

**Assessment of the Status
of USAID-Financed Projects/Pami
in Support of Street Children
in Guatemala**

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L. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Don Whitson and George Coleman traveled to Guatemala from November 11 to 19, 1997 on behalf of the Displaced Children and Orphan Fund to evaluate PAMI's programs for aiding street children. The scope of work was to:

- 1) Assist PAMI and the USAID Mission to develop an acceptable and appropriate close-out plan which would maximize the impact, legacy, and lessons learned from the program.
- 2) Draw upon experience from the related programs in Brazil, El Salvador, Indonesia, etc. in assisting the USAID Mission and the project to develop appropriate indicators and objectives for the program which might facilitate the final phase of the program.
- 3) Work with the USAID Mission and the project to determine the optimal time frame for closing out the project with existing resources in a way that will be as expeditious as possible, but will also allow for a rational phase-down which might best support the transfer of lessons learned and sustainability after USAID funding is exhausted.
- 4) Elicit as many lessons that can be learned from the Guatemala Street Children's initiative which might be of interest and relevance to other organizations and country programs.

The PAMI project's focus evolved from a focus on "street children" through a focus on "at-risk youth" and finally to "the rights of the child" in its broadest sense. It is interesting to note also that the social and political atmosphere in Guatemala evolved rapidly in a very short time during the project. During the project the National Peace Accord was signed and legislation protecting the rights of the child was passed (though not implemented). PAMI showed great responsiveness and flexibility in adapting to this rapidly changing scene as well as contributing significantly to this evolution.

II. INTRODUCTION

The USAID Mission in Guatemala made the determination last year that the Street Children Project (which does not fit within any current strategic objective and was functioning in the past as a special objective) would be discontinued at the end of the current fiscal year. After a careful consideration of the request of PAMI, the primary NGO working with USAID on this project, to extend the project at no cost to the government, USAID agreed to allow the project activities to continue until July, 1998 to provide more time for PAMI, its twelve subgrantee projects, and the Guatemalan government agency concerned with protection of children's rights to make a productive phase-down of the project activities.

The consultant team was given the challenge to assist PAMI and the USAID Mission in developing an acceptable phase-out plan so as to maximize the impact of the program. The consultants were also asked to draw up descriptions of the lessons learned throughout the PAMI subgrantee projects -- for use by other agencies within Guatemala and in other countries facing similar challenges with street children. Another major factor for the consultants to address was the desire of all participating agencies to provide a rational transition time, permitting development of plans for sustainability of the project after terminating USAID financial support.

Time did not permit the consultants to actually draw up detailed plans for phase-out, transition, and dissemination of lessons learned. After a brief visit to six of the current street children projects and a debriefing by staff of the National Campaign for the Rights of Children, it was possible to hold an intensive debriefing session with PAMI's key personnel and a useful joint reporting session with PAMI and USAID. These sessions permitted the consultants to relay their findings in detail. The overall impression of the consultant team was that the PAMI project with USAID support had gathered together an impressive staff of creative, young professionals of various disciplines who had performed skillfully their tasks. PAMI, if required to close down, would be leaving a group of agencies able to contribute significantly to improving the lives of children in Guatemala, but needed more time, resources, and additional technical assistance in order to create a balanced, technically sound program nationwide. Despite this gap in technical

capability, there were good lessons learned from the experience that should be carefully documented and shared through training and dissemination of documentation with other agencies in Guatemala and in other countries.

III. RESEARCH

The research component was implemented later in the project, beginning in May 1994, and the first study began in October of that year. As with all aspects of the PAMI project, the research component was carefully conceptualized, implemented, and extensively documented. Eleven research studies were completed and all but the last few have been published. In most cases, the studies were the only ones of their kind in Guatemala, and have helped to educate the public and institutions regarding child welfare as well as serving as baseline information for projects and programs.

The population of interest was defined as children living or working in the street, abused children, and other children at risk. Three broad objectives were defined for the studies: to obtain complete information about the characteristics of the population being served; to determine what factors cause children to take to the streets and what are the causes of abuse; and to determine what strategies and methodologies for intervention within the community will bring about more useful, realistic, and acceptable services to the population served. Broad thematic areas of interest were then defined, including risk factors, protective factors, psycho-social factors, institutional policies, and social attitudes. Research proposals were accepted from groups and individuals, and, in addition, specific projects were indicated by the research coordinator. Projects were initially limited to one year and a maximum budget of \$25,000. Very detailed documentation is available regarding the selection criteria and process, which may be of use to others undertaking such subgrants.

Although the selection process was originally designed to function in a similar fashion to the subgrants in the innovative services component, the team became aware in the early stages that there were few competent and experienced organizations and investigators in the areas of interest. It became necessary to direct the studies more than was originally planned, and to work closely

with the investigators in all phases from design and execution through publication and dissemination.

Results of the various studies were published in Spanish in book form by PAMI rather than being published in the scientific literature. The books have been distributed free of charge to organizations working in health, education, child rights, and the press. As of this visit, there was no mechanism in place that would guarantee the availability of the results of the studies after the end of the grant. In addition to the books, the results were used in numerous press releases. Three studies were still underway as of this visit.

The studies emphasized social issues and most used methods drawn from social science and anthropology. Consequently, they tend toward the qualitative rather than the quantitative, and tend to be lengthy. Given the scarcity of information on issues of youth, child labor, street kids, and abuse in Guatemala, beginning with a qualitative approach is appropriate as a way to define issues involved. Further refinement of findings through a more quantitative and epidemiologic approach would now be interesting as a second phase. See Appendix III for more detailed description of the studies and their findings. The PAMI team felt a need to include two areas that were not investigated: 1) mental health of youth, especially with respect to the effects of the long period of social violence in Guatemala, and 2) strengths: why and how young people cope with the problems around them, and especially why suicide rates are so low among young people with problems. There were indications that the issue of resilience may be linked with Mayan spiritual and cultural values, though this was not specifically investigated.

It was impossible for the consultants to directly assess the impact of the studies on other programs or society at large. The PAMI team felt that the greatest impact was caused by the three-volume set of testimonials by young people (#2 in Appendix III.) These are in great demand and are often cited in the press; we were presented with over 50 examples of stories in the press generated by PAMI research, though the team admitted that, in many instances and especially in the early days, articles were written by the PAMI team themselves, and it was necessary to pay for their publication. In addition, the demand for (albeit free) reprints demonstrated the demand for the information. Another measure of public interest is the large number of requests for presentations and talks that PAMI receives.

The PAMI team confirmed that there was little relationship between the research component and the innovative services component, either in project design, methodology, monitoring, or conception. The clearest example of influence was the design and implementation of the Cresvi project for the prevention of violence and abuse, which was a direct result of one of the studies. The PAMI team also reported that the OHRO also did not apply the results of the research in policy decisions. One direct result of the study on institutional responses to child abuse was the

development of the protocol manual for medical and psychological attention of child abuse cases¹.

Observations and Recommendations:

One of the more interesting and unexpected results of the research component was in the participation of university students in the studies. The PAMI team feels that one of the most important results of the research component has been the development of a cadre of researchers conversant in social science and anthropological research methods and with experience and interest in issues related to youth. These are likely to stimulate interest in this issue in the future.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the research component was the opening and widening of the public debate on youth. What began as a discussion focused on the visible problem of children in the streets has grown to include the wide range of topics surrounding the rights of the child. The research also provided a solid basis for a debate which was previously idealized and largely without factual foundation.

- ! If further studies are to be carried out, a more quantitative and epidemiological approach should be encouraged in the next phase. In addition, there is a need for operations research in the area of at-risk youth.
- ! A plan should be developed to assure continued availability of the publications after the end of the PAMI grant.
- ! Ways to apply the results in the innovative services component should be sought out.
- ! PAMI should help the OHRO to use the results to improve and narrow the focus of future rights campaigns.
- ! The subgrantees should continue to use the results of the studies to stimulate movement toward full implementation of child rights

¹ *Protocol manual for medical and psycho-social attention of child abuse*

This manual was produced as a final draft in October 1997. It was produced as a result of research project #2 that investigated the management and follow-up of reported child abuse cases by institutions. The manual is extensive and well-documented with a solid bibliography. It defines child abuse, describes typical syndromes and lesions, describes how to carry out a proper clinical history, physical examination and appropriate laboratory test, and includes sample forms that may be used. It also outlines the proper legal and social steps that should be taken by a health professional or institution in reporting and following up of cases. The manual has an excellent table of contents, but lacks an index. The manual remains to be tested by institutions under real conditions. It promises to be an important contribution to the problem of child abuse in Guatemala, and may serve as the basis for similar manuals in other Spanish-speaking countries (though the legal and social sections would have to be modified). We recommend that efforts be made immediately to disseminate this manual and evaluate its usefulness and impact.

IV. PAMI

A. The Organization

Overall, the team was positively impressed by the leadership of the organization of PAMI. The principal personnel interviewed included the Director, Susan Hewes, a bilingual former Peace Corps volunteer and staff worker with considerable experience in South and Central America and with graduate training in public health. She has organized a team of very professional, exceedingly dedicated specialists whose names are included in Appendix II.

The functions of the organization have been grouped into three major areas: coordination of innovative services, research, and administration-finance. Each is headed by apparently capable young persons with evident interest in the mission of PAMI and in the specific organizations that have been aided through sub-grants from USAID-funded PAMI. Clear definition of mission and organization were developed. The staffs of the sub-grantees are provided with appropriate training, technical assistance, monitoring and follow-up by the PAMI staff. Where specialized skills have been needed, PAMI has had the wisdom to foresee these needs and to have recruited within the country and internationally for the specific expertise required. Our indirect inquiries of sub-grant organizations as to how PAMI staff functioned and assisted them led to very positive affirmation of the quality of PAMI assistance. Related to this confidence was the obvious fears

generated by the prospective termination of this support and technical assistance once USAID funding is terminated.

Apparently, the systems designed and installed for financial and administrative control have been more than adequate in providing USAID with the type of management information needed. These systems have had widespread application and installation within the subgrantee organizations through a deliberate, well-planned process of in-service training and technical assistance for staffs of the subgrantees. What still needs improvement is the refinement of monitoring and evaluation data, to provide specific “countable” information about changes in the conditions of the Guatemalan at-risk youth which may be attributable to the projects supported by PAMI.

The portfolio of research topics undertaken by PAMI seem to be practical and useful. The topics reviewed earlier are appropriate for the operational needs of the projects undertaken and help prepare the staffs of subgrantee organizations for doing their own analyses of the community served and the target population. Research findings have been disseminated to the major users of the data and it is likely that other organizations within Guatemala and even within Central America, would benefit from receiving the research findings and publications to help them do similar analytical work. Therefore, PAMI should use some additional publication resources remaining in the budget or seek other sources of support for wider dissemination of their materials.

The six organizations visited and reported upon in Section V of this report are representative of the type of innovative service organizations that have been supported by this PAMI project. These are programs or projects for service to children and adolescents designed in such ways as to break the paternalistic, rigid projects that dominated the scene of service to children for decades in Latin America. The new approaches of PAMI are termed “innovative” or “alternative” because they seek to develop improved social identity within the community to deal realistically with the needs of the children at risk, and to develop a structure that meets the needs of the youth served.

B. Institutional Strengthening and Training

As PAMI began establishing its administrative organization for carrying out this project and began to look at the potential of institutions that might collaborate with PAMI in providing services for the children of the streets of Guatemala, it became clear that many of the potential subgrantees, while bringing a special capability and potential to the program, would need considerable strengthening of their technical capacities to carry out the demanding tasks ahead. To assure effective and efficient use of staff resources in institution building of the type needed, PAMI did a diagnosis of each potential collaborator. They included questions of their

administrative organization, experience in planning, evaluation, and psychosocial services. From this it was possible to develop a plan of technical assistance for each individual group.

Since these assessments, some as early as 1994, PAMI has consistently applied its resources towards technical improvement of these collaborating organizations. This does not mean that their performance has been without blemish, but the recognition of the place for technical improvement through technical assistance and training is a special lesson learned that other groups starting out would benefit from imitating. Program strengthening, needless to say, is very important to the PAMI projects but financial strengthening, especially the monitoring aspect, was a dire need.

PAMI staff reported that there have been many documented cases of mismanagement of funds by NGOs in Guatemala, ranging from simple incompetence to outright embezzlement, and that this situation has led to mistrust of the ability of NGOs to manage funds. In addition, the PAMI team stated that even the strongest of the recipient NGOs had serious weaknesses in their administration and financial management. The tool developed by PAMI for financial monitoring of the subgrantees was considered to be of sufficient usefulness to have been distributed by the USAID Mission in Guatemala to all USAID Missions in Central America for implementation as a tool for subgrant monitoring by the USAID Missions.

Training in administrative and financial management for participating organizations was carried out as a series of three two-day workshops. All recipient organizations participated in these workshops, as did other non-recipient organizations. Each participating organization was encouraged to develop three internal manuals: an organizational manual, a manual of administrative procedures, and a manual of financial management. All participating recipient organizations received intensive individual follow-up and technical assistance in the elaboration and implementation of these manuals and their procedures.

PAMI developed extensive instructional material for this training, complete with concrete examples of how organizational procedures manuals might be written and how forms might be designed. The instructional material has been well documented and is almost ready for formal publication, though this step has not been taken. As of this site visit, the material was available only through PAMI staff, and there was some reluctance to making it widely available. Charging a sum for training using this material was being discussed as one possible modality for PAMI's sustainability strategy after the end of the current cooperative agreement.

PAMI has also developed a standardized system of measuring institutional capacity: the administrative and financial monitoring and evaluation system. This system is objective and could be applied by an outside evaluator or internally by the organization itself. Unfortunately, neither the results of the implementation of these objective indicators, nor comparisons before and after

training that would measure resultant improvements in institutional strength were available during the site visit; however, PAMI staff did report that all recipient organizations had completed their financial and administrative procedure manuals.

The effort to strengthen the NGO recipients of subgrants and other institutions in the areas of administrative and financial management was one of the most impressive aspects of the PAMI project. The success of this aspect of the project owes itself in large part to the talents of the PAMI team's financial manager. Unlike many professional administrators or accountants, he demonstrated unusual skill and interest in organizing and teaching of administrative and financial management to others.

The ultimate goal of improved financial and administrative management is to reduce reports of incompetence, fraud and abuse among institutions, improve the efficiency and efficacy of programs, and to increase the sustainability of programs and institutions. This is, of course, the likely outcome, but whether it actually occurs in real life remains to be demonstrated, and should be monitored.

Observations and Recommendations:

- ! Where there seems to be some needs yet to be met are in the area of self evaluation through the realistic development of indicators. These indicators may be employed directly by most staff to obtain results that are simple, clear and help to guide the redirection of activities. In turn, the activities will more sharply focus the application of administrative actions and human and material resources on problems to be solved.
- ! There are still evidences of the need to continue to apply technical improvements with a view toward making project goals more refined, project interventions less vague, and cause and effect more clearly established.
- ! Whether or not PAMI intends to use the training modules in financial management as part of their sustainability strategy, these should be compiled and formalized so that they may be made available to other organizations in the future.
- ! The tool for the formal assessment of institutional capacity should be systematically applied to the recipient organizations and the results tabulated before the end of the PAMI project. It should also be published and made available to other organizations.

C. Campaign for Children's Rights

Improving the capacity of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office, the OHRO, (Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos, PDH in Spanish) was one of the three original pillars of the Street Children Project, of which support for PAMI and for Casa Alianza were the other two. This aspect of the project originally depended directly on the USAID Mission project officer and did not directly involve PAMI. In June 1995, responsibility for capacity-building of the OHRO was passed directly to PAMI. The only aspect of the work with the OHRO that was available to be examined by the consultants was the annual National Campaign for Children's Rights. These campaigns were undoubtedly the most successful result of the work with the OHRO.

The national campaigns had several different objectives: public education regarding the rights of children, training institutions and authorities about their responsibilities with respect to these rights, and stimulating decentralization of activities in the area of child rights. As part of the last objective, the campaigns sought to strengthen the actions of the departmental branches of the OHRO.

Four complete rounds were carried out, each covering a different geographic region, beginning October 1995 and ending in late 1997. Each round was planned, executed, and then evaluated. The strategy used focused on decentralized mobilization of different sectors of society including health, education, local government, churches, community groups, and media. The campaigns covered a daunting array of topics: family conflict, child abuse, marginalization, education, child labor, drugs and alcohol, armed conflict and its effects, child prostitution, discrimination, and violence in general. While the first three rounds focused on these issues as well as the child rights charter, the last round had the opportunity to coincide with the passage of the new child rights statute, and therefore focused on it. Information was disseminated through meetings, training sessions, promotional events and media.

In all, 8760 people representing 18 sectors of society were trained and 44,330 people reached by events, print media and radio (in television, storyboards were developed but the programs were not produced). Evaluation of the campaigns was carried out using focus groups, and it was felt that the local OHRO offices were indeed strengthened through their own participation. Also, the team published a research volume on population and education (not reviewed by the consultants).

The campaign administrators believe that they have been more effective in their activities because of the thorough training and indoctrination that has been given to field staff and to the general public, because of the participatory principles that have guided the design of the project, and because specific sectors of the public have been identified for direct intervention by the project leaders instead of simply relying on a mass publicity campaign. For example, before entering into a given geographical area a careful community analysis has been carried out so that the local campaign meets the interests and needs of the area served, leaving readied for action a powerful

cadre of local committees and local action groups with the knowledge and motivation to correct the injustices that are uncovered through the process of identification of victims of abuse.

Among the chief difficulties encountered in implementing the campaigns was the fear of authorities and the population at large in becoming involved in any mass campaign due to its past association with trade unions and violence. The fact that the mobilizations were even possible was counted as a victory by the team. This success may be attributable to the “universality” of the issue of child rights. The PAMI team also cited an almost total lack of local baseline information on any aspect of child rights. Even basic census data was found to be deficient and conflicting.

Some interesting lessons were learned from the campaigns. Youth themselves were able to play a much more active and significant role in the campaigns than was originally thought or planned for. The team attributed this to their lack of fear of violence and ability to see previously unseen problems in new ways. The team felt that the focus on the local level was effective and appropriate as was the active involvement of the various sectors of society: those who participate become believers. Unfortunately, impact evaluation was not possible because appropriate data was not collected. Perhaps the most important indicator of impact is whether or not the child rights law is finally signed into law and implemented. One factor that diminished the potential impact of the campaigns was the signing of the peace accord, which officially ended the many years of conflict in Guatemala. This important and historic event unfortunately had the effect of eclipsing the campaign for the rights of youth.

Observations and Recommendations:

Samples of materials produced for the campaigns were not included in the materials presented to the consultants. It would be of value to compile the best of it to share with neighboring Spanish-speaking countries.

V. INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

It is interesting to note that according to the original RFA, the primary goal of the innovative strategies component was to “strengthen institutional capacity of local PVOs to provide outreach, residential health education, and family reunification services in new, innovative ways through the award of sub-grants.” Suggested target groups included “children living on the streets, children working in the informal sector, and children who are the victims of abuse”. Most of the interventions that were foreseen involved outreach, prevention and treatment of STIs and AIDS, drug detoxification, educational support, vocational training, legal assistance, advocacy, shelter, and family and individual counseling.

The innovative services component was the most challenging of all the components of the PAMI project. PAMI prepared and documented this component well, developed a framework outlining areas of action and priority, and developed clear criteria and procedures for selection. The

conceptual framework was coherent with other components. The projects were sorted into the following categories according to area of activity:

1. Right to education, culture, sports, and recreation
2. Right to freedom, identity, respect, and dignity
3. Right to professionalization and protection of youth at work
4. Right to protection from mistreatment (abuse)
5. Promotion of youth participation and democratic processes

Time in country permitted the consultant team to visit six of the projects that have been granted funds by PAMI. The six chosen were representative of all the PAMI projects and demonstrated a variety of project activities that might be considered to include innovations of use to other programs in Guatemala and overseas. As will be demonstrated, the programs that were supported were quite different in vision and scope from those that the original proposal envisioned. This follows the program shift in PAMI from interventions for street kids toward *prevention*.

A. UDINOV

UDINOV, the Integral Development Unit of La Novena, is one of the stronger and better-established organizations to receive support from PAMI. They received support during the first round of proposals plus a renewal. The organization works in the La Mezquital neighborhood (Zone 12) of Guatemala City, an enormous area that was one of the first settlements established after the earthquake, and allegedly one of the most important sources of youth gangs.

Like many organizations, UDINOV began its activities as a crisis shelter, and later changed its focus to prevention. PAMI is funding preventative activities, including youth involvement (“protagonism”), family microenterprise, and a family school. The central activity involves recruiting and supporting community youth promoters, a group of about 40 adolescents who, in turn, carry out activities in the neighborhood. The adolescents meet regularly with the UDINOV team and receive counseling, support, and training. Their main activities in the neighborhood revolve around “street closures,” a sort of block party organized at different sites around the neighborhood in a rotating fashion on weekends. On “cierre” days, the promoters organize activities for neighborhood children and adolescents, including art, handicrafts, games, talks, and street theater, often involving themes related to child abuse, child rights, drugs, violence, and others. This use of neighborhood youth may help lend some sustainability to the program after the end of the PAMI grant.

The staff of this project are young and well trained. They certainly understand their goals and objectives and apparently have taken advantage of the resources for self development that PAMI has brought to their project. They indicate that the important lesson learned has been that it has been difficult for many indigenous people to learn to work together for their common social good and that the project has helped them to achieve the skills in collaborative action that they have traditionally lacked. There has been in the past very little understanding or awareness of the national code for improving civil rights for adults and certainly less about the concern for children's rights. This project is helping to improve community knowledge and acceptance of the code so that eventually it will improve the welfare of children in the area served.

The most innovative aspect of the project is its support of youth as primary protagonists in prevention of problem behaviors in adolescents. UDINOV is among the older organizations working with adolescents, and this presence has helped it to establish a reputation in the area. However, UDINOV's program, like many others that focus on prevention, suffers from a lack of focus on "risk", as well as from a lack of clear indicators of impact. When questioned about these aspects, the team repeatedly answered that "all youth in the neighborhood were at risk," and that participation of children and adolescents in the activities was evidence of impact. This lack of a focus on risk is likely to lead the organization to work primarily with those at lowest risk, since these are the ones most likely to attend their activities. A second weak point of the project is that, in spite of various years of existence, UDINOV still relies heavily on this single source of funding: According to their own estimates, the PAMI grant represents over half of UDINOV's total budget.

B. Conrado de la Cruz

Support to this institution is categorized by PAMI in the group "Right to freedom, identity, respect, and dignity." In the section of the capital known as Santa Marta in Zone 19 is a project to help young Maya girls and women who migrate alone from rural villages to the urban area in search of employment. Many of these girls and young women are employed in factories or as domestic servants, speak little or no Spanish, and are isolated, depressed, and exploited. With PAMI support, the program has trained 17 promoters from the target population itself to seek out and counsel these young women, usually identified in public plazas during their day off work.

The program provides a combination of counseling, leisure activities, vocational training, and education for the approximately 70 young women enrolled (and the one to two new participants that are identified each week). They receive orientation in these areas: labor law and negotiation, child rights, vocational training (tortilla making, textiles), cultural support such as field trips to Maya sites, the Spanish language, and family planning and reproductive health. Also incorporated in the project is participatory experience through group processes such as development of group

consensus and action plans. The group activities try to include exchanges of experiences of the individuals within their present community to help the women gain knowledge and courage for beneficial courses of action and to help them raise their self esteem.

Although the program has developed no firm guidelines regarding minimum or maximum age, or endpoints to participation in the program, nearly all are working girls and young women between 12 and 25, and most eventually leave the program for marriage, better jobs, or for other reasons. In addition, the program does not have a rigid “one size fits all” set of interventions. It adapts services according to the needs of the moment and the individual participants: reproductive health and family planning for those who need it, temporary shelter and meals for others, instruction in Spanish, labor law, or vocational training for some, and simple cultural and social support and leisure for others. The program is one of the few PAMI programs with numerical impact data: 37 participants have negotiated salary raises since the project began. However, the team noted the need to develop more realistic indicators of, for example, the actual wages earned, the numbers of women participating in practical training, or the participation of employers and industry owners in improving working conditions for the participants in this project.

One of the more interesting and creative aspects of the project was the definition, through qualitative research, of personality and needs profiles for the various categories of girl-workers most frequently encountered by the project: domestic servant, factory worker, etc. This allows the team to anticipate and focus their efforts on the probable needs of each specific type of participant. However, the director cited some specific problem situations for which that the program has yet to develop satisfactory approaches: single mothers or those prematurely married, and girls under 14 years of age.

This program has some unique characteristics that appear to have lead to its success. It was an existing institution before it received PAMI support, and this support seems to have genuinely strengthened the institution and helped it reach greater sustainability. In contrast to nearly all the other projects, PAMI support represents only about 30% of Conrado de la Cruz’s funding. Second, the program is overseen by a Filipino priest with an unusually dynamic, progressive and entrepreneurial style. This “outside” perspective may be one of the factors in the project’s success. Third, the program has a very well-defined and narrow focus: aiding rural migrant Mayan girls and young women who have come to the city in search of work to adapt to employment and urban life without being exploited. The project was deemed by PAMI to be sufficiently successful enough that its original grant (March 1995-February 1997) has been renewed and will end only in 1998.

C. Creciendo sin Violencia (Cresvi)

This project was created by PAMI “from scratch” in order to gain experience in the area of prevention of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. PAMI was unable to identify an appropriate NGO working specifically in this area and felt it sufficiently important to overlook sustainability aspects and launch the project on its own. Creciendo sin Violencia, which means “growing up without violence” in English, was approved during the last round of funding in May 1997 and is scheduled to wind up its activities in June 1998. The short timeframe, the fact that the project is a new startup, lack of local experience in dealing with the subject of abuse and neglect, and the selection of one of the most violent neighborhoods in Guatemala City (Colonia La Bethania, Zone 7) for the site all meant that the project would be an extremely difficult one, and it has only recently begun to implement concrete interventions.

The Cresvi team spent its first months in team training, developing objectives and indicators, and designing and carrying out a community-based study on abuse. The study focused on the most fundamental aspects of child abuse and neglect, namely public perception of the problem, without attempting to define its epidemiology, causes, or impact. Nevertheless, the results were interesting in that the problem was largely seen by the public as an intrafamilial one. This directed interventions toward the most basic level: raising awareness that child abuse and neglect are not normal behavior. The study’s conclusions were indirectly supported by the fact that, in one of the two health centers targeted for intervention, no activity was possible due to the denial by the medical director that any child abuse or neglect existed at all in the neighborhood. Other evidence of widespread denial of a problem is the very small amount of time allotted to Cresvi staff for talks and training of staff by a local daycare center (1.5 hours per week), and the local market.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from the Cresvi experience is that in confronting a newly recognized and extremely complex social problem, it is unrealistic to expect sweeping impact results in a very short time. Programs of this type may be more effective in the future if they limit themselves to a more narrow subset of the problem. In only 12 months, the small novice Cresvi team was tasked with defining and studying the problem of child abuse and neglect in its broadest sense (home, school, streets, institutions), defining intervention strategies for each of these, implementing these strategies, and measuring impact. Clearly, this is unrealistic.

The staff of the Cresvi team seem capable and dedicated. The Cresvi team was able to identify four areas of focus: family violence, school violence, neighborhood violence, and institutional procedures for confronting violence. It has developed target populations and interventions for each of these, and work in some of these areas is certain to produce some interesting results in the coming months. Through this effort, the project staff feels that they have been successful in making the community more sensitive to the perils faced by young people and the problems revealed that are associated with widespread physical, sexual and emotional abuse. As with other projects, there still seems to be a need to sharpen the objectives of the project and to develop

simple yet clearly “countable” indicators that would help determine how well the project is achieving its objectives and what additional actions and/or resources are needed. Nevertheless, if the Cresvi team is simply able to build a conceptual framework for abuse and neglect, and to raise public awareness about the problem, this would be a significant accomplishment.

D. Solidarity with Children and Youth (SNJ)

Solidarity with Children and Youth, or SNJ, is a very new project, conceived in 1996 with the mission of supporting and following up with services for the child and adolescent population of two communities in the department of Chimaltenango, approximately a one hour drive from the capital city of Guatemala. Its scope reaches beyond the young population to embrace project activities that will also strengthen the community. SNJ seeks to empower the population by orientation in the principles of child rights and teaching methods for taking necessary action to assure the guarantee of civil rights for young people.

The communities receiving this attention suffer from similar deficiencies: a precarious economic situation, few opportunities for work for both adults and children, low income in general, weak community infrastructure, no organized voice in the community for children’s rights, low level of school attendance, and few opportunities for training, recreation, health services and general infrastructure. These factors make it difficult to carry out SNJ initiatives of harnessing the power of the community to do something constructive about the needs of the young population.

The SNJ staff have developed a concept of a team arrangement between parents and teachers that have a common goal of improving the status of children. The implementing team consists of a well diversified professional group including a psychologist, administrator, teacher of primary education level, methodologist, recreation facilitator, and coordinator. They have held a series of panels and workshops for community representatives and parents, in which the new Child Rights Code, related legislation, press reaction, and other issues are presented. They have also developed a portfolio of community activities including sports and recreation for children principally, but for families as well, that enrich the entire community, which is their target, because they consider the entire community to be at risk.

The program also includes an effort to develop young leadership through a specific training effort that sensitizes young potential leaders to the issues and how to work with children and youth to enrich their lives. The SNJ staff is also seeking new ways to improve the community through efforts at developing small business enterprises, garden projects, poultry raising, and other small income- generating activities.

Since the project is still so new it was difficult for the consultant team to establish just where it was going. At first glance, the objectives and implementation plans seem vague, but we were told

this was partly due to the timidity of the staff facing the consultant team from “the States” and not so much that the goals and direction were poorly conceived. Nevertheless, this seemed to be the least likely of the projects visited to yield useful lessons learned or concepts that might be transported to other agencies in Guatemala or abroad. This is not a criticism but more a fact of the stage of development of the project. The staff appeared to be very intelligent and well motivated and should be revisited perhaps next year to see what results they have produced.

E. EPRODEP

By contrast to SNJ, the EPRODEP project (which means in English -- Studies and Projects of Popular Power or Force) has a very practical, tangible approach combining general education and vocational training that focuses on products that are marketable. At this point it furnishes children with primary education from the first through the third year, but has a goal of expanding over the years to provide complete primary education. It also requires children to have completed the previous years’ course satisfactorily before being admitted to the vocational training elements.

The EPRODEP vocational training activities include carpentry, ironworks, baking, and clothesmaking. A market analysis is done for each product before production is done in earnest. At the present time, it is estimated that about 10% of the cost of maintaining the project is returned through the sale of the products of these small industries, particularly the kitchen, the clothes confection activity, and the ironworks. It is expected that the carpentry shop will soon produce more revenues and contribute along with the others to future sustainability of the project. The project staff also expects that the percentage of project costs contributed by sales of goods produced by the children will lead to their being hired in income-producing situations outside of the project shops.

EPRODEP reaches out to the community as well, through meetings of parents and leaders to explain the concepts being presented to the children and to exhibit the activities as a way of explaining the training institute. While some doubts remain among the parents that this form of education will in fact prepare the children for real life, the staff feels they are making progress in establishing the Institute. The meetings also help EPRODEP to gear up community support to reach out to the children and to convince them of the benefits they will receive from attendance.

This project appeared to be well conceived, well staffed, and realistic in its approach to children and to their outside worlds. It had sufficient time to begin to produce real things and was not a project based on vague theoretical concepts but on actual accomplishments. Their analysis of the community to be served, including the market potential of the products made should be noted by others beginning to consider similar endeavors as a model of implementation.

F. Ceiba

Similar in nature to the EPRODEP the project called Ceiba (after a strong, tall cottonwood or poplar tree growing in this hemisphere and used as a symbol of shelter and protection for the children) provides a combination of basic (alternative) education and vocational training to children of all ages. The program includes special attention to young girls, a series of sport and recreational activities, and attention to health and the environment. A second related effort consists of outreach to prevent drug addiction and to reduce the influence of street gangs on the lives of young children by substituting more attractive group activities including recreation and sports.

Its area of focus is El Limon in zone 18 of Guatemala City, which in previous years was the scene of extreme violence involving organized crime and large street gangs, or *maras*, a situation so fierce that it resulted in a large scale massacre of young people ten years ago. All of the activities, whether recreational, vocational, educational, or community are designed to include attention to the development of a sense of spirituality (not based on any specific religion, however a sense of self-pride, dignity and a strong sense of identity.) Group meetings with children or parents emphasize these points and develop a perception that each can be a leader, influence others to take affirmative actions in support of their own rights, and can solve significant problems among themselves.

For the educational component, special alternative methods of teaching have been developed which, from the experience of the staff, leads to more and more children staying with the program and completing their educational requirements. Children began from the beginning to pay 5 quetzales per month for their school - this has now been raised to 15 quetzales each month. The children are encouraged to continue with their developmental activities through bi-monthly visits to each child from a Ceiba staff member. The Ceiba project now has 80 young people attending high school courses and 60 completing the primary curriculum. There are standards of attendance in school that affect the eligibility of the children to take advantage of the vocational training in bakery methods or ironworks training. Each child must also pay a small monthly fee to attend the bakery training, to cover costs of materials and to develop a sense of personal involvement in seeking new skills.

The Ceiba projects appear from our visits to be well-staffed, self-directed opportunities for the development of competent youth in a troubled, poverty-ridden community. The goals are clearly stated and planning for self-development seems to be an important component of the management process. There is the beginning of development of a system of evaluation that includes indicators, use of appropriate counting methods and data on the target population, and the experience of trying a first self-evaluation using other sources of income through its existing relationships with other international donors, so that it may continue important work in an at-risk community.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

As in other aspects of components of the PAMI project, the initial conceptualization of the problems to be addressed was especially clear. The categories defined by PAMI may prove to be a useful framework for other programs working with at-risk youth. The documentation of the selection process would be useful to other similar projects in the future.

The innovative strategies component expanded far beyond “street children” to include at-risk youth, and beyond the original “management” of the problem to also include a preventive focus

and an emphasis on rights of the child. In spite of programmatic and geographic expansion outside urban Guatemala City, solid innovative proposals were scarce. NGOs working with at-risk youth were generally weaker than was originally foreseen, and the proposal development process unexpectedly became an important part of the institutional strengthening component.

During their visit the consultant team noticed problem areas that were recurrent among the subgrantee projects and it is necessary to call attention to these deficiencies so that future programs and other institutions can avoid making the same mistakes. The following is a list of the main problems the organizations tended to have.

1.) Measuring Impact

There is a striking lack of measurable impact indicators being used by the projects being supported. There is also a general lack of quantitative indicators--it is even difficult to define the number of beneficiaries of the innovative strategies component, much less the impact of the programs. PAMI should support the development and implementation of such indicators in each program.

2.) Focus on Risk

Many of the programs suffer from programmatic "spread"--that is, there is little emphasis on "risk". This can lead to a vision that "all youth are at risk", and consequently, applying preventive measures to the entire population. While all youth are indeed at some risk, more work should be done to define factors that determine risk, how to identify them, and to concentrate efforts on them. Preventive interventions in social science are relatively expensive, and therefore working with entire populations (or neighborhoods) is rarely cost-effective, and can lead one to actually end up focusing on those at lowest risk, as these are the families or youth most likely to participate in programs. The highest-risk, most marginalized families and youth are the ones least likely to participate in a prevention program unless they are actively sought out. One successful example of such a risk focus is the Conrado de la Cruz program, which focuses on young Maya rural to urban immigrant girls.

3.) Measuring Institutional Strength

While PAMI developed instruments for measuring institutional strength which appear to be useful and sophisticated, these have not been systematically applied to the recipient organizations. This should be done, both as a measure of the progress of institutional strengthening, as well as to test and refine the instruments.

4.) Project Sustainability

Most of the institutions being supported are small, fragile, and heavily dependent on PAMI funding. Many of the projects and institutions are worthwhile, but are in danger of ceasing to exist after the end of PAMI funding. Work should begin immediately to help these worthwhile programs secure alternative funding, and to work toward a more "business-oriented" focus. The private sector could be more involved with the programs, especially those programs oriented

toward vocational training and youth involvement.

5.) Innovation

There was less “innovation” than was originally hoped for in this component. Most projects were fairly conservative and conventional: vocational training, counseling, shelters, etc. This mostly reflects the immature situation of the debate on at-risk youth and rights. Among the more creative programs were Saqb’é, not reviewed by the consultants, Cresvi (due to its unusual focus on indigenous migrant working girls), and Ceiba due to its unusual methodology.

Recommendations for the Future:

The consultants drew up recommendations for the PAMI projects, as well as for any projects confronting street children or similar problems, based on the observations they made during the site visit.

1.) From experience with several projects in Guatemala combining general education and vocational education, the following aims should be considered:

A. Make eligibility of children to undertake vocational training dependent upon their willingness to complete the general or basic education at same time; this gives them incentive to prepare themselves generally for the adult world. Also, require children to pay at least a token amount for participating in any of the basic education or vocational training programs. This engages them with more lasting conviction to focus their attention and efforts on self-development.

B. Do a market study to make sure that products coming out of the vocational training effort such as ironworks or bakery products are in demand in the local market and can be sold, so that children have realistic preparation for becoming economically self-sufficient and so that these operations can begin to support the project with income generation.

2.) Do a thorough job of preparing parents and the community in general for the project before initiation. Otherwise, there will be the attitude that the training will not prepare children to find work, or that the time spent in primary education is a waste of time when a child could be out working in the streets to earn money for the family.

3.) Time spent in doing an analysis of the community and/or target population will pay off by assuring more realistic, acceptable project activities because the project was designed to meet the needs of the communities served. This has been demonstrated over and over again throughout the work of the agencies providing innovative services described earlier in this report and through the community analyses done by the staff of the National Campaign for Children’s Rights.

- 4.) Be sure the results of research are thoroughly disseminated to prospective agencies planning to engage in similar work with street children. The research has been proven to provide more realism, more acceptance, and ultimately far more economical results than barging into a target community blind.
- 5.) Spend time organizing groups of leaders, educators, and parents in each community and give them experience working together for a common goal. They generally have not had such opportunities. They will become much more effective learning to pull together than to continue their isolated style of action.
- 6.) Make carefully documented systems for many aspects of financial and administrative management so that all participating agencies in a program are following standardized, acceptable, clearly documented procedures that make possible standardized evaluations because an agreed upon set of indicators is used by all and can thus be comparable.
- 7.) Take time to prepare operating staff to carry out research using acceptable procedures, data gathering, and analysis. This will provide the basis for realistic project activities and for being able to make comparative evaluations useful at all levels of the project operation and for submission to donors as proof of appropriate use of their resources.
- 8.) Taking the time to prepare staff in all cooperating agencies through training and periodic technical assistance so that they can plan, design, manage and evaluate their own projects is a highly effective investment of energy, resources, and central staff time.
- 9.) Use technical assistance to work with all participating agencies to prepare for the future, with the objective of becoming self-sufficient or at least to look to a diverse array of potential donors for ongoing support when current USAID funding terminates.
- 10.) Whenever possible, incorporate the family of participating children into the project, because they can be developed in ways to exert major influence on the child and the community, if supported by the project staff and when given adequate orientation.

VII. PHASEOUT: PROBLEMS AND PLANS

Throughout our visits with the participating organizations one theme was constant: the future of the programs once USAID financing has been terminated. We began with each organization to explore what steps they were planning to take to secure other sources of funding and what possibilities there were of becoming self-sustaining through the marketing of the fruits of their projects. We cited examples of projects in Guatemala and in other countries that might serve as models for them. We explored other production possibilities besides those they were now engaged in. We inquired about the experience of similar organizations in Guatemala, as to their

experience with market surveys and current gaps in production that might be met by the organization currently being visited. We, in short, were attempting some type of reality testing for the viability of the group being examined.

Most of the answers given indicated that there was a certain lack of reality in their current approaches, that perhaps they really had not yet accepted the fact that USAID financing would no longer be dependable in the future and that they must look elsewhere for support. Given that many of the agencies are staffed with intelligent, competent persons, it would seem hopeful that they can now face their future with the determination that they can find answers by exactly the type of analysis they have learned to apply to their programmatic decisions thus far.

Priority issues and options include:

- ! help the recipient NGOs to diversify their financial base through grant preparation, business planning, cost recovery and private sector involvement. This may involve more intensive consultancy, especially in the area of business and financial planning.
- ! develop and apply some quantitative and measurable impact indicators for PAMI as well as helping the NGOs receiving funding through the innovative services component to do the same
- ! evaluate the protocol manual on child abuse in real settings, and then revise and publish it
- ! the institutional strengthening materials (training materials, evaluation materials, and especially, the financial materials) are valuable. There should be some provision for their continued availability and use after the end of the project. Options include 1) publication; 2) sale or gift to another organization that works in institutional strengthening, or 3) continued use by PAMI. The last option could take the form of commercial consultancy and could help with PAMI's sustainability. The materials could be adapted for use by small and medium-sized businesses in addition to NGOs.

It might be useful if USAID has the technical capability within its consultant resources to plan a week-long seminar of several experts to visit Guatemala and sit with any or all of the agencies concerned about their future development. USAID could help by sharing with them the experience and lessons learned by other organizations about how to prepare for the time when there will no longer be support from a large donor such as USAID.

The USAID mission has announced that it will approve a no-cost extension to PAMI through

mid-1998. This is six months longer than planned in the original proposal, and six months shorter than what PAMI requested. It is striking that PAMI has in many ways ignored its own institutional development while it helped other organizations to strengthen themselves. PAMI would have been highly critical of any organization it supports which allowed itself to be exclusively dependent on a single source of funding, thus risking extinction once that funding ceases. Yet, PAMI finds itself in just this situation. PAMI has assembled a highly competent team, amassed a wealth of experience, developed procedures and established its name and reputation in the public debate on child rights. These assets are valuable and should not be discarded lightly.

PAMI urgently needs to invest some time focusing on its own plans for the future as an organization: will it behave as a “project” and simply cease to exist, will it behave more as a “contract agency” and seek another contract or project, even one unrelated to the rights of youth, or will it behave as an NGO and seek means to continue on its present course? Once these issues are resolved, coherent planning for project closeout will be easier. Since the latest revision of the USAID mission’s strategic objectives do not include child rights and street children, continued USAID mission funding is out of the question.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Schedule of Meetings November 12-19

APPENDIX II

Names and Organizations of Sources of Information

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mission to Guatemala

Elizabeth Hogan, Director, Office of Civil Rights and Democratic Inst.

Nelly de de Leon, Project Officer (Guatemala Street Children Project)

CEIBA

Eduardo Guerra, Director

CONRADO DE LA CRUZ

Padre Julian Oyales, Director

CRESVI

Jose Gomez Fallas, Director

EPRODEP

Pablo Ernesto Silva, Director

Juan Carlos Souza Rosales, Carpenter Instructor

PAMI

Susan Hewes, Director

Graciela Dominguez, Coordinator of Projects

Marco Antonio Garavito Fernandez, Coordinator of Research

Luis Erchila, Administrative and Financial Components

PROCURADORIA DE DERECHOS HUMANOS (GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA)

Myrella Saadeh (office is now located at PAMI)

SNJ

Gabriel Zelada, Director

UDINOV

Jorge Luis Sandoval

APPENDIX III

PAMI Research Studies Outline

The studies of the PAMI research component include:

- 1) Annotated Bibliography; published 10/95. The principal finding was that there is little published on Guatemala, and what is available is mostly methodologically weak.
- 2) Evaluation of the impact of institutions that work with street children; published 11/96 (Three volume set: Volumes I and II contain vignettes and depositions of youth; Volume III contains analysis). Findings included the fact that institutions are largely fragmented and ineffective, without standardized methodologies, and that the young people often take

advantage of institutions' "need" to treat them. More attention needs to be paid to the "human side" of street kids.

- 3) Child labor in high risk situations in Guatemala. Volume 1: coffee and lime production published 12/95. Volume 2 construction and fireworks 11/96. Published in single volume 6/97. Findings included that substantial numbers of young people are employed in dangerous situations, and that there is a public awareness of a need for better legislation and enforcement in this area.
- 4) Abuse within the family of adolescent girls in the El Mesquital area; published as a methodological guide for psychological attention of abused adolescents, 11/97. Guides were developed and tested for both girls and boys.
- 5) Attitudes of Guatemalan adults toward children, and street children; published 11/96; reprinted 11/97. The study found that although there is public awareness of the problem of street children, there is little interest in action or programs to ameliorate the problem.
- 6) Investigation of follow-up of child abuse by the various institutions responsible for this follow-up. Publication scheduled for 1/98. This study found, not surprisingly, that follow-up of reports of child abuse is very poor due to lack of knowledge, fear of reprisals, bureaucracy, and lack of supporting institutions and clear legislation.
- 7) The school and its role with respect to street children. Not approved by selection committee, and therefore not carried out.
- 8) Child labor in Guatemala: an analysis of the existing theoretical and practical concepts. To be published 12/97. The study found the debate around the subject of the child labor to be very superficial, polarized, and not admitting the current reality. As a result of the study, a coordinating group of relevant public and non-profit organizations was formed to discuss the issue further.
- 9) The problem of working girls in the duty-free zone of San Lucas Sacatepéquez to El Tejar, Chimaltenango. To be published 12/97. The study found that the poor working conditions (long hours, low pay, etc.) in the factories was negatively affecting the children's' lives.
- 10) Opinion of Guatemalan boys, girls, and youth about child abuse, mass media and social violence, and what it means to be a child in Guatemala. Published as vignettes in the press during 1997. To be publicly presented in January 1998. Final publication together with a third public opinion study on the significance of being young in Guatemala due to be published March 1998. The first study, the only one completed as of yet, found a great

lack of understanding by youth of the issue of abuse and the legal and social options available to them. The study concludes that schools could and should play a larger role in educating youth on this subject.

- 11) Investigation of the situation of youth organization in the education sector in metropolitan Guatemala City; in analysis, publication scheduled for 3/98.
- 12) The problem of working children on the Guatemalan-Mexican border. Under development, scheduled for publication 6/98