

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

October 2007

Since our arrival in Central America in 1974, Save the Children UK has contributed to the construction of a rights based framework, which has led to dramatic changes in the lives of children and young people.

This case study highlights our work in the Caribbean and Central America over the last five years and the changes we have inspired, and is a record of the lessons we have learned, the challenges we have identified and the recommendations we have for all those involved in development work and the defence of human rights, especially the rights of children.

Since the closure of our programme in the Caribbean and Central American (CARICA) in March 2007, the legacy of our work for children continues through the ongoing work of our dedicated partners throughout the region. This particular study focuses on juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The programme

This programme sought to contribute to the reduction of violence committed by and against juveniles. It helped to define and advocated for state policies emphasising prevention and worked to eliminate anti-youth stigma and foment a social and community based culture of prevention that respects the rights of children and adolescents who have run foul of the law or are at the risk of doing so.

The specific goals of the programme were:

- To influence institutional policies and practices in a way that tilted the balance away from purely punitive responses and toward preventive ones.



Imprisoned gang members who wanted out of the gangs had nowhere to go. Their bodies were marked with readily distinguishable tattoos and their lives by death warrants. Their former mates wanted to kill them for leaving the gang, and they still were targeted by members of rival gangs, the police and vigilante death squads.

- To develop preventative community models of intervention to reduce violence among and against young people.
- To defend the right to life of young victims of extrajudicial executions.

Why we did it

Starting in the mid-1990s, thousands of boys and girls facing the stark reality of poverty and limited opportunities for education and employment joined a new type of youth gangs, called "maras," that were an offshoot of gangs based on the West Coast of the United States.

This gang culture was basically deported to Central America. Economic and political refugees from the Isthmus settled in the poor, gang infested barrios of Los Angeles and their children fell in with the Hispanic 18th Street Gang or formed their own Salvatrucha gang, also known as the MS-13. Many of these Central American youth

got into trouble with the law and were deported back to their homelands, taking their gang experience with them.

These deportees found excellent conditions for organizing new gang cells in poverty stricken and corruption riddled Central America. The resulting gangs spread quickly and took effective control of many poor neighbourhoods, which they lived off of via extortion rackets and other forms of crime. They developed a reputation for being even more violent than their U.S. counterparts, prompting a

Contents

The programme	1
Why we did it	1
What we did	2
Our partners	3
Results	3
What we learned	4



Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

severe reaction that included heavy handed police tactics, legal measures of questionable constitutionality and even campaigns of extermination by vigilante groups that practice “social cleansing.”

In this context of extreme violence, Save the Children identified weaknesses in the institutions responsible for dealing with adolescents in trouble with the law. The already under funded juvenile justice systems were quickly overwhelmed by the gang phenomenon and authorities in Central America were slow to respond to the challenge.

We also identified state policies and practices that contributed to creation of the problem rather than helping to resolve it. Far from attacking the root causes of the gang problem, these policies were oriented toward repressing any youth expression that resembled gang customs. In doing so, the policies actually generated discrimination and, with it, more violence, especially against under-privileged youths.

In civil society we discovered a vacuum of support for young people, characterized by the lack of vigorous responses to the killing of hundreds of adolescents in the poor neighbourhoods. We also found the existence of innovative experiences in prevention at the non-governmental level that demonstrated notable success in the reduction of gang related violence.

What we did

Research

Save the Children programming conducted its own research and supported counterparts that carried out studies on a variety of topics related to the gang phenomenon. Those include:

Contribution to the elaboration of independent reports on youths and violence (produced by counterpart the Coordination of Organisations Pro Children’s Rights, COIPRODEN) for the UN Children’s Rights Committee in Geneva; Financing of two field investigations into the gang phenomenon in Honduras carried out by nationally recognised experts; Scientific

exchanges with Salvadoran researchers; Studies of the reform of Article 332 of the Honduran Penal Code, commonly known as the “Anti-Gang Law”; Studies aimed at quantifying the extermination of suspected gang members in Honduras; Collaboration in many studies on the gang phenomenon for universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Central America; and research into the impact of the Law on Juvenile Delinquency on El Salvador’s criminal justice system.

National advocacy

We provided technical and financial support to the formulation of a Youth Code in Honduras and to lobbying for its approval and implementation; the development of a National Police proposal for working with juveniles under the auspices of Honduras’ National Youth Forum; the Forum on Juvenile Delinquency and Community Security in Honduras; training and mobilisation of community resources in 20 urban barrios working with Communities for Peace (COHAPAZ) to demand the end to violence against youths in those poor neighbourhoods; a legislative work group that elaborated the proposed “Law for the Prevention, Rehabilitation and Social Reinsertion of Persons Involved in Gangs”; the Collective for Life and the Roman Catholic Church in their campaigns against the murders of youths; the mobilisation of the national Youth Forum with regard to the Framework Juvenile Law; debate forums co-sponsored with other international agencies (FES, GTZ, etc.); and a reconciliation effort between members of the 18th Street gang and the government.

We provided technical support for: formulation of the Organic Law of the Honduran Institute for Childhood and Family (IHNFA), and its strategic plan; design of the National programme for gang prevention in Honduras; awareness raising campaigns carried out by and with civil society on the issue of widespread murder of young people; and lobbying for creation of the Inter-institutional Commission for the Physical and Moral Integrity of Youth and the Unit for the Investigation of Murders of Minors within Honduras’ National Police.

We lobbied against or supported lobbying against a 1995 move to change the law governing jurisdiction over minors that would have redefined under-aged detainees as juvenile penitentiary inmates; a series of legal initiatives introduced between 1996 and 2006 in an attempt to reduce the age for criminal responsibility from 14 to 12 years; a proposed reform of Article 332 of the Honduran Penal Code that would have increased the penalty for gang membership from a maximum of 12 years in prison to a maximum of 30 years in prison; reform of Article 198 of the Youth Code aimed at increasing detention periods for juvenile offenders to as much as 15 years; reform of the Penal Code and the national constitution of Honduras with regard to legal detention and periods of inquiry; proposed constitutional reform that would have reinstated capital punishment in Honduras; criticisms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and efforts to repeal or reform articles in the Youth Code related to juvenile offenders.

International lobbying

In the international arena we provided technical and financial support for: the elaboration of independent reports by non-governmental networks in Honduras for presentation to the United Nations Children’s Rights Committee in Geneva; Central American working groups and networked NGOs that pushed for approval of Youth Codes in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua; and the presence of independent representatives from Central America in the assembly of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH), New York office.

We also participated in interchanges with Amnesty International on the summary execution of minors; lobbying of Amnesty International HQ in London to obtain support for a campaign against those killings; consultations between the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) and senior Honduran officials; relations with human rights organisations in Los Angeles, California, USA; and support of the Latin American Network on Children’s Rights.

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

Community mobilisation

We supported mobilisations of Communities for Peace (COHAPAZ) and Casa Alianza, the Central American branch of Covenant House, against the extrajudicial execution of minors; and provided support to the National Youth Forum of Honduras in its struggle for effective implementation of the Youth Law in that country.

Building the model of community intervention

We supported the creation and implementation of a community governance model against Social Violence in the Rivera Hernández sector of San Pedro Sula, an industrial city in northern Honduras. Rivera Hernández is a sprawling complex of urban slums that is home to some 100,000 people and was a centre of gang activity. Save the Children support for community model piloted there included work with the authorities on a pilot community policing project, support for co-operative enterprises formed by former members of juvenile gangs, including the Co-operative of Multiple Services, and a micro-enterprise and vocational centre for young women who had been in gangs and were seeking reinsertion into society.

Strengthening networks

We worked to support and strengthen the National Network of Municipal Defenders of Children; the Collective for Life, Peace and Justice which was co-founded by Save the Children UK (a collective dedicated to investigating the summary executions of minors); the network of human rights organisations and Children and Adolescents of Central America (various regional networking initiatives); and the Central American Coalition of Non-governmental Organisations against Violence.

Strengthening of institutions

We provided extensive support to the Honduran non-governmental organisation Forward Honduran Youth – United We Advance (JHA-JA), a pioneer with respect to research of the Central American gang phenomenon and progressive responses to it. We provided the organisation with

training about the Inter-American System of Human Rights, funded its research and supported its organisational development. We also co-founded and provided extensive logistical support to the Collective for Life, Peace and Justice in Honduras.

Supporting youth participation

We strengthened and broadened participation in Honduras' National Youth Forum and its affiliate Youth Forum of the Sula Valley, (a national network working on youth issues run by youth). We also supported a group of ex-gang members called "Generation X", formed with the help of our San Pedro Sula counterpart JHA-JA.

Our partners

In Honduras

Forward Honduran Youth – United We Advance (JHA-JA, San Pedro Sula); Group Generation X (San Pedro Sula); Christian Youth Association (Central District affiliate of the YMCA); National Youth Forum; Permanent Centre Against Torture; Jesuit Reflection, Research and Communication Team; Centre for the Research and Promotion of Human Rights; Peace and Justice Project of the Mennonite Church; Committee of Relatives of Massacre Victims; Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared of Honduras; Coordination of Private Institutions for Children and their Rights; State's Attorney for Children and the Disabled; One Opportunity for the Children Coordinator; and the 21st Century Network

In El Salvador

Foundation for the Study and Application of Law; Network for Infancy and Adolescence; Save the Children Sweden; and Community Youth Development

In Nicaragua

Coordinator for the Defence of Children's Rights (CODENI); and Save the Children Norway and Sweden

In Guatemala

Coordinator of Institutions for the Promotion and Defence of Children's Rights; Social



"My vision is to continue working with young people and to create spaces for them. Generation X is opening its own vocational centre so they have such as space."

Head of Generation X and former gang member Jorge Sabillon (left).

Movement for the Defence of Children's Rights; CEIBA Association; Alliance for Community Youth Development; and Save the Children Norway, Sweden, and Denmark

In the United States

"Without Borders" of Los Angeles, California

Results

Direct benefits to children

The lives of numerous children and adolescents were saved in the Rivera Hernández, San Pedro Sula, during the operative period of the Model of Community Governance. The homicide rate was reduced from one death every two days prior to the project to one death every 45 days during the project.

Thirty former leaders and members of MS-13, 18th Street and the "Vatos Locos" gangs in Rivera Hernández sector have left

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

their respective gangs and are seeking re-integration into the community and society. Another 30 former gang members working with the project left their gangs in Lomas del Carmen and Chamelecón sectors.

At least 10 of these former gang members have managed to undertake some sort of employment, a crucial step toward reintegration into the community and productive society. A high rate of unemployment persists, however, due to discrimination against former gang members. At least 30 former gang members have acquired vocational skills in the areas of silk-screening, welding, and tortilla making, and the Multiple Youth Services Cooperative organised by this project continues to promote employment opportunities for these former gang members and other young people from the community.

The treatment of the children of former gang members has improved due to the education their parents have received through the project. Participating youth have improved physical and mental health after receiving medical attention, and ten of these have received support in overcoming drug addiction.

Advocacy in public policy

The Community Governance model allowed the people of Rivera Hernandez to take back their streets. During the model's operation the population regained its confidence in the use of public spaces, like parks, which had been nearly abandoned for fear of crime.

The model managed to gain the respect of officials of the "Peace and Co-existence programme", a municipal public security programme funded by the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) in San Pedro Sula, as well as that of municipal officials in Puerto Cortés. Officials in both cities recognised the model's potential for replication in their jurisdictions. We noted greater community control over the actions of police officers, while the police regained a measure of public trust thanks to the work of the Community Policing component.

Youth who left the gangs provided a positive example and influence over other children at risk of joining violent youth gangs.

In November 2001, the Honduran National Congress approved legislation establishing the obligation to create a National Prevention programme for youth related violence. One of the books published by Save the Children-UK with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), "The gangs in Honduras", was adopted by legislators as a basis for drafting the Gang Prevention Law.

Save the Children UK was able to position itself as the international agency with the most expertise on violent youth gangs in Honduras.

We interested some members of the private business sector in San Pedro Sula in supporting prevention and community rehabilitation projects and the programme improved the perception of participating youths within the community and the police department.

We helped place the issue of extrajudicial executions of children and adolescents on the national agenda, working with the Collective for Life, Peace and Justice, and we successfully blocked a regressive legislative proposal with respect to children's rights.

We managed to convince the 18th Street gang, through negotiation, to limit its actions against former gang members to self-defence.

Summary execution of minors

The programme helped focus the attention of the Honduran government, civil society, and the international community on the problem of summary executions of young people, a disturbing trend that appeared in the mid-1990s. The Honduran government recognized that such executions had occurred, and that members of the National Police had participated in some of the killings.

The national and international public advocacy campaign, undertaken by the programme with the Collective for Life, Peace and Justice, contributed to the creation of the Permanent Commission for the Protection of the Physical and Moral Integrity of Children. This commission created the Special Unit for Investigation into the Deaths of Minors, within the National Police. Member organisations of the Collective then supported the special investigation unit's efforts, providing valuable

information in cases of summary executions and leading to the identification of those responsible for some of the deaths.

On this and other issues regarding children and violence, the collective developed a coherent alternative discourse that consistently advocated balancing the government's primarily punitive approach with an increased emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation. This debate raised awareness among certain sectors of Honduran society about the prevalence of the summary execution of minors and about the consequences and limitations of the government's one-sided approach to resolving social problems. Among those who gained a broader understanding of the issues were national and international human rights organisations and justice system operators.

Networks

The community governance model

The community governance model was constructed around a working team of concerned individuals drawn from the private and social sectors who first came together under the Rivera Hernandez Sector Development Committee. Without the dedicated teamwork of these core individuals the programme would not have achieved the results listed below.

The model's networking efforts were extended to the international level through contacts with the Central American Coalition for the Prevention of Youth Violence. Support for the involvement of counterpart JHA-JA in the model helped establish the organisation as an authority on the issue of gang prevention.

The Collective for Life, Peace and Justice

The Collective for Life, Peace and Justice brought together local and regional human rights organisations around the issues of capital punishment, reduction of the age for prosecution as an adult, and the reforms to Article 332 of the Penal Code known commonly as "the anti-gang law", among other issues. The collective provides a space for reflection and discussion and is a point of reference for other human rights organisations. Efforts to deal with these issues are better coordinated because of it.

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala



Generation X sends envoys into the poor neighbourhoods of San Pedro Sula to counsel children to stay in school and out of the gangs. Here association vice president David Ortiz speaks about self respect to a group of youths whose geographic and economic situation puts them at risk for gang recruitment.

Participation

The programme and partner JHA-JA helped former gang members achieve a voice through the formation of an association called Generation X, which provides its members with a mutual support network while acting as a platform for public advocacy activities and community rehabilitation and prevention efforts.

The programme succeeded in validating youth participation in the eyes of community leaders involved with the different aspects of implementation. Adults said they were impressed with the level of interest displayed by the youth and with the quality of their input on key issues. Steps were taken to ensure this input at every step of the process.

Several former gang members participating in the programme have gained leadership in the broader youth movement through participation in forums and organisations.

Partner JHA-JA involved youth at the level of its board of directors as well as in project design and implementation. One group of 15 young people in the Rivera Hernández Sector extended their organisational efforts into the economic arena via formation of the Multiple Youth Services Cooperative.

Advances against discrimination

The programme was able to reduce the amount of discrimination faced by former gang members by incorporating them into broader community governance activities. Relations between the community and the former gang members improved along with perceptions. Improved community relations had a positive impact on the former gang member's standing within their own families.

At least a dozen female former gang members who had been ostracized by community and society were reintegrated into education or the work force.

What we learned

The community governance model

Prioritisation of programme activities

Effective strategic planning should prioritise programme activities, identifying which aspects are crucial in the beginning stages, what inter-institutional coordination is prerequisite, and what training will be needed to prepare programme personnel and participants. Resource management should be carefully staged as it is likely that initial support will be limited until the programme can prove itself to potential sponsoring agencies which might initially be put off by such high-risk programming.

Given the experimental nature of this programming, initial socialisation of project goals should be conservative and realistic so as to avoid disappointment and disillusion with the process if it does not develop quickly.

Participating actors

It is important to encourage broad non-politically aligned participation in the model, rather than limiting direct participation to a select group of leaders. Limiting participation in the model will limit its potential results. Different sectors bring a greater variety and often complimentary skill sets to the table while broadening community support for the initiative.

Families have an important role to play in this process. Work with parents and siblings can ease the reinsertion of former gang members into society, and instruction with regard to taking care of their own spouses and children can help to break the vicious cycle of domestic violence and abuse often associated with the incorporation of youths into street gangs. The youths need orientation that few if any have ever received with regard to roles within their family, respect for rights within the home, non-violent conflict resolution, and adequate sex education.

The complexity of youth violence associated with gangs should not be underestimated. It is the product of historical structural factors beyond the scope of programming and these causes cannot be quickly remedied. Transforming the reality of social risk for youths in conflictive neighbourhoods may well require more time than generally allotted for project implementation and programme staff must be flexible, ready to adapt to changing circumstances in the target community. In the words of one of the Model's chief architects, Fermin Lainez, "The reality always trumps any technical or theoretical proposal, and as such, the model is a proposition that can never attain an absolute conclusion."

The youth the programme seeks to assist must become its primary protagonists. Our experience shows that they are the most interested parties, pursuing substantial

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

change in their lives with the same conviction and force of will that had ensured their survival in the face of life's substantial daily risks. Programme staff should therefore employ a theoretical and methodological framework that corresponds to the perspective and logic of the chief protagonists, the involved youths. Results will in the end depend on the programme's ability to increase the capacity of participating youths to find and implement their own solutions.

In working with these youth who have been ostracized and worse by their society, programme personnel should not be surprised by the depth or the personal nature of the relationships they form with the youth. The identification of these social outcasts with the facilitating organisation proved to be especially strong because of the novelty of finding a source of support and institutional protection, and due to the environment of trust, freedom and solidarity implied by this type of undertaking.

Gender issues in gang violence

Gender issues must be taken into account when working on the issue of gang violence. Participants are coming from a highly regimented gang atmosphere where relationships are defined by power and blanketed in machismo, including extreme physical and sexual abuse of females by their male counterparts. Care must be taken to ensure that this macho culture does not transfer to the new forms or organisation used by former gang members, and special attention should be paid to the abuse females endured within the gangs.

Masculinity and gender must also be taken up with males whose senses of these issues have been warped by membership in gangs that equate violent action with manliness and make it a condition for achieving status.

Religion in reform and rehabilitation

While the promotion of spirituality was not a component of this model, it is important to recognize the importance of religion to the reform and rehabilitation process. The gangs use traditional Catholic symbols inherited from their Latino predecessors in the United States. In the past, they

allowed for joining of a church as one of the only legitimate ways to leave the gang. Local priests or pastors have been at the forefront of gang rehabilitation activities in many of the communities plagued by youth violence. Generation X members display an uncommon religious fervour and often equate leaving the gangs with salvation before God. These youths have inflicted and been subject to intense levels of violence and they find in religion a way to get past those brutal experiences. Most left the gangs only after hitting a psychological bottom that included contemplation of suicide. Through religion they seemed to find not only redemption but a new reason for carrying on and encouragement in facing the difficulties they continued to confront. Religion also provides former gang members with an important point of reencounter with the rest of Honduran society.

Programme design in a violent context

The violence that this model aims to prevent, especially the exaggerated rate at which the target population is being killed, places special demands on programme design and implementation. Security mechanisms are a must and should be adjusted in line with constant monitoring and evaluation of the security situation. Care must be taken not to inflame sensibilities that could lead to additional violence or put programme personnel and participants at risk. Personnel should be given adequate health support, including in the psychological arena.

Our experience led to the development of five pre-requisites for the implementation of this model: a) a process of social intervention that allows staff to get to know the community actors and to design ways of interacting with them; b) feasibility studies for the different options of training and workforce insertion; c) analysis of the presence of groups in the community that represent a risk for those youths who decide to participate (i.e. active gangs, groups involved in organised crime, vigilante groups, etc.); d) training in the areas contemplated for working with the youths; and e) strengthening of administrative and managerial capacity with respect to meeting donor requirements while maintaining the flexibility to respond to changing conditions in the street.

Vocational training and actual productive activities proved a powerful stimulus for youth to overcome their conflict with the law, reduce their physical risk and seek new horizons through reinsertion into society. Accompanied with the right amount of psychological and logistical support, and sports or cultural forms of recreation, economic enterprises established through the programme became a vehicle for the desired reinsertion.

Any programme working with former gang members must be prepared to deal with drug abuse problems among participants and in the community. Special care must also be taken because of the ties between drug traffic, the gangs and even the police.

Firearms have an important place in the cycle of violence plaguing poor urban neighbourhoods like Rivera Hernandez and Chamelecon. Effort should be made to foster processes of negotiation and reconciliation within the neighbourhoods. A project to get guns off the street by exchanging them for items or services in demand with youths might be a viable option for lowering the level of violence.

The police historically have been another source of violence in these communities, and more recently have also been a target of gang violence. It is necessary to have a profound understanding of the operations and capabilities of police in the target community, as well as their policies with regard to the humane treatment of citizens, suspects and detainees. You can expect to have to intervene on the behalf of project participants who are detained and to advocate respect for their human rights. These activities will also contribute to improving the image of the police department and respect for the law within the community.

Community members with maternal or paternal attributes and who were willing to offer love, guidance and solidarity proved most effective in reaching out to children who had fallen in with gangs. Participating community leaders should be carefully trained and sensitized to Save the Children standards before working directly with youth gangs. Establishing clear ground rules at the outset helps ensure consistent cooperation during project implementation.

Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

Generation X achieved a high level of organisation during the life of the programme. Future efforts should focus on projecting their message of reconciliation to larger audiences. Their story has been reported internationally, but should now be focused closer to home in order to counter the discrimination and rejection felt there. JHA-JA, as the technical organisation that supported the creation of Generation X, should continue to accompany these youth leaders in their journey while documenting and socializing their experience and this model for addressing youth violence.

It is important to introduce a component of public communication so that successes can be relayed to the general public and awareness raised with regard to the existence of effective alternatives to the problem of violence and youth.

When organising communities around projects attending to former gang members, you must be prepared to address the unique and at times antagonistic interests of participating community groups, like churches. Care must be taken so that the project does not become a vehicle for the furtherance of separate institutional ambitions or for the imposition of a separate institutional vision on participating youth.

Vocational and employment opportunities proved essential to maintaining youth involvement in the project. These types of enterprises should be established in neutral territory, not controlled by any

gang. Care should be taken to minimize rivalry between gangs. Sporting events pitting former rivals against each other, for example, have a potential for reviving old but deeply engrained animosities.

Working with youths in vocational activities requires special knowledge and skills, and facilitating organisations should enlist the help of specialized entities for this purpose. The Polígono Don Bosco in El Salvador is one example.

The specific needs of female participants should be taken into account when providing vocational training. Separate facilities were preferable in this case due to extreme male dominated experience within the gangs.

The perseverance of Generation X despite the killing of 30 of its members and the organisation's continued commitment to non violence in the face of such adversity must be characterized as a triumph of this model of integrated attention to youth violence, developed by JHA-JA, the community and the participating youth groups.

The Collective for Life, Peace and Justice

Lessons in political advocacy

Effective political advocacy is fundamental to achieving the changes pursued by this collective of organisations united by a concern for human rights. The collective was most effective when it was able to respond to crisis situations with well thought out and technically detailed proposals for public action.

International allies can be very important when the social and political climate of a country is marked by high levels of violence or repression. The government's desire to be held in favourable regard by international opinion with respect to human rights compliance can be used as leverage to increase the influence of human rights organisations.

Organising a collective

Diversity among members of a network or inter-institutional space creates potential for shared learning and resources. A properly functioning collective requires a well-defined structure and membership and a high level of personal and institutional commitment. The broader interest that unites the collective must be channelled through a coordinated plan of action.

Commitment was key in our experience because proper functioning of the collective depends in great measure on the participating organisations completing their assigned tasks. Group cohesion depended on member organisations feeling like the collective represented their interests, but care must be taken to separate those individual agendas from that of the collective.

Organisations grow and develop when conditions are right, and they should have the flexibility to respond to changing conditions. Where there is willingness and commitment, financing is not an obstacle.

Other learning case studies from the Caribbean and Central America

- [Child labour and poverty reduction in Honduras & Guatemala](#)
- [Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala](#)
- [Child participation in Cuba](#)
- [HIV and AIDS in Jamaica](#)
- [Advocacy in public policy in Honduras](#)
- [Emergency preparedness in the Caribbean and Central America](#)

Feedback:

If you have any comments regarding any of the issues highlighted in this case study or are interested in acquiring further information on "Juvenile justice in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala" or any of our other work in the Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and South East Europe region, please contact the LACMESEE Regional Office at lacmesees@savethechildren.org

Learning case studies:

This case study is one of a wider series focusing on learning from experience in key areas of our programmes work. If you have ideas for topics we should examine in other learning case studies or any other comments please contact Gema Vicente at g.vicente@savethechildren.org