

**An Assessment of Status of AID Financed
Projects in Support of Street Children
in Guatemala and Brazil**

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Assessment trip made with Lloyd Feinberg, AID/W

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall purpose of the trip was to provide an opportunity to assess the present status of two sizable projects financed by AID in support of assistance to street children in Guatemala and Brazil. The Guatemalan project has been functioning for more than a year and provides experience of use to similar projects in other countries, due to its successful activities in three areas: delivery of basic services for children living and/or working in the streets and those who have been physically and/or sexually abused, development of research and training activities to assure effective and innovative services, and support through the government human rights organization of policies that lead to improved protection and expanded rights for children and increased public awareness regarding the status of children.

The Brazil project has only been in operation for a few months, has four principal areas of focus: family preservation, vocational training, improvement of service to street girls, and enhancement of legal rights of children.

In both countries there were good examples of project design and service activities that could serve to enhance the implementation of projects in other countries where AID or other international agencies are supporting children at risk projects; what is needed is a mechanism for the exchange of information among such groups. The assessment team also recommended, in some cases, clearer definition of the scope of activities to be offered and in subgrant operations a clearer statement of criteria to be applied in selecting subgrant organizations. Otherwise, the overall impression is that a good beginning has been made in both countries.

See page 10 of this report for specific recommendations of the Brazil TAG members.

GUATEMALA--March 9-11, 1995

The assessment team was able to meet with representatives of PAMI, which is the major grantee of this project, in Guatemala and independently with staff of USAID concerning the problems experienced with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which has been, at least temporarily, suspended. Separately, meetings were held with Casa Alianza the service agency for direct contact with street children and with subgrantee activities administered by PAMI. A brief meeting was also held with a representative of the Ombudsman for Human Rights Organization, the government of Guatemala, which receives funds under this project.

The USAID staff¹ felt strongly that the TAG which met last year on several occasions had not served the project, primarily because individual members had lost the global vision that TAG members should possess and instead had concentrated on providing technical assistance to participating agencies in a manner that smacked of conflict of interest. Specifically, some TAG members would in effect recommend application of technical advice to certain problems areas, then arrange for these to be given by themselves, at separately paid consultations. Therefore, USAID had suspended the last meeting scheduled in December, 1994 and instead permitted a retreat of participating agencies to reflect on a proper useful role for a future TAG. We discussed as well the possibility that no TAG might be necessary, that the kind of visit made by the present assessment team had already proven helpful and might set a pattern of future assistance, i.e. broad assessments and advice to participating agencies. Otherwise, specific technical assistance for defined problems might be provided by experts already on the advisory list of PAMI and USAID. A lengthy evaluation of the TAG based on the participating agencies retreat last year by a consultant Denis Tecum exists in Spanish. A brief translated summary of this could prove useful to other projects to help avoid similar experiences with TAGs. The particular TAG need not be identified, but the information could be presented as a case study.

PAMI: Another concern raised by USAID was a difference of opinion between USAID and PAMI regarding what PAMI's role might be vis a vis the OHRO grant management; USAID wanted financial management of OHRO to be monitored by PAMI. We discussed this issue with

Meeting with Bambi Orellano, USAID Deputy Director and Beth Hogan, Director of USAID Democratic Development Training Office.

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Susan Hewes, PAMI director, who explained her concern that it would reflect badly on PAMI should OHRO management be faulty and that this role was not included in the project agreement with AID. She did agree to review the project agreement and paper to determine whether she might be able to bend on this point. (Later, she left us a note indicating that the issue would be subject of a retreat with her own staff with a focus on how each PAMI component would be able to assist OHRO without compromise to its own integrity.)

We were generally impressed with the technical knowledge, management skills, training capability, and information offered on research,² monitoring and evaluation. We were so impressed with the materials prepared by PAMI for subgrant and training uses, that we asked for an additional set to take with us to Brazil as examples of what the POMMAR project might seek to develop and adapt for its own uses.

We then visited a number of PAMI supported projects that focus on working with children to prevent their becoming street children or offer alternatives to street living, including a vocational skills project at a center close to the target area, CEIBA. The director of this project, a very dynamic caring young man was establishing facilities for giving children specific skills they could use to earn a living, including doughnut making. The children seemed adapted to the environment established by CEIBA.

We also made brief visits to impoverished communities where CONANI and the Conrado de la Cruz staffs worked with children through recreation and attractive educational activities to reach children, offer them services, and identify children in special need for assistance. Attempts are made through these groups, where possible, to meet the parents and families to determine what preventive work may be indicated and feasible.

AGES: The Guatemalan Association for Sex Education received us on a day when they were training educators who would work with street girls who have been sexually abused or are prostitutes. AGES was founded by several MDs, psychologists, including Eugenia Monterosso now head of Casa Alianza. It was established in 1978, has had its curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education for sex education in public schools. It began a peer promotion effort with USAID help and has worked in both urban and rural settings. AGES has developed handbooks for trainers, and leaders in the community, has a library of videos for circulation and seems to deal effectively with the media. It needs a training area on the compound and would like resources to help expand its services into Central America, including Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. It is also developing a textbook for school use, under the distribution of the Ministry of Education. We observed a group of young girls being trained as peer

²See Appendix 2 on research.

counselors to help young girls avoid STDs, AIDS, and to help improve their self-esteem. AGES trains educators working in other institutions in Guatemala including Solo Para Mujeres.

All of the above groups observed are part of direct PAMI assisted projects that are preventive in nature, not dealing so directly with the street child. This observation led us to discuss, without any attempt at final resolution, the question of where resources should be spent: directly in services to street children whose future at times seems very dim or only on preventive activities where some hope of change seems likely. It did not seem possible to ignore coldly the child already a victim, no matter how hopeless the prospects and only give funding to prevention, but we did feel that some research time should be devoted to this question for future project design.

To obtain hands on experience with those project activities designed for direct service to the needs of street children, we visited several levels of the Casa Alianza organization, which now receives a direct grant from AID under this project. From all said by USAID staff and our own observations, this is an extremely well managed operation that provides immediate relief to street children. This report will not repeat the details of the Casa Alianza organization which is described in an Appendix 1 to this report. We observed the two first phases of contact with street children provided by Casa Alianza: the work of initial contact by street educators and the next stage Crisis Center, a refuge located in downtown Guatemala city.

We accompanied street educators on their rounds by daylight and then at night on the streets of the capital. There are seven educators, including a coordinator, most of whom are university students or recent graduates who are personable, dedicated and able to establish non-threatening relations with the children. They identify children in need, begin a relationship based on offer of first aid and/or recreational activities. At a certain point in the process, the educator refers the child to the refuge, a residential center which deals more systematically with the problems of the street child including use of drugs, recovery from wounds, malnourishment, etc. As stated in the appendix, the logical next step would be referral to a transition center where the child receives occupational training, apprenticeships to small businesses, education and in few cases a reintegration with their families. Otherwise, the child will be sent after 4 to 6 months to a group home where he or she may live until age 18 or so or until economic independence.

The family reintegration is an important facet of the current Casa Alianza project, funded by the USAID. It seeks where possible to locate biological families or extended family connections for the child, analyze whether the family (in the past dysfunctional, alcoholic,

poverty-stricken) has recovered sufficiently to receive back the child and if so, what resources

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would enhance chances of success. Access to community services is facilitated by Casa Alianza, if needed, and to educational, vocational or industrial links where indicated.

Throughout all of these abovementioned levels of services, it should be pointed out that as high as 60% recidivism occurs, yet it is felt that this level of success, hopefully to be improved with better service design, justifies the expenditure of project funds, considering the alternative: permanence in the streets.

All of our impressions of Casa Alianza were so positive and our experience with PAMI clearly productive, the team has entertained the idea of Guatemala as a suitable orientation site for project teams from other countries, particularly the POMMAR project (we later offered this suggestion to both Guatemala and Brazil, which welcomed the opportunity for exchange).

We were able to make a brief protocol visit to Marilys Barrientos de Estrada, who is Defender of the Rights of Children for the government OHRO. We discussed a proposed Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice Survey (KAP) to be included under the project. She seemed to have doubts about the value of such an expenditure but is willing to explore with USAID and other project entities how this might be used to gauge public attitude re child rights. This discussion was inconclusive but at least established contact for a future visit.

We concluded our visit to Guatemala with a visit with Casa Alianza educators of certain sites in the city that attract children at risk, still living at home, however precariously. The purpose of this special effort is to identify the family of the child at risk, contact the family, determine what it needs to strengthen the home environment for the child, and take steps to avoid having the child move to the streets. Part of this is a service to facilitate access by the family to existing services in the past not known or not available to it. It seems a worthwhile effort and related to the family reintegration segments of the ongoing AID project with Casa Alianza.

BRAZIL--March 13-19, 1995

The assessment team then proceeded to Brazil to hold meetings with project-related organizations and other individuals who would provide insight into aspects of the POMMAR project, now in operation since late 1994 under the direction of Partners of the Americas, headed by Arthur Powers. We also attended the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group of the project, TAG, in Recife March 17-18.

Our first meeting was in Rio de Janeiro with Hilda Lopes of the Catholic University School of Social Work. This was a brief discussion of the training program that is offered by the university primarily for social workers interested in the phenomena of street children. It provided us with information about the educational opportunities for people from the POMMAR that may be in need of such formal training.

We then proceeded to Salvador, Bahia, where we were met by Mária Klin, Project Officer of USAID for POMMAR. She gave us a solid briefing on the status of the POMMAR project, plans for the TAG meeting in Receife, and an overview of the projects we would visit in Salvador. Throughout the tour of agencies in Brazil, Mária Klin was very helpful, translating for non-Portuguese speaking team members, explaining the significance of what we were observing in regard to the total project planned, and generally facilitating our visit.

We visited OAF (Organizacao Auxilio Fraterno), headed by Father Clodoveo Piazza, a project that provides shelter where boys either live in the facility and receive vocational training or may live at home and come into day training. It is a tight organization/operation that provides salary to the boys while training and producing a variety of useful marketable items, including furniture, hospital equipment and hospital uniforms. All of these items are sold to the state government facilities and to private outlets as well. The project appears to be self sufficient. The question raised by POMMAR staff is whether it is replicable by other newly forming organizations; this must be studied. Present student population served at OAF 's six centers is 400, with an additional 300 reached through day training. The planned capacity will reach 1,400 to 1,600. Additional facets include a literacy program that permits over 900 children to enter public school classes; for this OAF provides classroom space and the state provides teachers. The project also plans to provide brain development programs, preparing for professional training through prior preparatory studies, with a six months orientation providing for up to 18 months of skill training readiness.

At CENDECA in Salvador, we learned of the great problem of "impunity" for example of police officers who kill street children; not one has been successfully brought to a guilty verdict, because of this impunity. Instead of the unsuccessful strategy that led them to criticize the judicial system, CENDECA has begun with citizen participation to approach the courts with impartial information and has mobilized parents and media, have gained access to the documents of the courts, maintain pressure to keep cases active and provide seminars for judges in which impunity is denounced. Through the media campaign it is hoped that the public acquiescence to violence will change.

On a tour of the Favela (slum) Alagados, with Joselito Assis, who runs the Grupo Baguncaco (big mess group) we were shown the sites of training and recreational activities for young people intended to divert them from negative behavior including glue sniffing. Music, theater, sports, artistic activities are all offered as substitutes for destructive activities.

We also had the opportunity to see some of the activities of Projeto AXE, one of the best known projects for benefitting children at risk in Brazil. More than 2,000 adolescents are led off the streets to "full citizenship" through activities of AXE. They receive health cards with access to public health facilities, counseling to prepare child to cope with family, develop self esteem through participating in circus activities, capoeira, take on such responsibilities as paper recycling, a future construction activity. The estimated cost per child is one-sixth of the cost for the state to maintain a child.

We also visited the MODAXE project which teaches the participants to make marketable high quality clothing, to be sold for the benefit of Projeto AXE. It is a very effective means of developing young people and, in some cases, their parents to learn to perform useful, reimbursable tasks.

UNICEF: We had a brief meeting in Salvador with Ruy Pavan, coordinator of the UNICEF office in Bahia, who is involved in the rights of street children. He works principally through NGOs, giving them support to encourage efforts to help street children through improvements in public policy. They also promote the rights of children generally under international conventions, attempt to combat the evils of impunity of assassins of children, work to prevent child prostitution and child labor. Support of NGOs includes the City of the Mother (cidade de mae) with the AXE project. More than half of UNICEF funding goes to NGOs but it does work with the government in education and health activities. Some UNICEF funds come earmarked for government projects from international donors and some donations particularly

mention to be used for street children, e.g. the Swiss, Germans, and the EC. Mr. Pavan approved of the POMMAR approach which would not be creating new, competing projects but would lend support to existing successful efforts.

CETAD: A brief visit with this center for the study and therapy for drug abuse in Salvador demonstrated an ambulatory approach to combatting drugs by meeting the child in the streets with services. A minivan takes a team to streets and provides services including caution about the misuse of syringes that may lead to contracting AIDS. The center also provides group therapy with psychiatrists and psychologists as leaders in order to take advantage of the acceptance of children of help, if given in groups. Another initiative, the establishment of a street clinic in a local square has been tried for six months and found to be successful in its outreach and, therefore, a plan is being initiated to establish it on a regular basis.

From Salvador the team flew to Recife to visit additional relevant projects and participate in the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting.

An extensive meeting with CENDHEC, The Dom Helder Camara Center for Rights led by Margarita Bosch, provided interesting community based organization active in three areas: the right to life, right to citizenship, and the right to faith. One of its main foci now is the right to land tenure. The slum areas are built on government land; there is no family stability, much violence. The poor constitute 2/3 of the 2.5 million people of Recife. The organization works to create community groups to defend their social rights, obtain health, housing, education, transportation, security, and sanitation. They educate the people to use the new laws themselves and not rely on lawyers or agents. They have a hotline called DISQUE- CIDADANIA (dial citizenship) used for calls for civil rights assistance and receive 15 to 20 calls per day. They are working on five hundred active cases of assistance. They would like to expand their program into anti prostitution efforts. Before leaving the Cendhec scene, we were able to observe a group being trained to undertake a specific community effort. These groups are often organized around specific topics and in accordance with a segment of population, e.g. teachers, parents, students, etc.

CENDHEC began to advise the community at Ilha do Chie in 1994 through its RIGHT TO CITIZENSHIP program, through a team of social workers, lawyers, and social service trainees giving legal and social services. A particular focus now is the area of sanitation and paving of roads and construction of improved housing.

A tense meeting was held with Ana Vasconcelos, director of the Casa de Passagem, a shelter and retraining project for young girl prostitutes. Her main concern and "beef" was that unlike other organizations hers had not been included in participation in the TAG meeting. (There is intense competition among Recife agencies generally.) We spent a very tedious time with her explaining that the TAG meeting would come up with some of the answers that would guide POMMAR as to what types of organizations would fit within the project criteria. Furthermore, Ana Vasconcelos had not yet applied for a grant, providing project activities descriptions and budget that would facilitate a decision as to whether Casa de Passagem would be included. We reassured her as to the value of her work, our good will toward her organization and asked her to await the TAG results, at which time a letter would be sent to her to guide her next steps.

Three years ago in Recife the Coletivo de Adolescente Menina was created to provide special training for six months to girls victims of violence and sexual and physical abuse in their families. Four schools were surveyed, 200 girls in each school interviewed and 20 from each school selected as having been the victims of greatest level of violence. Using church space, schools, and community centers a program of activities was initiated, including art, dance, theater as therapy for these girls. The girls still maintain ties with their families but learn their rights, how to defend themselves. Individual psychotherapy is provided, activities to improve their self esteem are included. POMMAR's interest in this project is not necessarily to fund it but to use its experience for the benefit of other projects in the region.

Other activities were visited by Lloyd Feinberg, when members of the TAG were discussing areas outside of his interest. He will report separately on these visits and the visit to Fortaleza, in which George Coleman did not participate.

Finally, a brief summary of the TAG meeting held in Recife March 17-18, 1995. Only three of the five TAG members were able to attend, the other two being delayed due to travel snags. Present and active, nevertheless, were Mario Volpi, young, dynamic leader of the National Association of Street Boys and Girls, based in Brasilia, and Father Bruno, head of an organization for street children in Belem.

Present from AID were Ed Kadunc, USAID Brasilia Director; Jennifer Adams, Health and Population Program Officer, USAID Brasilia; and Lloyd Feinberg, AID/Washington, who is in charge of the displaced and otherwise disadvantaged children worldwide and who funded the present Brasil POMMAR project. Kadunc and Feinberg provided members of POMMAR with a broader view of the context in which the POMMAR operates within AID.

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The present status of the project was presented, work plans for the year discussed and strategies for implementing the remaining project activities presented. This information was generally well received. A good discussion occurred, particularly with the participation of Rita Ippolito, Training Director of POMMAR and Lloyd Feinberg, concerning ways to assure that replicable ideas from ongoing projects are disseminated to other cities. The need to develop an effective information system to coordinate, report, monitor and evaluate project developments and progress was emphasized. Discussions on family preservation by the head of a research center in Recife, CIELA were helpful to the TAG, as were observations of the CENDHEC director on human rights promotion.

A sneak preview of some of the prospective projects was presented, including assistance to Projeto AXE in Salvador, the Center for Family Studies in Fortaleza, establishment of a center for vocational training for girls at risk in Fortaleza, and a microenterprise development center in Recife.

The three attending members of the TAG then met separately from the larger forum to reflect on the work thus far presented by POMMAR. We agreed as one that the four areas of activity chosen for the project: family preservation, street girls, professionalization (or vocational skills development) and human rights are the correct areas of emphasis for this project in the Northeast of Brazil.

We suggested that the topics are relevant and so as to avoid a jumble of disconnected projects, the POMMAR staff should select one or two projects in each of the four areas on which to concentrate. In addition, the staff should work on maintaining an articulation among the four areas within each project so that there may be synergistic effect. The project should also support local efforts of organizations to link with those ongoing at the national level. In fact, organizations should be deliberately chosen which have links to national movements, but the project should not provide funds directly to those national organizations.

The TAG recommended that POMMAR should:

- C Incorporate income-generation activities and access to public services for family preservation activities.
- C In order to obtain much needed experience in appropriate interventions for street girls, the project should finance 4 or 5 activities which are then monitored closely for the experience gained that may be applied to other areas.
- C In human rights area, focus on strengthening civil groups and link their efforts to national objectives and organizations.

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- C Emphasize working with collective organizations in order to increase the spread effect of our efforts.
- C In the area of vocational skills development, POMMAR should be alert to the fundamental connections between skills training, income generation and marketability of products from these efforts.
- C Our public policy should emphasize development of skills first for enhancement of child development, then consideration of other aspects of the project.
- C Continue to work on actions that bring pressure on government.

These recommendations were conveyed to the final meeting of POMMAR staff with the TAG and USAID members in writing. The final topic, scheduling of the next TAG meeting and frequency of TAG meetings was discussed. It was decided that the TAG should meet twice a year and that the next TAG would occur November 3-4 of this year.

(This writer felt that the projects in both countries are off to a good beginning and should be monitored periodically for lessons learned that might be shared with other efforts in AID-assisted countries.)

Appendix 1 Covenant House Guatemala

Covenant House Guatemala, known locally as "Casa Alianza", started long term residential programs for street children and abandoned children in 1989. Currently the Agency has 500 children in, residence programs and attends the needs of approximately 10% of the other 5,000 children who still live on the street of the capital city. The majority of the street children are between the ages of 8 and 14, approximately 60% of whom come from the rural areas of the country and the remainder from the poorest "barrios" of the peri-urban area.

Casa Alianza's programs are the following:

Street Educators: These counselors spend the whole day on the streets of Guatemala City looking for the street children and offering them a basis of friendship and counselling. The Street Educators offer first aid and an invitation to leave the streets and enter into the Casa Alianza program.

The Crisis Center: This 24 hour open center is the first residential step for the children in their struggle to leave the street. All the immediate needs of a child in crisis are met under one roof: food, clothing, a shower; a safe place to sleep and, more than anything, the love and caring support that all children need. A development plan is developed with the participation of the child. An average of 50 children per night stay at the Crisis Center.

Transition Home: With an average population of 20 children the Transition home is the program stage where the "resocialization" of the children takes place. This is where they leave the mores of the street and learn the rules of society which no-one has ever taught them: how to sit at a table, study habits, personal hygiene, etc. The average length of stay is 4 or 5 months before passing on to the next stage.

Group Homes: Casa Alianza has 18 group homes with 14 children in each plus a male and female counselor as "substitute parents". The child lives in this non institutionalized setting until they reach the age of 18. During this time the children are studying, working, and having a real childhood. This stage attempts to replicate a true family setting.

At the present time, the demands for services from the street children far outweigh the capacity of Casa Alianza to deliver them. The lack of an expanded long term funding base is the principal limiting factor. There are many children who are struggling to leave the streets and the inevitable life of petty crime but need a support network to help them do so. Unfortunately the government services are deficient at best and few private agencies are offering quality services in the quantity necessary to cover the demand.

Program priorities that will be implemented with the development of new funding sources:

Family Reintegration: Based on experiences of Casa Alianza in Honduras and Mexico, in some 20% of the cases it is possible to reintegrate a street child with his or her family after a significant amount of social work directly with the child and with the family.

In many cases, the crisis that caused the child to leave home in the first place can be overcome with counseling or referral to specialized agencies. In this manner, a child can be eventually returned to his or her natural family environment instead of having to be cared for by Casa Alianza over the long term. This is much better for the development of the child and, in economic terms, much less expensive.

In a three year period, an estimated 500 children will benefit directly by being reintegrated with their families plus another 1,500 children will benefit indirectly through the family therapy and follow-up provided in an integrated manner. The estimated cost over 3 years is US\$150,000.

Street Education: Casa Alianza is currently working in just three of the 25 "zones" into which Guatemala City is divided. The Agency is concerned that in at least three of four other zones of the city there are a significant number of abandoned street children who receive no type of support from any private or governmental source.

Casa Alianza would like to double the number of street educators to be able to extend the current coverage to other areas of the city. The number of street children who would directly benefit from an increase of eight more Street Educators will be approximately 750 each year at a cost of US\$ 45,000 per year.

Residential Services: With an increase in the number of street educators the demand for residential services will also increase. An estimated four group homes will be opened the first year of the three year project at an annual cost of US\$27,000 per group home per year. Over three years this is a total of US\$ 324,000. This will provide a long term benefit to 52 children a year at approximately 40% of the cost to maintain a person in jail.

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION RE PAMI RESEARCH EFFORTS

A very rewarding discussion was held by the assessment team with Marco Antonio Garavito, Director of Research for PAMI. Research is planned in several project-related areas, results of which may be useful to other agencies participating in this project, to USAID and to projects in other countries faced with similar problems of child rights, neglect and abuse.

The parameters of the street children problem in Guatemala, according to Garavito include a central element of the basic promotion of child rights, with the child at risk the target population. Recidivism is always present, child abuse is the main cause of children taking to the streets.

Some areas of interest include research on the reasons why children go to the streets, studies of the institutions working with children, their strategies, interventions, results; what are the risk factors, how can we understand them and prevent them in order to decrease the number of street children in the future. Another area for research is the marginal community which is the principal producer of the street child. Asked why so much research in a number of communities of Guatemala, factors that contribute to producing street children and that the problems are much more acute in Guatemala than in many other countries, therefore more study is required, and require careful studies of factors that produce risk and how to use this info to make successful interventions. Over the life of this project, fifteen research projects are scheduled. We concluded that there would be developed a wealth of information that should be widely shared with other countries. There should be a true interchange of info worldwide regarding how to change policies, attitudes, and methodological approaches in order to create more successful interventions.