

**Pro-Redes Salud -NGO Networking Project
Annual Report
2001**

**JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
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I. Background

On May 9th, USAID/Guatemala published a request for application (RFA) for the NGO Networks project. The objective of the project is to strengthen and develop NGO networks working in the health sector in Guatemala. These networks are to expand coverage of basic reproductive and child health services in seven priority departments in the Central and Western highland region of Guatemala. The purpose of the project is to increase the use of reproductive and child health services by improving their quality, accessibility and management through NGO networks.

John Snow Research and Training International, and subcontractors Project Hope and the Manoff Group, submitted a proposal for the NGO Networks project and were subsequently selected. The Cooperative Agreement was signed on September 21, 2001. The Cooperative Agreement is for a period of three years, ending September 20, 2004. The following is the first Annual Project Report for the NGO Networks Project (Pro Redes Salud). It covers a three month period from the signing of the CA to the end of 2001.

2. Project Administrative Start-Up

A. First Steps

Once the Cooperative Agreement was signed in September, JSI moved quickly to identify and hire a financial assistant who was contracted to begin project set-up including the opening of a bank account, identification of a temporary office and other tasks. The COP for Pro Redes Salud arrived in country and began work on October 29. She was assisted during the first weeks of November by Ms. Danielle Haley and Ms. Pat Taylor of JSI. On October 30, a temporary office was established in the hotel Clarion Suites, which served as the base of operations for the project until a more permanent office could be found.

B. Bank Accounts

Following consultations with USAID and other USAID projects, JSI decided to place its accounts with the Banco de Café. Paperwork was collected from the Bank and sent to the US for signatures. Once this was done, an account was opened in Quetzales. The first funds were then wired to the account by JSI. This account was used through the end of the year, as the dollar account takes longer to establish and will not be ready for use until the first part of 2002.

C. Permanent office in Guatemala City

In the first week of November, the project identified a real estate agent and began searching for an office. By November 9th, an office had been identified and terms had been negotiated with the owner. JSI was fortunate to find a small house in an approved zone, Zone 10, which had been previously used as an office and therefore was already equipped with office lighting and 7 telephone lines. The office is owned by the Iglesia Luterana, whose offices are next door. The church has been very supportive of Pro Redes and has even donated chairs and tables for project use, saving the project funds originally budgeted for a conference room.

Once the office was identified, USAID was contacted for a security review. The review was conducted by the Embassy RSO on November 15th. Following the inspection, a contractor was

secured and improvements made on the office. Improvements included a large fence on the outside of the office, razor wire on the side fence, reinforcing of all outside doors, bars on all open areas and windows, an alarm system, a safe room upstairs, installation of an outside camera and remote control gate. By December 10th, two weeks after the inspection, the security improvements had been completed. That same day the Embassy RSO came and approved the office for occupancy. The alarm was then activated for the Embassy roving patrol. On December 11th, the initial staff of 3 began to move in.

During the period Pro Redes was working out of the temporary office in the hotel, quotes were obtained from various vendors for the necessary office equipment and supplies, and vendors were selected and items set aside for delivery. This allowed the Project to move quickly once the permanent office was approved. Beginning on December 11th, vendors began delivering desks, tables, file cabinets, computers, the photocopier and fax machine. By the end of the year, the Guatemala City office was functional and ready to begin activities in January.

D. Field office in Quetzaltenango

During this period, Project Hope also cleared out space and set aside an office for the Project within their principal offices in Quetzaltenango. The office was loaned a desk, filing cabinet and basic materials by Project Hope during this period until Pro Redes would be able to provide these out of the Project budget in the first of the year. The Technical Coordinator for the Quetzaltenango area began working out of this office during the first week of December (see Personnel, below).

E. Project Vehicles

While in the temporary office, JSI consulted with other USAID projects about their experiences with field vehicles and collected quotes from various vendors. Based on this information, on November 21, the Project requested approval from USAID for the purchase of three Ford Ranger doubl-cab pick up trucks. Approval was received from USAID on November 26th. The vendor was informed and payment wired from JSI. Payment was received by December 18th, the vehicles were sold to the project and USAID was requested to assist with the paperwork and license plates. The vehicles are expected to be processed and delivered to the Project in January of 2002.

F. Personnel

Also while in the temporary office, ads for both administrative and technical staff were placed in the newspaper and contacts made word of mouth. More than 200 CVs were received and reviewed based on pre-identified selection criteria. In addition to the COP and the Accountant contracted at the beginning of the Project, the following positions had also been filled by the end of the year:

- Finance-Administrative Director: selected, proposed to USAID and approved on November 26th
- Child Health Specialist Technical Coordinator: selected, proposed to USAID and approved on November 29th.
- IEC/Behavior Change Specialist, Technical Coordinator: proposed and approved by USAID during the proposal process, CA signed in September
- Receptionist/Bilingual Secretary – selected and contracted in December
- Conserje: selected and contracted in December
- 2 drivers: selected, to be hired when vehicles are ready in January

During this period, the organizational chart for the project was modified and position descriptions were developed. Personnel pending selection in January include the Administrative Assistant, a Data and Computer Specialist, even Departmental Coordinators, and the Reproductive Health Specialist Technical Coordinator.

G. Legal Representation and Personnel Policies

While in the temporary office, JSI interviewed and identified a lawyer to be used by Pro Redes Salud as legal support, where necessary. The lawyer began work on three items as follows:

Legal Representation: Following consultation with the lawyer, JSI in Boston and DC completed the paperwork necessary for legal representation in Guatemala. This paperwork was sent to Pro Redes and has been given to the lawyer for completion in January.

Individual Employment Contract: A draft contract was developed by JSI and given to the lawyer for review. In December, the Project met with the lawyer to hear his comments and discuss. He will complete the contract for Pro Redes in January.

Personnel Policies: A draft Personnel Manual was begun for review and approval by the lawyer. The draft will be completed in January 2002. JSI also began the selection of medical and life insurance companies during this period. Several companies were identified and interviews conducted. Selection will be made in early 2002.

3. Project Technical Start-up

A. Internal Consensus Building

During the week of October 15th-19th, JSI conducted an orientation for the COP in its offices in Boston and Washington DC. A meeting was also held in Washington DC between all partners, Project Hope, JSI and the Manoff Group to discuss the project and begin to build internal consensus. This was a very helpful gathering, which set the tone for future collaboration.

Once in country, the COP worked closely with the Country Director for Project Hope, based in Quetzaltenango, who traveled repeatedly to Guatemala City to assist in the review of CVs and selection of personnel for the Technical Division. The week of Dec 11th, the COP also traveled to Quetzaltenango to meet with Project Hope in their offices, and to meet jointly with Hope and the NGO network La Federacion. In December, the Child Health Technical Coordinator for the Quetzaltenango Zone joined the team. The Manoff Group IEC/Behavior Change Technical Coordinator will join the Project and the Departmental Coordinators will be contracted in January.

B. Coordination with Key Partners

Ministry of Health

Pro Redes Salud has met four times to date with the Ministry of Health. In the first meeting with the Vice Minister on November 9th, USAID introduced the project COP and plans were made for follow-up. The second meeting on November 13th was chaired by the Vice Minister and involved the heads of all Divisions of the MOH. At that meeting, it was agreed that a group would work together to develop a Convenio between the Project and the Ministry.

Since then, two meetings have been held with personnel from the Unidad de Provision de Servicios 1 (UPS1), the unit responsible for the Extension de Cobertura/SIAS NGO program, on November 20th and 29th to exchange information and come to an agreement on the terms of a

Convenio. JSI and Project Hope staff have developed a draft Convenio document, which will be reviewed with the UPS1 staff in January.

UPS1 has also provided the Project with data regarding the current status and location of SIAS NGOs in the seven highland departments. Pro Redes analyzed that data comparing it with the list of municipalities with high rates of chronic malnutrition, and shared the list of SIAS NGOs in those locations with USAID.

URC/Calidad en Salud

A first meeting was held on November 2nd at Calidad de Salud offices between the two COPs to discuss the projects and how they might coordinate in the future. Since then, Pro Redes Salud has some opportunities to discuss further with some URC staff members, though much more specific coordination is needed. Pro Redes and URC hope to develop a Memorandum of Understanding in the early part of 2002.

Population Council and their NGOs

Pro Redes Salud has met three times with the Population Council and the network of NGOs – now called *La Federacion* – that has been formed by the NGOs supported by the PC project. This Network is comprised of independent NGOs and three sub-Networks and is currently headed by the NGO *Renacimiento*, based in Patzún.

The first meeting was held on November 31st in the Population Council offices when USAID introduced the Project and the COP to Population Council staff. The next two meetings were with the NGO Network, once in Guatemala City during an NGO meeting with the Global Health Council in November 14th, and lastly in Quetzaltenango on December 11th when Pro Redes was asked to come and make a presentation on the project to the Network at one of the NGO offices. The most recent meeting produced a lively discussion regarding Project approaches and future possibilities for Network participation. Pro Redes and *La Federacion* plan to continue these discussions after the first of the year.

Project Concern International and their NGOs

The Project has met with once with PCI and the network of NGOs – now called *la Red de ONGs para el Desarrollo y Salud (REDDES)* - that has been formed by the NGOs supported by the PCI project. This Network is comprised of independent NGOs, and is currently headed by the new PCI-supported local NGO *Genesis*.

The meeting was held during a group workshop just outside of Guatemala City. Pro Redes made a presentation about the project and answered questions about future Network involvement. As with the other Network, Pro Redes and REDDES plan to continue to work together after the first of the year. At the request of Pro Redes Salud, the Network REDDES and Genesis also provided the Project with information regarding those NGOs located in municipalities with high rates of chronic malnutrition.

Other Key Partners

APROFAM: ProRedes attended a meeting called by APROFAM with NGOs on December 7th to present the new program for provision of contraceptives to NGOs. No further coordination has taken place.

JHPIEGO/MNH: The Project has not yet met with the staff from the MNH Project, but plans to begin coordination in early 2002.

Nutrition Group: Pro Redes has been incorporated into the inter-sectoral group that is working on the nutrition crisis. This group has met three times, twice at USAID on November 9th and

November 19th, and once at the MOH. Although the Project is not yet in a position to offer specific support, these meetings have been extremely important in ensuring that the Project is up to date and can therefore fit into the response in 2002.

UNICEF: No formal meeting with the country representative or staff yet. Contact has been made with the Nutrition Advisor.

OPS: No formal meeting with OPS staff yet, though the Pro Redes COP has been introduced to the country representative.

GTZ: A meeting was held on November 20th with Coordinator of the GTZ project with SANIPLAN, Programa de Salud Rural Region VII, working with NGOs in the highlands. This was a useful meeting as several points of coordination were identified, including possibilities for joint funding of activities.

4: Monitoring and Evaluation: Draft M and E Plan

A Project M and E Plan was developed by JSI as a draft, and was submitted to USAID as per the terms of the CA on November 21st. Pro Redes Salud expects to receive comments from USAID in January and incorporate those into the document. In addition, Pro Redes will seek internal consensus with the rest of the Technical Division as they join the Project, and with JSI's M and E advisor. Once these comments are received, the draft will be revised and the M and E Plan put into final form.

5: Reporting and Planning

A. Project Planning

An Annual Plan for 2002 was also developed by JSI and submitted as a draft to USAID as per the terms of the CA on December 18th. The Project will expect to receive comments on the Annual Plan from USAID and new technical staff in January. These comments will be incorporated into a final plan in early 2002.