine violence in school spaces, AHM and public officials developed strategies to implement more effective school-based interventions. This documentation is now shared among school staff and public officials who serve vulnerable children and teenagers and is a product of the project's long-term legacy in the MMR. Participants also appreciated the opportunity of having a space to share experiences and best practices with each other, across institutions and peers who serve vulnerable youth.

The EJEMPLAR Project was the first such youth empowerment project in the MMR to utilize cameras and audiovisual tools. Since then, other youth projects such as Supera now incorporate photography into their work. One of EJEMPLAR's added value was its ability to introduce the arts in a non-invasive way to children and youth. The tailored activities increased their understanding of the arts and culture as a topic available to all people and not just something reserved for "educated people."



Jóvenes EJEMPLARES / EJEMPLAR Youth