
**EXTERNAL MIDTERM EVALUATION
OF THE
YOUTH PATHWAYS CENTRAL AMERICA
YPCA**



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This report describes in detail the interim evaluation conducted in April 2018 of the Youth Pathways Central America (YPCA) Project. Dan O’Brien, Ena Lilian Nunez, and Cecilia Hernandez, independent evaluators, conducted the evaluation in conjunction with YPCA project team members and stakeholders. The evaluation team prepared the evaluation report according to the contract terms specified by O’Brien and Associates International, Inc. The evaluators would like to thank the youth, their families, school directors and teachers, and government officials who offered their time and expertise throughout the evaluation of YPCA in Honduras and El Salvador. Special thanks go to the YPCA staff for their highly effective coordination of the field work in Honduras and El Salvador.



**O’BRIEN &
ASSOCIATES**
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CONAMYPE	National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprise (<i>Comisión Nacional de la Micro y Pequeña Empresa</i>)
CONMIGRANTES	National Council for the Protection and Development of Migrants and Their Families (<i>Consejo Nacional para la Protección y Desarrollo de la Persona Migrante y su Familia</i>)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DGME	Government Office on Immigration and Aliens (<i>Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería</i>)
DINAF	National Directorate for Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (<i>Dirección Nacional de la Niñez, Adolescencia, y Familia</i>)
FUNADEH	National Foundation for the Development of Honduras (<i>Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo de Honduras</i>)
FUSADES	Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (<i>Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo Económica y Social</i>)
ICT/ICT4D	Information Communication Technology/for Development
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILAB	Bureau International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
INFOP	Institute for Professional Training (<i>Instituto de Formación Profesional</i>)
INJUVE	National Institute for Youth (<i>Instituto Nacional de la Juventud</i>)
INSAFORP	Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (<i>Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional</i>)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISNA	Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Childhood and Adolescence (El Salvador – <i>Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia</i>)
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MINED	Ministry of Education
MTPS	Ministry of Labor and Social Provision (<i>Ministerio de Trabajo y Provisional Social</i>)

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
STSS	Secretary of Labor and Social Security (Secretaria de Trabajo y Seguridad Social)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCRI	U.S. Committee on Refugees and Immigrants
USDOL	United States Department of Labor/Department of Labor
UTEC	Technological University (<i>Universidad Tecnológica</i>)
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor
YPCA	Youth Pathways – Central America

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

On July 29, 2015 the U.S. Department of Labor’s (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) awarded Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners USD 13,000,000 to implement the Youth Pathways Central America (YPCA) project. The original end date for the project was August 31, 2019. The grant was modified in September 2107 to make several programmatic changes, including adding new geographic locations and increasing the amount of the grant to USD16,478.

The project targets youth 12 to 25 years of age. For children ages 17 and younger, the project targets youth who are at risk of being engaged in child labor, in particular those at risk of being recruited into gangs or engaging in illicit activities. For youth 18 to 25, the project targets youth who have a family member who is engaged in or at risk of being engaged in child labor. The overall goal of the project is to reduce the prevalence of child labor (CL), hazardous child labor, and irregular work among at-risk children and youth in El Salvador and Honduras.

Findings and Conclusions

Relevance

By focusing on employment, YPCA is addressing the key priorities of the project beneficiaries as well as the priorities and policies of government in both Honduras and El Salvador to address violence in high-crime neighborhoods. Project partners are providing a combination of training in both traditional and non-traditional topics.

Validity of Project Design

The project’s theory of change states that IF children and youth are motivated to remain in school, have access to education or employment or self-employment opportunities, and benefit from social protection services THEN their participation in formal or non-formal education and *acceptable employment* or self-employment will increase, which will, in turn, decrease the prevalence of child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work. Although the term *acceptable employment* does not exist in the labor field, the project’s comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (CMEP) defines it as work that meets at least two of the following criteria: income equal to or greater than the minimum wage, full-time work, verbal or written contract, and social insurance or pension.¹

¹ “YPCA Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Project Performance

Outcome 1. While the project is meeting or exceeding indicator targets for the number of children and youth provided educational or vocational services and the percent of Career Connect Club participants regularly attend classes, nearly 54 percent of the participants drop out of the clubs, which is well below the target of dropout rate of 20 percent (80 percent retention rate). The project has not measured and reported two indicators for Outcome 1 that include percent of club members who improve social skills and who improve perception about school activities.

Outcome 2. While the project is generally on track to meet its indicator targets, the project is underachieving one of the most important indicators, which is the percent of YouthBuilder program participants who obtain employment. The project set a target of 30 percent but has only achieved 18 percent. On the other hand, the project set a target to graduate 80 percent of all YouthBuilder participants and is achieving 72 percent, which is close to the target and reflects that participants are overall satisfied with the program.

Outcome 3. The project is underachieving the number of households benefiting from social protection services (30 percent) while overachieving the number of households enrolled in the Strong Families program and the percent of families that complete the program (105 percent). However, the project is significantly underachieving the indicator targets for the number of youth and families referred to local institutions (15 percent) and the number of youth provided emergency shelter (one percent)

Effectiveness of Strategies

The *Career Connect Clubs* are very popular among students who participated in them. Many of the school directors and teachers credit the clubs to improving motivation and grades. While those students who participate attend class regularly, the clubs have a high dropout rate that often times is the result of parents deciding to take their children out of the clubs to work or, in some cases, the family moves to another location. The project has had difficulty recruiting and keeping volunteers, which are critical to the success of the clubs. The decision, however, to use more teachers and parents as volunteers has helped address this problem.

The *YouthBuilder* program appears to be effective at preparing youth for employment. The soft skills component is especially effective at improving confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, self-awareness, and attitudes toward both life and work. Challenges that the project faces include many employers require employees to have a high school diploma, which is not the typical YouthBuilder beneficiary profile. Other challenges are well-documented discriminatory hiring practices, difficulty recruiting youth due to competition from other employment projects, and the lack of seed capital to start businesses.

In the *Youth Community Connect* program, project field teams provide effective counseling and psycho-social therapy to children and youth beneficiaries. The project has been less effective at linking these beneficiaries and their families to local institutions that provide

social protection services. Placing children and youth in emergency shelters is not functioning due to a variety of legal obstacles.

The *Strong Families* program is another project intervention that appears to be transformational for those who participate. The Strong Families workshops have helped improve the relationships between children and youth beneficiaries and their parents. One of the few weaknesses of the program is a low participation rate among parents, many whom have work responsibilities.

The project's *Migrant Campaign* reflects its strategy to address returning migrants and implement a communication campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the dangers associated with migration such as child labor, hazardous working conditions, and forced labor. Since the campaign was only beginning at the time of the midterm evaluation, it was too early to assess its effectiveness.

Effectiveness of Project Management

YPCA's organization structure is generally appropriate given the project's strategies and the fact that the project is being implemented in two countries. Since the project's director and deputy director are located in Honduras and the project does not have a leadership position in El Salvador, it is not possible for project leadership to attend some key events in El Salvador. The staffing of the implementing partner field teams also is appropriate. A communications specialist was recently hired to lead the migrant campaign and has started to develop an overall communication strategy, which is highly appropriate.

Sustainability

The project's components, as designed, are not sustainable because they require substantial resources to pay staff to implement them, purchase materials, provide incentives to club volunteers in some cases, and pay meals and transportation for YouthBuilder beneficiaries. The implementing partners nor other stakeholders are able to assume responsibility for continuing to implement project activities as currently configured. However, some of the strategies and their impacts have strong chances of being sustained. The best chance to sustain the Career Connect Clubs is if Fe y Alegria decides to adopt the clubs and implement them in its educational centers. CRS has taken important steps to sustain the YouthBuilder model by institutionalizing it within national vocational training agencies and local governments. While the Strong Families and Community Youth Connect strategies will be difficult to sustain, the impact these strategies have had on children, youth, and their families is sustainable, in the short to medium term.

Lessons and Best Practices

- To address the problem of gang-controlled areas, the project divided the field team into two sub-teams that allowed youth from the two gang-controlled areas to participate.
- The project implemented pilot activities that allowed project partners to gain valuable experience and adjust methods and tools in preparation for formal implementation while it was waiting for the CMEP to be completed and approved.

- Glasswing El Salvador conducts informal surveys by visiting and interviewing local businesses and manufacturers to determine the job opportunities and the required skill sets for those jobs.
- To address the high attrition rate of club volunteers, the project started to recruit teachers, parents, and other community members because they have stable jobs and live near the schools.
- To gain the support of teachers, club coordinators have started to orient the teachers about the club objectives and activities and involve them.

Recommendations

Internship Program. YPCA should develop a set of standards to guide its internship program to ensure that the internship experience is a learning opportunity and that labor rights are protected. The standards should include job descriptions, learning objectives, workdays, work hours including breaks, supervision, and roles and responsibilities including who is responsible for paying medical bills in case of an accident.

Discriminatory Hiring Practices. YPCA should clearly indicate discriminatory and illegal hiring practices during the YouthBuilder program so youth understand their labor rights including discrimination based on residential areas, strip searches looking for tattoos, pregnancy tests, and polygraph tests. In particular, the project should not coach youth on how to take polygraph tests, which the evaluators believe is contrary to the values that are taught during the YouthBuilder program.

Strengthen the Definition of Acceptable Employment. YPCA and USDOL should discuss how to strengthen the definition of *acceptable employment* so it complies with national labor laws and approximates the ILO's definition of decent work.

Revise Employment and Education Targets. YPCA should consider reclassifying the employment and education insertion targets so that the employment indicator target is reduced while the education target is increased.

Monitoring and Evaluation Training. The YPCA M&E team should train implementing partners and their field teams in the basics of the CMEP focusing on how information they gather are used for both decision-making and reporting including how indicators are measured.

Child Care for Young Mothers. YPCA should develop a range of simple and easy to implement child care options for young mothers who want to participate in the YouthBuilder program. The evaluators recommend that the project not take responsibility for providing child care itself due to the range of legal requirements and legal risk in case of accidents.

Professional Development for Field Teams. YPCA should assess the professional development needs of the field teams and, based on the findings, provide training and other professional development activities to ensure the teams have the knowledge and skills they require to deliver the project's interventions.

High Field Team Turnover Study. YPCA should work with the implementing partner organizations to conduct a study to determine the reasons for the high turnover of project field team staff.

Employment Strategy. YPCA, including the implementing partners, should review each partner’s approach to identifying internship and employment opportunities and placing YouthBuilder graduates in these opportunities to determine the most effective strategies and lessons.

Communication Specialist and Strategy. YPCA should convert the communication specialist from a part-time to full time position so she has the time to develop and oversee an effective project communication strategy.

YouthBuilder Ability and Interest Tracks. YPCA should develop different tracks that respond to the different abilities and interests of YouthBuilder beneficiaries. These should include: an educational track, a job track, and entrepreneurial track.

Review and Revise Indicators. YPCA M&E team should review the current set of indicators in the CMEP to determine their utility in measuring key outcomes and make the appropriate adjustments. In particular, the project should review the following indicators: 2.3 (business plans); 2.1.2 (local labor markets); 2.2.1 (psychological scales); 2.2.2 (youth starting YouthBuilder); 2.3.1 (businesses contributing to the program); 2.4.2 (public officials attending training events); and 3.1.1 (families starting Strong Families).

Local Labor Market Surveys. YPCA, including the implementing partners, should identify the different approaches being used to assess local labor markets, the successes and challenges, and how that information is used to determine the vocational training topics.

Comprehensive Sustainability Plan. YPCA should update its current sustainability plan and matrix so it provides a current and clear roadmap to sustainability.

Meal and Transportation Policy. YPCA should work with the implementing partner organizations to develop an inclusive and competitive meal and transportation policy, including a budget, that provides nutritious meals and safe transportation to all Career Connect Club and YouthBuilder beneficiaries.

Technological University, El Salvador. YPCA should use the agreement that it signed with Technological University (UTECH) to develop an alliance where the project transfers the YouthBuilder model to UTECH who agrees to use the model to train vulnerable youth in soft and technological skills and place them in internships and jobs using its rich connections with the private sector.

I. CONTEXT AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1. Context

Studies indicate that the main causes of youth violence in Latin America include inequality, high unemployment for youth, increased school dropout rates, and disintegration of family structures.² High income inequality and slow growth mean that there are few economic opportunities for young people in El Salvador and Honduras.³ There is also a mismatch between job skills and the labor market and the fact that youth lack the academic preparation they need to enter the workforce and be competitive.⁴ For example, the average number of years of schooling in Honduras is four while the average number in El Salvador is six; only about 30 percent of youth graduate from high school.⁵

According to national household surveys, more than 750,000 youth in Honduras and 250,000 youth in El Salvador are unemployed or out of school. Youth living in high-crime urban areas are exposed to violence and are at risk for recruitment into and exploitation by gangs, which is a form of worse forms of child labor (WFCL). Key risk factors for urban youth living in high-crime neighborhoods include low academic performance, aggressive behavior, dysfunctional families, deep trauma from long-term poverty, and threats of gang violence. These risk factors limit youth’s development of social and academic skills.

Discriminatory hiring practices also limit job opportunities for youth living in high-crime neighborhoods. For example, some businesses refuse to interview youth from high-crime areas while others physically check youth for tattoos and conduct pregnancy tests. The administration of polygraph tests, although illegal, is a common practice in the interviewing process for some larger businesses. Gang control over many areas means that youth from one area are frequently unable to cross rival territory to access jobs or training centers without a beating and death threats. Those starting a business face extortion threats.

1.2. Project Description

On July 29, 2015 the U.S. Department of Labor’s (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) awarded Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners US \$13,000,000 to implement the Youth Pathways Central America (YPCA) project. The partners included Fe y Alegria and Glasswing International and the original end date for the project was August 31, 2019.

² PNUD, (2013) Informe Regional de Desarrollo Humano 2013-2014 Seguridad Ciudadana con Rostro Humano: diagnóstico y propuestas para América Latina. Nueva York, PNUD.

³ J. Johnston and Lefebvre, S. “Honduras Since the Coup: Economic and Social Outcomes” Center for Economic and Policy Research Washington D.C. November 2013.

⁴ USAID & GIZ. (2011). Private Sector Survey on Youth Employment: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations, Final Report. San Salvador: USAID

⁵ OECD Development Pathways Multi-dimensional Review, [United Nations. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), 2014.

On September 29, 2017 CRS received a grant modification that included the following changes:

- Increased the award amount from \$13,000,000 total federal funds to \$16,250,000.
- Included cost share amount of \$200,000 from CRS.
- Extended the end date from August 31, 2019 to September 30, 2020.
- Added geographic locations in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and La Libertad, El Salvador and recognized work previously carried out in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.
- Added the National Foundation for the Development of Honduras (FUNADEH) as a project sub-recipient and approve their budget for activities in Honduras.
- Increased the number of direct youth beneficiaries from 5,100 to 6,380 and the number of family beneficiaries from 1,900 to 2,380.
- Reduced the target age group for youth participating in Career Connect Clubs from 14 to 12 years of age.

The grant was modified again on September 30, 2017 that increased the award amount from \$16,250,000 to \$16,478,000. In addition to the award amount, CRS agreed to provide \$200,000 cost share amount and an additional \$301,309 leverage funds in the extension budget.

The project targets youth 12 to 25 years of age. For children ages 17 and younger, the project targets youth who are at risk of being engaged in child labor, in particular those at risk of being recruited into gangs or engaging in illicit activities. For youth 18 to 25, the project targets youth who have a family member who is engaged in or at risk of being engaged in child labor. The overall goal of the project is to reduce the prevalence of child labor (CL), hazardous child labor, and irregular work among at-risk children and youth in El Salvador and Honduras. To contribute to the overall goal, the project developed an overarching objective, which is to increase the participation by at risk children and youth in formal and non-formal education, acceptable employment, or self-employment. To achieve the project-level objective, three primary outcomes and a variety of sub-outcomes. Table 1 shows the project goal, objective, and outcomes.

Table 1:YPCA Goal, Objective, and Outcomes

Project Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes
Goal: Reduce the prevalence of child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work among at-risk children and youth in El Salvador and Honduras
Objective: Increase the participation by at risk children and youth in formal and non-formal education, acceptable employment, or self-employment
Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivation to attend school increased among at risk children and youth 2. Increased access by at-risk children and youth to employment and self-employment opportunities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Strengthened life skills and workplace skills for children and youth at risk 2.2. At-risk children and youth have acquired technical skills related to labor market demand 2.3. Private sector support generated for youth training programs

Project Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes	
2.4.	Strengthened existing public programs and services for employment and self-employment
2.5.	Increased access to resources that support attainment of employment or self-employment
3.	Children, youth and their families benefit from the network of social protection services
3.1.	Increased family support for children’s and youths’ educational and employment plans
3.2.	Supportive services for at risk children and youth increased

YPCA implements the following four strategies aligned with the three outcomes.

Career Connect Clubs: The Career Connect Clubs, which support Outcome 1, are extra-curricular school clubs designed to increase students’ motivation to attend school. The clubs are based on Glasswing International’s afterschool clubs that have reached 22,000 youth in four Central American countries.⁶ The Career Connect Clubs offer educational and recreational activities such as art, dance, soccer, leadership, debate, and communication.

YouthBuilder Program: CRS’s YouthBuilder program provides life and job skills, entrepreneurship, and vocational training and internships, school re-entry, and job placement services for out-of-school and unemployed at-risk youth ages 16 to 25. In addition to training, the model uses community service projects to help youth acquire critical leadership, service and job-preparedness skills.

Strong Families: Strong Families service model is designed to ensure that the families of vulnerable children and youth provide the support, guidance and oversight they require to remain in school or in their jobs. The Strong Families program aims to enhance positive relationships between parents and children through a series of six, two-hour counseling sessions.

Community Youth Connect: Community Youth Connect aims to provide children and youth with additional support to address problems such as use of drugs, legal problems, and absence of parent control or guidance. Support might include counseling and psycho-social therapy or referrals to local institutions that provide the appropriate services such as health care, mental health services, and legal services.

CRS’ five implementing partners share the responsibility for implementing project activities under each project strategy.⁷ Currently, the partners are implementing the Career Connect Clubs in eight schools in Honduras and 11 schools in El Salvador. They are implementing the YouthBuilder program and the social protection services component in 11 centers in Honduras and seven centers in El Salvador. These components and the primary implementing partner(s) are listed by country in Table 2.

⁶ YPCA Project Document, November 2015.

⁷ The project partners include Fe y Alegria Honduras, Glasswing Honduras, FUNADEH, Fe y Alegria El Salvador, and Glasswing El Salvador.

Table 2: Project Components and the Corresponding Implementing Partner

Component	Honduras	El Salvador
Career Connect Clubs	Glasswing Honduras	Fe y Alegría El Salvador Glasswing El Salvador
Youth Builder Program	Fe y Alegría Honduras Glasswing Honduras FUNADEH	Fe y Alegría El Salvador Glasswing El Salvador
Social Protection Services	Fe y Alegria Honduras	Fe y Alegria El Salvador
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong Families ▪ Community Youth Connect 	Glasswing Honduras	Glasswing El Salvador

In El Salvador, Fe y Alegria is implementing all three project components at its training centers. In Honduras, however, Fe y Alegria is implementing only YouthBuilder and the social protection services components while FUNADEH only implements the YouthBuilder program at their respective training centers. Glasswing Honduras, on the other hand, implements the Career Connect Clubs, YouthBuilder program and the social protection services at its training centers. It also is the only partner that implements the clubs in Honduras.

It should be noted that YPCA implements a cohort approach for the YouthBuilder program. The project recruits a group of youth who begin and end the YouthBuilder program together. The project uses a cohort study with a longitudinal approach as the evaluation methodology to measure key indicators such as employment and education status. The primary reason the project decided to use the cohort study approach is because the more traditional prevalence baseline and endline methodology relies on a random sample survey that requires enumerators to travel to sample households located in high crime neighborhoods that would expose them to safety risks.

II. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Evaluation Purpose

The overall purpose of the YPCA midterm evaluation is to provide USDOL and CRS with an independent assessment of the project’s performance and experience. Specifically, the evaluation is intended to achieve the following objectives.

1. To assess the project’s effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, and sustainability.
2. To identify gaps and adjustments required at the midterm evaluation point to accomplish the project’s objectives by the end of the project.
3. To identify those activities and actions that are contributing to achieving the project’s objectives.
4. To identify lessons and good practices that can be leveraged in the remaining life of the project to more effectively and efficiently achieve the project’s objectives.

USDOL and CRS developed a set of questions to guide the evaluation. The questions address key issues in (1) relevance; (2) project design and validity; (3) project performance; (4) effectiveness of interventions; (5) effectiveness of project management; (6) sustainability; and (7) best practices and lessons learned. The evaluation questions appear in the Terms of Reference (TOR) in Annex A.

This midterm evaluation should also provide USDOL, CRS and its partners, and the Governments of Honduras and El Salvador, and other project stakeholders an assessment of the project’s experience in implementation and its impact on project beneficiaries.

2.2. Methodology

Evaluation Team. A three-member team conducted the final evaluation of the YPCA project. *Dan O’Brien*, founder and president of OAI, served as the lead evaluator. Dan is a seasoned labor evaluation expert who has conducted more than 25 evaluations for USDOL and the ILO. He evaluated USDOL-funded child labor prevention projects in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, and Uganda. He also evaluated USDOL and State Department-funded labor strengthening programs in Honduras Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bangladesh, Jordan, and Indonesia.

Ena Lilian Nuñez, served as the assistant evaluator and supported the evaluation in both Honduras and El Salvador. Ena is a labor lawyer with extensive child and labor rights experience in Latin America. Ena consults frequently with the ILO and the Fair Labor Association on labor rights issues including child labor. She is also an experienced evaluator. She co-conducted the final evaluation of the *Todos y Todas Trabajamos* project funded by USDOL and implemented by Catholic Relief Services in Central America and the Dominican Republic. She also co-conducted the final evaluations of the *Strengthening Unions to Protect Worker Rights* in Peru and *Somos Tesoro* in Colombia and the midterm

evaluation of the *Strengthening the Labor Inspection System* in Peru. All three projects were funded by USDOL.

Cecelia Hernandez served as the second evaluation assistant and supported the evaluation in El Salvador. She has recently joined the OAI team of associates for Latin America. Cecelia has more than 15 years working on child labor and youth employment issues in the region. Cecelia served as the National Project Coordinator for the Eradication of Child Labor in Garbage Dumps and Public Markets in El Salvador from 2003 to 2006. She also served as Project Director for the *Citizen Security and Coexistence Program in the Municipalities of Sonzacate, Sonsonate and Acajutla* from 2009 to 2009. This project specifically addressed community security and youth violence.

Evaluation Schedule. The evaluation was conducted between April 2 and May 25, 2018. The evaluators contributed to the development of the TOR, reviewed project documents, and developed interview tools prior to carrying out fieldwork in Honduras and El Salvador. The fieldwork in El Salvador was conducted from April 9-16, 2018 while the fieldwork in Honduras was conducted from April 17-25, 2018. The stakeholder meetings to present the preliminary findings were conducted in Honduras on April 26, 2018 and in El Salvador on May 2, 2018. The majority of the data analysis and writing of the report occurred from May 3-May 25, 2018.

Data Collection. As noted previously, USDOL and CRS developed a list of evaluation questions that served as the basis for the evaluation. The questions were used to develop guides and protocols for the key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. The master key informant interview guide is listed in Annex B. The following methods were employed to gather primary and secondary data.

Document Reviews: The evaluators read numerous project documents and other reference publications. These documents included the technical proposal, project document, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (CMEP), baseline and longitudinal studies (first cohort), technical progress reports, and other supporting project materials obtained during the fieldwork component. Annex C shows a complete list of documents that were reviewed.

Key Informant Interviews: The evaluators conducted 64 key informant interviews (individual and group) with USDOL and CRS representatives, project staff, partners, national and municipal government officials, school principals and teachers, businesses, and other stakeholders. The USDOL interview was conducted by telephone. The interviews with project staff, partners, national and municipal government officials, businesses, and other key stakeholders were conducted in Honduras and El Salvador.

Focus Group Discussions: The evaluators also conducted 36 focus group discussions with out-of-school youth, youth participating in the career connect clubs, parent participating in family strong workshops, and teachers. The size of the focus group discussions generally ranged from five to 12 persons. The focus group discussions with out-of-school youth were conducted at training centers and youth centers while focus group discussions with Career

Connect Club participants, Strong Families participants, and teachers were conducted in schools.

In total, 534 stakeholders were interviewed including 289 from Honduras and 242 from El Salvador. The bulk of the interviews, approximately 61 percent, were conducted with youth beneficiaries who participated in the Career Connect Clubs and YouthBuilder program. The evaluation team used a two-tier approach to choose a non-random, purposive sample of beneficiaries as described below.

1. The evaluators worked with the project to choose the training centers and schools where the project is being implemented in both countries. The selection criteria included sites where the interventions are deemed to be successful and sites that have faced challenges. Based on the amount of available time, the evaluation team chose 10 sites in Honduras and 8 sites in El Salvador that represent 53 percent and 44 percent, respectively of total number of training centers and schools where the project is operating.
2. To choose the beneficiaries for the focus group discussions, the evaluators established a set of criteria to choose the purposeful sample that included (a) a mix of male and female beneficiaries representative of the beneficiary target population for the site; (b) a mix of age groups representative of the target population for the site; and (c) a mix of the first and second cohorts for focus group discussions with YouthBuilder beneficiaries.

Table 3 provides a summary of the stakeholder groups interviewed, sample size and their characteristics. A complete list of individuals interviewed appears in Annex D.

Table 3: Stakeholders, Sample Size and Sample Characteristics

Stakeholder Group	Sample Size			Sample Characteristics
	Honduras	El Salvador	Total	
YPCA project staff	54	39	93	YPCA staff representing including CRS, Fe y Alegria, Glasswings, and FUNADEH
YPCA Partners	4	6	10	Non-project staff from the three implementing partners: Fe y Alegria, Glasswings, and FUNADEH
Government representatives	13	8	21	Honduras: STSS San Pedro Sula, INFOP, municipal governments of El Progreso and Choloma. El Salvador: MTPS, JUVIL, municipal governments of Santa Ana and Soyapango
Youth beneficiaries	167	160	327	Career Connect Club members and YouthBuilder participants and graduates (first and second cohorts)
Parents	28	20	48	Parents that participated in Strong Family workshops
Club Volunteers	8	0	8	Volunteers of Career Connect Clubs
Teachers	6	4	10	School directors and teachers implementing or interested in implementing Career Connect Clubs

Stakeholder Group	Sample Size			Sample Characteristics
	Honduras	El Salvador	Total	
Business representatives	9	5	14	Business owners and human resource directors where YouthBuilder graduates have been hired
USDOL/CRS	NA	NA	3	USDOL project manager and evaluation officer and CRS regional technical advisor
TOTAL	289	242	534	

Observations: In addition to the key informant interviews and focus group discussions, the evaluators conducted observations of three Career Connect Club activities in schools in El Salvador including El Pino, Jose Marti, and San Ramon.

Data Analysis. The evaluators used both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze data. Quantitative data were obtained from the CMEP and incorporated into the analysis. The document reviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions generated a substantial volume of raw qualitative data. The evaluators used qualitative data analysis methods, including matrix analysis, to categorize, triangulate, synthesize, and summarize the raw data captured from the interview notes. The results of the data analysis provided tangible blocks of information, which the evaluator used to write the evaluation report. The data analysis was driven by the evaluation questions in the TOR.

Limitations. Several important limitations that could have affected the evaluation findings deserve mention. The most significant limitation was the time allotted to conduct fieldwork. The evaluation team had three weeks to conduct interviews with project staff, government officials, youth beneficiaries and their parents, and other stakeholder. While the evaluation team visited 50 percent of the sites where the project is being implemented, there was not enough time to visit all of the project sites to undertake data collection activities. As a result, the evaluation team was not able to consider all sites when formulating findings.

Another limitation is the sampling methodology. Due to time constraints, availability of a sufficient number of primary data sources (stakeholders), and other logistical challenges, the evaluation methodology included purposive sampling to select project sites and stakeholders to interview. The sample included project sites that have performed well and some that have experienced challenges.

It should also be noted that this evaluation is not a formal impact assessment. The findings for the evaluation were based on information collected from background documents, the project's monitoring and evaluation system, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The accuracy of the evaluation findings are predicated on the integrity of information provided to the evaluator from these sources and the ability of the evaluators to triangulate this information. Furthermore, the sample of beneficiaries was purposive based on selection criteria. Since the sample was non-random and not statistically significant, the results of the interviews cannot be generalized to the entire target population of beneficiaries.

III. FINDINGS

The following findings are based on fieldwork interviews with project staff, partners, beneficiaries, and government and non-government stakeholders as well as reviews of project documents, reports, and other publications. The findings address the questions in the TOR and are organized according to the following evaluation areas: relevance, project design and validity, project performance, effectiveness of strategies, effectiveness of project management, sustainability, and lessons and best practices.

3.1. Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which the project is suited to the priorities and policies of the beneficiaries as well as the host government.⁸ This section will attempt to answer two evaluation questions related to relevance. The first examines the benefits and challenges of developing the project in two countries (Evaluation Question #1) and the second assesses whether the vocational training that the project provides to youth is market-relevant and will likely lead to future employment (Evaluation Question #2).

3.1.1. Benefits and Challenges of Implementing YPCA in Two Countries

The evaluation team discussed the benefits and challenges of implementing the YPCA project in two countries with project management. The project director and deputy project director noted that implementing the project in two countries has generated opportunities for cross-learning among partners that has ultimately improved the quality of project activities.

The project director commented that the project conducted two annual planning meetings with 30 participants from Honduras and El Salvador to discuss good practices and lessons, which was a very rich experience. The good practices and lessons included how Fe y Alegria and Glasswing field teams in both countries had to split its team members in order to implement activities in two sites because gangs controlling the areas where the training centers are located would not allow youth from other areas to enter. FUNADEH intends to follow the same strategy where it implements activities in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

The deputy project director also noted that shared learning is an important benefit. She explained that implementing the project in two countries has created important synergies that have helped increase the impact of the project. For example, what works in one country can be tried in the other country such as how field teams decided to divide themselves in order to be able to implement activities in two areas controlled by opposing gangs. Another project staff explained that the partners have shared experiences from implementing the Career Connect Clubs that have helped increase their effectiveness.

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Project managers and staff also noted challenges to implementing the project in two countries and three cities. One of the major challenges is the management structure. The project’s leadership, which includes the project director and deputy director, is located in Honduras. While the project’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and training specialists are located in El Salvador, these are technical positions and not management decision-making positions. The project director also noted that being based in Honduras makes it difficult to attend key events in El Salvador. While technologies such as regular Skype meetings helps ensure effective communication and coordination, she acknowledges that multiple demands on her time make it difficult to travel to attend all key events and activities.

One particular challenge that the project has successfully addressed is the location of the field teams. Initially, the field teams were divided between Honduras and El Salvador and traveled to the other country to provide field support and supervision, which increased the amount of travel and caused inefficiencies. The project leadership decided to base field teams in each country that would only be responsible for technical support and supervision in that country. The project director believes this has improved effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition to project management issues, project managers and staff noted that differences in policies and institutions create a particular set of challenges. First, youth employment and violence prevention are priorities for governments in both countries, which makes the project focus highly relevant. However, government agencies in Honduras and El Salvador such as labor ministries and vocational training institutions are structured differently with different policies. This requires the project to develop partnerships with key government agencies in each country in different ways, which doubles the project’s efforts.

According to the CRS regional technical advisor, CRS and its implementing partners’ experience and capacities vary from country to country. For example, CRS has more experience implementing youth employment projects in El Salvador while it has more experience implementing education projects in Honduras. Fe y Alegria and Glasswing have more experience implementing the YouthBuilder program and Career Connect Clubs in El Salvador while Glasswing is the only partner that has experience implementing the clubs in Honduras.

In summary, the major benefits of implementing YPCA in Honduras and El Salvador is the potential for cross-learning, generating important synergies, and achieving efficiencies. The challenges, on the other hand, include managing one project that is implemented in two countries and three cities with distinct institutions, operating environments, and implementing partners with different levels of experience and capacity.

3.1.2. Market-Relevance of Vocational Training

YPCA contracted consultants in January 2016 to conduct labor market studies in Honduras and El Salvador. The studies were conducted in the municipalities of San Pedro Sula, Choloma, and El Progreso in Honduras and in the municipalities of San Salvador,

Soyapango, Mexicanos, and Santa Ana in El Salvador.^{9,10} The studies, which were published in March 2016, provide a broad analysis of the demand in the labor market and identified a wide range of job opportunities that require minimal education and experience that matches the profiles of youth targeted by the project in both countries. The studies also identified specific opportunities in sectors. The labor study in El Salvador documented supply chain opportunities, identified a network of potential buyers who would collaborate with the project, and recommended that the project focus on these supply chain opportunities due to the lack of formal jobs.

The evaluation team reviewed the labor market studies and concluded that while some of the key findings and recommendations are not feasible given the low educational and socio-economic profiles of target youth, other findings and recommendations are feasible and would help increase the impact of the project. These include certain jobs that are in demand and companies hiring for these types of jobs. For example, the Honduras study recommended customer service, cashiers, welding, industrial maintenance, refrigeration, administration, and automotive mechanic assistants. The El Salvador study recommended sales, cashier, painter assistant, automobile mechanic assistant, warehouse dispatcher, inventory manager, waiter, driver, machine operator, and receptionist. However, it is unclear to the evaluation team how YPCA used the studies to inform its vocational education services since many of the jobs opportunities noted in the studies are not addressed by the project.

The project’s partners, Fe y Alegria, Glasswing, and FUNADEH, are responsible for assessing labor market demand, training youth in job skills that are in demand, and helping place youth in jobs. The implementing partners are also responsible for training youth in entrepreneurship and helping them start a business or a self-employment initiative. Table 4 shows the kind of vocational training provided and number of youth trained by each partner in El Salvador and Honduras.

Table 4: Number of Vocational Training by Number and Partner¹¹

El Salvador		
Partner	Topic	Number
Fe y Alegria	▪ Barber shop/esthetics and beauty	178
	▪ Bakery	156
	▪ National and international cuisine	126
	▪ Administrative assistant	54
	▪ Apparel: cut and confection	17
	▪ Repair computers and cell phones	16
Glasswing	▪ Microsoft Office	53
	▪ Computers and graphic design	41

⁹ Estudio del Mercado, Honduras. José Acevedo, March 2016.

¹⁰ Estudio del Mercado Laboral en los Municipios: San Salvador, Mexicanos, Soyapango, y Santa Ana. Guillermo Ernesto Monterrosa, March 2016.

¹¹ YPCA Technical Progress Report, April 2018.

Honduras		
Partner	Topic	Number
Fe y Alegria	▪ Barber shop/esthetics and beauty	143
	▪ Motorcycle repair	70
	▪ National and international cuisine	65
	▪ Electrician	38
	▪ Air-conditioning repair	31
Glasswing	▪ National and international cuisine	46
	▪ Apparel: cut and confection	40
	▪ Electrician	39
	▪ Hospitality	27
	▪ Barber shop/esthetics and beauty	21
	▪ Repair computers and cell phones	20
	▪ Drywall	20
	▪ Bakery	6
FUNADEH	▪ Sales and accounting	177

In El Salvador, Fe y Alegria provides vocational training at its training centers, which have equipment to train in barbershop (men’s hair cutting and styling), esthetics and beauty (women’s hair cutting and styling), bakery, and cuisine. Fe y Alegria also has access to vocational trainers. This would help explain why nearly 85 percent of youth trained were in the more traditional areas of men and women’s hair styling, bakery, and cuisine. It is logistically easier for Fe y Alegria to provide youth with vocational training in areas in which it is experienced and equipped. According to Fe y Alegria field teams, these traditional vocational skills remain in demand and are appropriate for youth with low academic qualifications. It should be noted that Fe y Alegria trained 54 youth in the second cohort to work as administrative assistants, which represented a new technical area for the organization.

Glasswing El Salvador, on the other hand, provided training only in Microsoft Office for 53 youth in the first cohort and only computers and graphic design for 41 youth in the second cohort. According to the Glasswing coordinator for El Salvador, the field teams conducted an assessment of potential employers in the target areas to determine the kinds of jobs and skill sets that are in demand. Glasswing decided to focus on broad skill areas like Microsoft Office and graphic design that can be applied to a variety of jobs.

In Honduras, Fe y Alegria also provides vocational training at its training centers that are equipped to train in men and women’s hairstyling, bakery, cuisine, motor cycle repair, air conditioning repair, and electricity. Nearly 40 percent of the youth in the first and second cohorts were trained in hairstyling because, according to Fe y Alegria field teams, it is a skill that many youth can use to generate self-employment if they cannot find a job. Youth were also trained in other traditional areas such as motorcycle repair, cuisine, electricity, and air conditioning repair. Like El Salvador, the Fe y Alegria field teams believe that there is a demand for these more traditional vocational skills.

While Glasswing trained youth in Microsoft Office and graphic design in El Salvador, it opted to train youth in Honduras in more traditional vocational topics similar to Fe y Alegria. In Honduras, Glasswing collaborated with the National Institute for Professional Training (INFOP) to train about 220 youth in national and international cuisine, cut and confection (tailoring), electricity, drywalls, hair styling, bakery, and repairing cell phones. The Glasswing Honduras field teams believe that these more traditional vocational areas are well understood by youth and are in demand in the labor market.

FUNADEH chose to focus training on two areas, which is more similar to the Glasswing El Salvador approach. The foundation trained 177 youth in the first and second cohorts in sales and basic accounting that FUNADEH believes are broad skill sets that will help youth to find jobs in local manufacturing and services-oriented businesses.

To further assess whether YPCA is providing market relevant vocational training that will help youth find jobs, the evaluators solicited the opinions of labor ministries, national vocational training institutions, and businesses. In Honduras, the Secretary of Labor and Social Security (STSS) in San Pedro Sula opined that the project should consider training youth in topics that coincide with the government’s employment strategy because it will generate jobs. These include call centers, tourism, construction, and agriculture. INFOP, on the other hand, anticipates increased demand for jobs in environmental protection technologies, forest management, and staff for cruise lines. INFOP is in the process of developing its capacity to train in these non-traditional areas.¹²

Several business owners that were interviewed expressed concern that the labor market is saturated with some traditional vocational areas like cell phone repair, barbershops, and beauty salons. An owner of a drinking water company in San Pedro Sula said “no more cell phone repair shops, please. We already have too many”. Another business owner commented that in some communities, she observed several barbershops and beauty salons located on the same block. In general, business owners and representatives recommended talking to chambers of commerce and businesses to identify the kinds of jobs that are in demand and then training youth in these topics.

The evaluators also interviewed youth to ascertain their opinions about the kinds of vocational training they have received and if it is relevant. Their opinions were mixed. For example, many youth who were trained in hair styling, bakery, and cuisine are passionate about these vocations and intend to either pursue jobs or start businesses. Other youth, however, told the evaluators that they would like to have had the opportunity to develop skills in other areas such as information technologies, auto mechanics, and carpentry.

YPCA implementing partners are providing a combination of training in both traditional and non-traditional topics. The field teams that are providing training in more traditional vocations believe these skills are appropriate for youth targeted by the project and will help

¹² The evaluation team realizes that employment in some of these areas such as agriculture and forest management are not appropriate for urban youth while other areas such as call centers and tourism require skill sets such as English that would require training beyond what the project can offer.

them either find jobs, start businesses, or generate income through self-employment. Other field teams that are providing training in non-traditional topics believe that skills like graphic design, sales, and Microsoft Office are most appropriate based on the sorts of jobs available in local businesses. Given the different approaches to vocational training, the evaluators believe it would be valuable to conduct a study to determine which, if any, of the approaches is more effective at helping youth find and retain employment in local labor markets. This is addressed in more detail as a recommendation in Section 5 of this report.

3.2. Validity of Project Design

This section assesses the validity of the project design’s theory of change and attempts to determine whether the project design addresses the real livelihood needs of youth given the labor market conditions in both countries (Evaluation Question #3). More specifically, the project’s theory of change is reviewed and several factors that weaken the theory of change are identified. Finally, the livelihood needs of youth and whether the project is meeting those needs is discussed.

3.2.1. The Project’s Theory of Change

The CMEP defines the target problem as *at-risk children and youth are subject to child labor or to irregular work* and states the primary causes as (1) the rise in student dropout rates, (2) vulnerable youth do not have access to quality livelihoods opportunities; (3) failure of businesses to comply with labor rights, and (4) youth are more vulnerable to participate in illegal groups.¹³

The project’s theory of change aims to reduce the prevalence of child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work among at-risk children and youth in El Salvador and Honduras by addressing the primary causes noted above. To address these causes, the project developed a project goal, objective, and related outcomes that serve as the foundation of theory of change and results framework. These are shown below in Figure 1.

¹³ YPCA Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, November 2016.

Figure 1: Project Theory of Change



3.2.2. Relevance of the Theory of Change

The theory of change is built on a sequential flow of internal causal logic around the project’s outcomes, objective, and goal. For example, if the outcomes are achieved, the project objective will have achieved and if project’s objective is achieved, it will contribute to achieving the overarching goal of the project. The evaluation team identified several factors that weaken the causal logic linking the project objective to the project goal and the logic linking Outcome 1 to the project objective.

Project Objective: Increase the participation by at risk children and youth in formal and non-formal education, acceptable employment, or self-employment.

The project objective’s hypothesis is that IF at risk children and youth enrolled in school continue their education AND out-of-school youth either return to school or acquire acceptable employment or self-employment, THEN child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work will be reduced. The evaluators identified an issue that weakens the hypothesis, which is the concept of *acceptable employment*.¹⁴ The CMEP defines *acceptable employment* as work that meets at least two of the following criteria: income equal to or greater than the minimum wage, full-time work, verbal or written contract, and social insurance or pension.¹⁵

The definition used by the project falls short of what international labor organizations consider to be decent work. For example, a verbal contract instead of a written contract is not considered decent work because it places the employee in a vulnerable position without legal protection.¹⁶ The evaluation team believes YPCA and USDOL should discuss how to

¹⁴ It should be noted that the concept of “acceptable employment” does not exist in the labor field.

¹⁵ “YPCA Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

¹⁶ https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/HRW_ILO_brochure_lores.pdf

strengthen the project’s definition of *acceptable work* so it complies national labor laws and approximates the ILO’s definition of *decent work*.

The evaluators understand that the project is operating within an extremely difficult labor environment plagued with high unemployment, informality, and lack of job opportunities, especially for vulnerable youth living in high crime neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the evaluators opine that the project should *take the high road* and aim for jobs and self-employment opportunities that provide youth with fair remuneration in safe working conditions while protecting their labor rights. These would be jobs that meet the minimum requirements established by labor law, which is a written contract, minimum wage, and access to social security that guarantees medical assistance in case of illness or accident.

Employment that does not meet decent work standards runs the risk of perpetuating child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work. In fact, a recent longitudinal study conducted for the first cohort of YouthBuilder graduates found that child labor and hazardous labor actually increased by about 15 percent because, according to the research organization that conducted the study, some youth acquired employment in unsafe and precarious work conditions.¹⁷ It should be noted, however, that the longitudinal study referenced above did not include a control group and, as such, it is not known whether the increase in child labor can be attributed to the YouthBuilder program.

Outcome 1: Motivation to attend school increased among at risk children and youth.

The hypothesis is that participation in the Career Connect Clubs will motivate children and youth to attend classes and remain in school. The hypothesis assumes that children and youth make the decision to not to attend classes or drop out of school. During interviews with youth, parents, teachers, school directors, and YPCA field teams, the evaluators asked why children and youth do not attend school or decide to drop out. Based on the responses, it appears that more often the parents make the decision not the child or youth.

The most common reasons given for not attending school or dropping out include:

- Parents keep children at home so they can help with chores or work in family owned shops or in the market;
- Families decide to move from the area due to threats from gangs or to pursue economic opportunities in a different area;
- Parents keep children and youth at home because traveling to school represents a safely risk for the child or youth when crossing zones controlled by gangs;

¹⁷ “Estudio Longitudinal de Cohorte: Fase II, Senderos Juveniles de Centroamérica, El Salvador y Honduras”, FUSADES, March 2018.

- Parents do not want their children or youth walking home alone after club activities are finished because it represents a safety risk;
- Parents do not want their children or youth to attend club activities when they are scheduled at noon time because they will miss their meal;
- Parents withdraw their children and youth from the clubs as punishment for poor grades.

These are all decisions that are made by parents and are out of the control of children and youth.

3.2.3. Livelihood Needs of Youth

YPCA addresses the livelihood needs of youth through the YouthBuilder program, which helps youth develop a set of soft and vocational skills designed to help them acquire jobs, start businesses, or engage in some other form of self-employment. As reported in the April 2018 TPR, 222 youth in El Salvador and 48 youth in Honduras completed the YouthBuilder training for the period October 2017 – March 2018, which represents a 68 percent and 80 percent completion rate, respectively. However, only 18 percent of youth who successfully completed the YouthBuilder program have sustained employment for at least one month, which would suggest that the livelihood needs of youth are not being fully met. Employment as a performance indicator is discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.

The evaluators believe that the YouthBuilder program provides a comprehensive set of soft skills such as values, leadership, communication, teamwork, and job interviewing that help prepare youth for jobs or self-employment. The program also provides youth with a vocational skill. As discussed above in Section 3.1.2, YPCA implementing partners are offering youth very few vocational options that do not always meet the interest and expectation of youth and labor market demand.

The evaluators understand that the YPCA project is operating in a difficult employment environment that is characterized by a lack of decent jobs and intense competition for jobs. Nevertheless, to better meet the livelihood needs of youth, the project should consider more strongly aligning vocational offerings with local labor market demand and placing youth on educational and vocational tracks that meet their interest, abilities, and demand. This is discussed more as a recommendation in Section 5.

3.3. Project Performance and Progress

This section examines the progress the project has made in achieving its end of project indicator targets for education (E1), livelihoods (L1), and the CMEP performance indicators (Evaluation Question #6). In the process, the following assessment of project performance highlights particular successes or challenges with respect to the different sites where the project operates.

3.3.1. Political Violence in Honduras

Honduras held general elections on November 26th, 2017. Reported anomalies in the electoral process sparked a political and social crisis. Violence erupted in several regions and the government enforced curfews in urban centers. Demonstrations, road blocks, riots and security forces operations severely restricted travel throughout the country. The chaos affected project implementation, especially in the municipalities of San Pedro Sula, La Lima, Choloma, and El Progreso.¹⁸

According to project staff, the crisis caused implementation delays, high dropout rates for the YouthBuilder program, inability to hold Career Connect Clubs during school vacation, and delays in starting activities in Cofradía and San Pedro Sula. In addition, planned collaborative activities with national and municipal government agencies were delayed for more than two months due to disruption within the Honduran government.

3.3.2. Education: Career Connect Clubs

Table 5 shows Outcome 1, its indicators, end of project indicator targets, achievements against the indicator targets as of April 2018, and the overall performance status. Indicator E1, one of USDOL’s common indicators, is the number of at-risk children provided educational or vocational services. The project set an end-of-project target of 3,240 children. As of April 2018, the project provided education or vocational services to 2,418 children or about 75 percent of the target. The vast majority, 1,900, are children and youth who participated in the Career Connect Clubs while 518 are youth who participated in the YouthBuilder program.

The project is exceeding the indicator target for the percent of Career Connect Club beneficiaries who attended at least 80 percent of classes. The project reported that 98 percent of the Career Connect Club beneficiaries attended 80 percent or more of classes last school year. The project does not yet have data available for Indicators 1.1 and 1.2 that aim to measure improvements in social skills and perceptions about school activities.

Table 5: Indicators, Indicator Targets, and Achievements for Outcome 1¹⁹

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Percent Achieved
Outcome 1. Motivation to attend school increased among at risk children and youth			
E1: Number of children engaged in or at high risk of entering child labor provided education or vocational services.	2,418	3,240	75%
1.1. Percent of school Career Connect Club beneficiaries who attend at least 80 percent of school classes by the end of the school year.	98%	85%	115%

¹⁸ Extract taken from YCPA April 2018 TPR.

¹⁹ YPCA Technical Progress Report, April 2018.

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Percent Achieved
1.2. Percent of Career Connect Club beneficiaries who report improving their social skills by the end of the school year.	NA	85%	NA
1.3. Percent of Career Connect Club beneficiaries who report improving their perception about their school activities and climate by the end of the school year.	NA	85%	NA
1.4. Percent of Career Connect Club beneficiaries who are enrolled in Career Connect Clubs and complete 60 percent of the school club program.	54%	80%	83%

Indicator 1.4 measures the completion rate for the Career Connect Clubs. Only 54 percent of children complete at least 60 percent of the school club program. The reasons for the low completion rate are discussed in detail under project effectiveness in Section 3.4.1.

3.3.3. Employment: YouthBuilder Program

Table 6 shows the indicators, indicator targets, and achievements as of April 2018 for Outcome 2. Indicator L1, which is another USDOL common indicator, has an end-of-project target of 2,826 households. The project provides livelihood services via the YouthBuilder program and calculates the number of households by using the number of youth targeted by YouthBuilder program. To date, YPCA has provided livelihood services to 900 households or approximately 30 percent of the 2,826 targeted households, which is somewhat low given that the project is about 50 percent completed.

While the project is generally on track for achieving the indicator target for L1, it should be noted that it fell short of its target for the October 2017 - March 2018 reporting period. YPCA set a target of 300 youth enrolled in YouthBuilder program and managed to enroll 237. According to the field teams, recruiting sufficient numbers of youth for the second cohort was difficult due to competition from other youth employment projects such as *Jóvenes con Todo* in El Salvador and *Empleando Futuros* in Honduras. This is consistent with comments made by youth during interviews. They told the evaluation team that there are several projects offering employment training for youth.

Indicator 2.1 measures the number of youth involved in a job search process. The project reported that 371 youth are involved in a job search or about 29 percent of the end-of-project target value. These include 183 for the period April-September 2017 and 188 for the period October 2017-March 2018. Since the second cohort is still in progress in Honduras, the number of youth involved in a job search should increase once youth graduate and begin their job searches.

Indicator 2.2 addresses employment, which is counted when a YouthBuilder graduate finds and keeps a job for at least one month. While the employment target is 30 percent, the April 2018 TPR reported that only 18 percent of graduates were employed including 19 percent for El Salvador and 17 percent for Honduras. One possible explanation for the low employment rate in El Salvador is that the second cohort graduated at the end of March 2018 and started the job search in April 2018. A possible explanation for the low

employment rate in Honduras is the impact that the political crisis had on the economy (discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.1). A reduction in economic activity decreased the demand for labor, which caused some of the beneficiaries to lose their jobs. Nevertheless, the evaluators attribute low employment rates to a highly competitive labor market and the fact that a large number of youth have not completed their high school diploma, which is a requirement for most jobs.

Indicator 2.3 measures the number of YouthBuilder beneficiaries who have a business plan. To date, the project reported that 40 percent of beneficiaries have business plans including 70 percent for Honduras and 30 percent for El Salvador. The reason for the significant difference between the two countries is because Fe y Alegria Honduras requires all of its YouthBuilder participants to develop a basic business plan while Glasswing and FUNADEH in Honduras and Fe y Alegria and Glasswing in El Salvador only require youth who are interested in starting a business to develop a business plan.

The evaluation team opines that the number of business start-ups would be a more accurate measure for Outcome 2 and recommends changing the indicator. However, if the project decides to keep the current indicator, the evaluators recommend requiring only youth who are interested in starting a business and who have a viable business concept to develop a detailed business plan.

Indicator 2.1.1 measures the YouthBuilder graduation rate, which is set at 80 percent for each six-month reporting period. To date, YPCA has graduated 475 youth from El Salvador and 190 youth from Honduras that account for a graduation rate of 78 percent and 59 percent, respectively. While the second cohort in Honduras was still on progress at the time of the evaluation, it is expected that the graduation rate will be affected by the post-election violence that caused youth to drop out of the program because they could not travel to the project's training centers.

Adjustments the project makes to align its vocational training course to labor market demand is measured by Indicator 2.1.2. The project set an end-of-project target of four and reported an achievement of two in the April 2018 TPR. The adjustments include new courses that align more closely with labor market demand: sales and customer service and sewing and confection. While the evaluators understand the logic of this indicator, they believe it should be reformulated based on the recommendation to conduct a more thorough assessment of local labor markets and business opportunities, which is described in more detail as a recommendation in Section 5.

Table 6: Indicators, Indicator Targets, and Achievements for Outcome 2²⁰

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Percent Achieved
Outcome 2: Increased access by at-risk youth to employment and self-employment opportunities			
L1. Number of households receiving livelihood services.	852	2,826	30%
2.1. Number of youth beneficiaries of the YouthBuilder program involved in a job selection process.	371	1,301	29%
2.2. Percent beneficiaries of YouthBuilder program who obtain employment through project intermediation services.	18%	30%	60%
2.3. Percent of beneficiaries of the YouthBuilder program who have a business plan through project support.	42%	20%	211%
Outcome 2.1: At-risk youth have acquired technical skills related to labor market demands.			
2.1.1 Percent of beneficiaries of Youthbuilder program who pass their vocational training courses.	70%	80%	90%
2.1.2. Number vocational training courses opened to beneficiaries adjusted to labor market needs.	2	4	50%
Outcome 2.2: Strengthened life skills and workplace skills for youth at risk.			
2.2.1. Percent of beneficiaries of YouthBuilder program who report an increment in their life and work skills assessment after completing the Program.	NA	80%	NA
2.2.2. Number of participants who start the Youthbuilder program.	1,260	2,600	48%
Outcome 2.3: Private sector support generated for youth training programs.			
2.3.1. Number of businesses that have contributed to the program.	58	150	NA
Outcome 2.4: Strengthened existing public program and services for employment and self-employment.			
2.4.1, Number of public institutions that have expanded their employment and self-employment services to at risk children and youth.	3	2	150%
2.4.2. Number of public functionaries who attend a training event. ²¹	3	20	15%
Outcome 2.5: Increased access to resources that support attainment of employment or self-employment.			
2.5.1. Number of youth that benefit from programs that offer employment and self-employment resources.	516	1,300	40%
2.5.2. Number of employment information resources linked to the project.	NA	20	NA

²⁰ YPCA Technical Progress Report, April 2018.

²¹ Note that Indicator 2.4.2 is not cumulative. The project sets targets and reports achievements against the target each reporting period. The target and achievement in Table 6 is for the October 2017 – March 2018 reporting period.

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Percent Achieved
2.5.3. Number of beneficiaries who participate in a saving group.	1,220	2,600	47%

Indicator 2.2.1 measures perceived improvements in life and work skills of YouthBuilder beneficiaries and has an overall indicator target of 80 percent. YPCA uses a variety of tools to assess life and work skills, which are administered at baseline when a cohort begins and re-administered after graduation during the follow-up survey. The life skills tools include the Position Analysis Questionnaire PAQ-A²², to assess depression, the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)²³ to measure mental well-being, and the Child and Youth Resiliency Measure (CYRM)²⁴ to assess resiliency.

The Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES), who conducted the baseline and follow up survey, reported mixed results. For example, YouthBuilder participants experienced very mild improvements in PAQ-A and SDQ scales while depression measured by the CYRM actually increased by a small amount. This begs the question as to whether these tools are actually measuring what they are intended to measure. The evaluators suggest that the project should re-evaluate these three scales to determine if they are the most appropriate.

The work skills tool is essentially a perception questionnaire that asks youth whether they feel prepared to start a job search or start a business. The tool measures changes in perception from baseline to the follow up survey. For the first cohort, FUSADES reported that 77 percent feel more prepared to search for a job while 78 percent feel more prepared to start a business. These achievements are close to the indicator target of 80 percent.

Indicator 2.2.2 counts the number of youth who started the YouthBuilder program. The primary purpose of this indicator is to establish a target for each cohort and assess whether the target number for each cohort was met. While the end-of-project target is 2,600, the cumulative target set for April 2018 is 1,252. The project achieved 1,260, which exceeds the cumulative target by 8.

Indicator 2.3.1 measures the number of businesses that contribute to the program. Contributions, according to the CMEP definitions, include hiring youth, purchasing services or supplies provided by youth, participation in curriculum validation, and in-kind contributions such as the donation of food or supplies. The project set targets for each six-month reporting period including an end-of-project target of 150, which is the number of businesses the project believes is required to support the employment target of 30 percent (Indicator 2.2). While the indicator target for the most recent reporting period is 75, the project achieved 58, which is slightly low. The evaluation team is not convinced of the

²² <https://www.eries.com/paq>

²³ <http://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>

²⁴ <http://cyrm.resilienceresearch.org>

utility of this indicator given the wide range of actions that constitute a *contribution* and believes the project should consider eliminating this indicator or refocusing it on a specific contribution that leads to employment such offers of internships.

Indicator 2.4.1 aims to measure improvements in institutional strengthening by expanding employment services to at risk children and youth. In El Salvador, the National Institute for Youth (INJUVE) extended services to project beneficiaries and MTPS increased advisory services to entrepreneurs from 700 in 2016 to 3,608 in 2017 and is collaborating with the project in Santa Ana on a variety of activities to promote YouthBuilder program and assist graduates find jobs. This collaboration is discussed in more detail in Section 3.6.3. In Honduras, the STSS sent technical staff to the *I am an Entrepreneur* training, and the municipality government of Choloma allocated funds to support entrepreneurial initiatives for youth.

The evaluators interviewed the mayor and his staff in Choloma and believe their commitment to provide support to youth is an important achievement. The evaluators also interviewed the director of INJUVE's *Jóvenes con Todo* program who confirmed that YouthBuilder graduates could access seed capital to start businesses but they would have to enroll in *Jóvenes con Todo* and graduate from its vocational training course, which represents an additional level of effort. Finally, while the evaluation team confirmed that the STSS technical staff attended the *I am an Entrepreneur* training, the team is not clear how this translates into extended services for at risk children and youth. The evaluators would have liked to see concrete actions taken by STSS technical staff to provide services to at risk children and youth.

Indicator 2.4.2 measures the number of public functionaries trained and sets targets for each six-month reporting period, which CSR set based on its experience training public functionaries. The target for the most recent reporting period, October 2017 – March 2018, was 20 and the project achieved only three. However, it did over achieve the training target in the two previous reporting periods by 35 and 22, respectively. The project should consider modifying this indicator to measure specifically what public functionaries are expected to do strengthen services for employment and self-employment (Outcome 2.4).

Indicator 2.5.1 measures the number of YouthBuilder graduates or those nearing graduation that are linked to other employment, self-employment, or educational services. While the end-of-project target is 1,300, the project reported that it linked 515 youth to other services as of April 2018. Project staff note that since the second cohort is not completed in Honduras, the number will likely increase once the cohort graduates are linked to these services.

Indicator 2.5.2 measures the number of employment resources linked to the project that provide information about employment and education services for YouthBuilder beneficiaries. These might include employment bulletins or social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp that have job announcements. The project set targets for each six-month reporting period and has an end-of-project target of 20, which corresponds to the number of training centers. The project set targets of 10 and 15 in the last two reporting periods and only achieved five and two, respectively. The evaluators suggest that the project review

this indicator to determine its utility and remove it if it is not critical in measuring Outcome 2.5.

Indicator 2.5.3 measures the number of youth who participate in a savings group. YPCA, which plans to have 2,600 youth participate in savings groups by the end of the project, is on track to achieve this target. To date, 1,220 youth or about 47 percent have participated in savings groups including 616 in the October 2017 – March 2018 reporting period. Based on interviews with youth, the savings groups have been promoted as a tool to foster financial education and the habit of saving money. The savings groups are also intended to generate small sums of seed capital that can fund self-employment activities. The evaluation team was unable to document any cases where the savings groups generated enough money to fund self-employment activities.

3.3.4. Social Protection Services: Strong Families and Community Youth Connect

Table 7 shows the indicators, indicator targets, and achievements for the outcomes related to social protection services. Indicator 3.1 measures the number of beneficiary households that received at least one service from social protection institutions. The end-of-project target is 600 households. As of April 2018, YPCA reported that 181 households received at least one service, including 150 households in the October 2017 – March 2018 reporting period. All of the households are in El Salvador. Services are from local institutions and typically include health care, psycho-social therapy, and legal services.

Indicator 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 measure participation in the Strong Families program. Indicator 3.1.1 is the number of families starting the program and Indicator 3.1.2 is the percent of families who complete the Strong Families program. The evaluation team believes Indicator 3.1.1 is redundant and not necessary since it is used as the denominator value to calculate the completion rate.

Table 7: Indicators, Indicator Targets, and Achievements for Outcome 3²⁵

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Status
Outcome 3: Outcome 3: Children, youth and their families benefit from the network of social protection services.			
3.1. Number of households benefitting from the project that have received at least one service from the social protection network	181	600	30%
Outcome 3.1: Increased family support for children's and youth's educational and employment plan.			
3.1.1 Number of households that start the family strengthening program	528	400	132%

²⁵ YPCA Technical Progress Report, April 2018.

Indicator	Achieved April 2018	End of Project Target	Status
3.1.2 Percent of beneficiaries whose family completed the family strengthening program and report an increased level of support from their families	84%	80%	105%
Outcome 3.2: Implemented supplemental supportive services for at risk children and youth, particularly returned children and youth.			
3.2.1. Number of beneficiaries who are referred to complementary services by program staff	150	1,000	15%
3.2.2. Number of children and youth provided with emergency shelter assistance by the project	1	76	1%

As demonstrated in Table 7, the project is overachieving these indicators. According to project staff, the field teams are organizing two groups of about 10-12 family members each semester for the Strong Families program, which is more than initially anticipated. The evaluation team interviewed parents and children participating in the Strong Families program and were impressed by testimonies of how the program help strengthen family relationships. The one weakness of the program, however, is that only about 20 percent of the parents are participating. The low participation rate is discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.

Indicators 3.2.1 is the numbers of beneficiaries who are referred to complimentary services such as health centers, hospitals, and counseling centers to seek the level of support that YPCA cannot provide. Indicator 3.2.2 is the number of children and youth provided emergency shelter and support. The project is significantly underachieving these indicator targets. The project planned to refer 1,000 beneficiaries to complimentary services and 76 to emergency shelters by the end of the project. The project has managed to refer 150 beneficiaries to complimentary services and one beneficiary to an emergency shelter as reported in the October 2017 TPR.²⁶ The reasons for low indicator achievement are discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.

3.4. Project Effectiveness

This section examines the effectiveness of the project’s strategies and related mechanisms (Evaluation Questions #4, #5, #7, #8, and #9). This section is organized by YPCA’s three main strategies: Career Connect Clubs; YouthBuilder Program; and Social Protection Services.

3.4.1. Career Connect Clubs

To increase students’ motivation to attend school, the project is implementing extra-curricular school clubs known as Career Connect Clubs, which are based on Glasswing

²⁶ The project did not report on Indicator 3.2.1 in the April 2018 TPR.

International’s afterschool clubs that have reached 22,000 youth in four Central American countries.²⁷ The Career Connect Clubs offer after class educational and recreational activities aligned to student’s interests and talents and expose them to different academic, cultural and recreational activities that will enrich their school experience, making it more relevant for them.²⁸ In El Salvador, YPCA is offering a variety of clubs including art, music, soccer, communication, English language, leadership, robotics, and debate that vary from school to school based on student interest. In Honduras, YPCA offers the same set of five clubs that include art, music, soccer, debate, and leadership. One club, Centro Escolar Gabriela Mistral at La Lima, offers gender equity for girls and boys.

The clubs are intended for students who are academically struggling or who have behavioral problems. According to the YPCA field teams, teachers refer students with poor grades or other problems that put them at risk for dropping out of school. However, as the field teams explained, any youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years is allowed to participate because the project does not want to turn away students who are motivated to participate and, at the same time, does not want to create an image that the clubs are only for students with problems. A negative image of the clubs would likely make them less attractive for everyone.

Examples of Successes

Several club members at a school in El Salvador explained that they initially participated because their teachers made them join the clubs but after a few weeks they learned to enjoy the clubs and now do not want them to end. In another school, the director told the evaluators that several students refused to join clubs. In response, he told the students that if they brought notes from their parents stating the reason for why their son or daughter would not participate, they would not have to join a club. According to the director, these students decided to join clubs and have benefited. He said he has observed improvements in their attitudes and grades that he credits to the clubs.

Factors Affecting Club Effectiveness

One issue that has decreased the effectiveness of the clubs is the high dropout rate as discussed above under project performance. The April 2018 TPR reported a 54 percent completion rate. The evaluators asked students, teachers, and parents during interviews why children and youth did not complete the club program. As discussed in Section 3.2, parents play an important role as to whether their children participate. Parents keep children at home so they can help with chores or work in family owned shops or in the market; families decide to move from the area due to threats from gangs or to pursue economic

Reasons for Low Club Completion

Some parents reported that they do not want their children to walk home alone after club activities are finished because it represents a safety risk. Other parents do not want their children or youth to attend club activities when they are scheduled at noon time because they will miss their noon meal. Project technical teams also explained that parents withdraw their children and youth from the clubs as punishment for poor grades. School directors and teachers told the evaluators that, in some cases, children and youth drop out of the clubs because they lose interest or are not interested in the kinds of clubs that are offered.

²⁷ YPCA Project Document, November 2015.

²⁸ YPCA Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, November 2016.

opportunities in a different area; and parents keep children and youth at home because traveling to school represents a safety risk for the child or youth when crossing zones controlled by gangs.

Another issue that has decreased the effectiveness of the clubs has been difficulty recruiting and maintaining volunteers. The Glasswing International after school club model relies heavily on volunteers. Typically, Glasswing International recruits business leaders to serve as volunteers. Given the security concerns in many of the communities where YPCA operates, using volunteers from the business community is not feasible. Instead, YPCA uses a mix of volunteers who include university students, YouthBuilder graduates, high school graduates, teachers, and parents. Given the security situation in some communities, teachers and parents are the only feasible option.

The evaluators observed high turnover rates among volunteers in the schools they visited in both Honduras and El Salvador. While university students, YouthBuilder graduates, and high school graduates prove to be highly motivated volunteers that serve as role models for members of the Career Connect Clubs, they tend not to volunteer for long periods. According to the club coordinators, these youth volunteer to gain experience while they look for jobs. Once they find employment, they leave the clubs. Fe y Alegria provide shirts and a small amount of per diem to motivate volunteers to remain but the results, according to the coordinators, are mixed. Teacher and parent volunteers tend to be the most stable and reliable volunteers. One group of teachers who were interviewed in Honduras told the evaluators that they are interested and ready to serve as club volunteers if asked.

Emerging Good Practices

During visits to schools, the evaluation team noted several creative solutions to the meal and transportation issues. For example, in El Salvador at the Lamatepec school in Soyapango, the school director negotiated an arrangement with the Ministry of Education to provide meals as part of its school meal program to students participating in the Career Connect Clubs. In addition, the Soyapango municipal government agreed to provide free transportation to students participating in clubs for nearly two months.

Another difficulty noted by the coordinators that have affected the clubs in some schools is the lack of space where club activities can be conducted. The evaluation team observed competition with other extra-curricular activities for space in several schools. Many of the schools in both Honduras and El Salvador operate at least two and up to four sessions per day that increases demand for classrooms and other spaces where club activities can be conducted.²⁹ To address

the high demand, YPCA offers club activities during the noon lunch hour or on Saturdays.

The project does not provide meals and transportation to the Career Connect Club participants during regular club activities.³⁰ Students who participate in the clubs during

²⁹ Given the large number of students in some schools, three to four sessions are offered. For example, one group of students attends the morning session, another group attends the afternoon session, and a third group attends the evening session. A few schools even offer night sessions.

³⁰ The project only provides meals and transportation to club members during educational or recreational field trips.

the lunch break tend not to eat. Those students that remain at school to participate, do not arrive at their homes until late and often miss lunch. On the other hand, students who arrive to school early to participate in the noon hour club activities leave home too early to have lunch and, after the club activities, must proceed directly to the afternoon classes. As discussed previously, some parents do not permit their children to attend club activities because they will miss their lunch and bus ride home. During interviews, school directors, teachers, and parents told the evaluators that providing meals and transportation would help reduce the high dropout rate.

Impressions of Students Participating in Clubs

To better understand how students perceive the Career Connect Clubs, the evaluators interviewed club members in schools in Honduras and El Salvador. Below is a representative set of paraphrases from the interviews.

- *I have improved how I communicate with other students and teachers.*
- *I now respect and value the opinions of others in class and respect what they say.*
- *I learned new things like how to paint and draw.*
- *Teamwork is one of the most important things I learned.*
- *I now share with my friends more than I used to do.*
- *The clubs are fun and playing makes the time go fast.*
- *Before the clubs, the school was a "prison with friends".*
- *Me and my friends cannot wait for the club days.*
- *I wish we had the clubs every day.*
- *My favorite activity is the competitions with other schools.*
- *The coordinator helped me with my homework.*
- *My grades have improved.*
- *I am more confident in myself.*
- *I am not afraid any more to talk in class and ask questions.*
- *The clubs should be offered during school vacation.*

Teachers as Volunteers

Several teachers told the evaluators that the project should recruit more teachers as volunteers. One teacher commented that “we are ready and capable to help.” Another teacher noted that the project should do more to build relationships with the teachers. She said that many teachers in her school did not know about the clubs, which is a shame since they could be supporters.

In Honduras, club members told the evaluators that they would like to have more options to choose from and more time to participate. One club member said that he knew other students who would participate in the clubs if other topics were offered. Several students told the evaluators that they intend to keep participating in the clubs until they graduate. Interestingly, during one interview with club members, they suggested that clubs should be offered by levels such as basic and advanced. For example, a student participating in the art club believes she is not learning anything new because it is too basic.

Many of the club members who were interviewed mentioned the club competitions between schools as one of

the most entertaining activities. The competitions are actually part of the Generation Now Festival organized by Glasswing in both Honduras and El Salvador. According to Glasswing coordinators, the festival is a safe and fun event in which club members have the opportunity to demonstrate skills they learned in the clubs by competing with clubs from other schools. Competitions included soccer, debating, dancing, and spelling bee tournaments in English. The club members who were interviewed told the evaluators that “the competitions were a wonderful idea” and those who won competitions felt proud because their teachers congratulated them. In fact, several members believe that the competitions are the main objective of the clubs.

Impressions of School Directors and Teachers

The evaluation team also interviewed school directors and teachers during visits to the schools in both Honduras and El Salvador to understand how they perceive the Career Connect Clubs. Following is a representative set of paraphrases from the interviews.

- *I really think that clubs are making a difference in the students. They are more self-confident now.*
- *In general, those students who participate in clubs have more confidence.*
- *I noticed a major change in how these students follow the rules now.*
- *We have to look at the grades, but I think they have improved.*
- *I think several of the students have improved self-esteem considerably.*
- *I noticed a major change in one student who failed the 6th grade three times. After participating in the clubs, he not only passed the 6th grade but had some of the best grades and his self-esteem has improved.*

Two school directors noted that the clubs are important because they help fill free time by putting students to work in positive activities. However, they expressed concern because some parents do not permit their children to participate or allow them to drop out. These directors opined that part of the problem is that parents do not understand the purpose of the clubs and how their children would benefit by participating in club activities. They recommended that the club coordinator should go with a teacher to visit the parents and explain the benefits so the parents would be supportive. In addition, they recommended that the project use events such as school registration and handing out report cards to promote the clubs to parents who attend these events.

3.4.2. YouthBuilder Program

CRS’s YouthBuilder program is the project’s primary mechanism to generate employment for out-of-school youth. The program provides life and job skills, entrepreneurship, and vocational training and internships, school re-entry, and job placement services for out-of-school and unemployed at-risk youth ages 16 to 20. In addition to training, the model uses community service projects to help youth acquire critical leadership, service and job-preparedness skills.

Although the YouthBuilder model is fairly standardized, the program is being implemented differently by the partners. For example, Fe y Alegria provides parallel soft skills and vocational training for six months. The vocational skills, in general, focus on traditional vocations such as hair styling, bakery, cuisine, motorcycle repair, electricity, and air conditioning repair. Glasswings provides four months

The evaluation team believes YPCA has an interesting opportunity to analyze the different approaches to implementing the YouthBuilder program to determine which, if any, is more effective. The project might consider comparing graduation and employment rates as well as participant perceptions and satisfaction levels to determine if any of the approaches has an advantage.

of soft skills followed by two months of vocational training. In El Salvador, it trained youth in Microsoft Office and graphic design but trained youth in Honduras in more traditional vocational topics similar to Fe y Alegria. While FUNADEH provides parallel soft skills and vocational training like Fe y Alegria, the required number of training hours is compressed into four and a half months. FUNADEH trained the first cohort of youth only in sales and customer service.

The partners implement the YouthBuilder program differently due to different circumstances. Fe y Alegria, who has its own training centers and vocational trainers, believes that providing a half day of softs skills training and a half of day of vocational training helps maintain interest and motivation. Since Glasswing does not have training centers and trainers, it must rely on INFOP and INSAFORP to provide vocational training. It believes that providing four months of soft skills training helps develop a strong foundation of values before sending youth to other institutions for vocational training. FUNADEH, on the other hand, believes combining training over a shorter period of time helps meet youth expectations that they will find employment as soon as possible. It is not clear to the evaluation team which approach, if any, is more effective. This is discussed in more detail as a recommendation.

Factors Affecting Effectiveness

Age and Educational Requirements

The evaluation team identified a range of factors that are affecting the effectiveness of the YouthBuilder program and its objective of providing employment to out-of-school youth. One of the most important factors is that most businesses require employees to have a high school diploma and be at least 18 years of age. Although the minimal legal working age in both Honduras and El Salvador is 14 years, the labor ministries in both countries require children to have a work permit. Business owners and human resource directors that were interviewed told the evaluators that ascertaining work permits for children is a difficult and time-consuming process that they normally avoid. These requirements are a major challenge for the project since many of the youth who the project targets have not completed their high school diploma.

Discriminatory Hiring Practices

Another important factor affecting the effectiveness of the YouthBuilder program is discriminatory hiring practices that places project beneficiaries at a disadvantage.

Discriminatory hiring practices that the evaluators identified during field work include pregnancy exams, removing clothes during interviews to check for tattoos, disqualifying job candidates if they live in high-crime neighborhoods, and polygraph tests. The prevalence of discriminatory hiring practices would strongly suggest that the project should ensure that youth understand labor laws and their rights and take concrete actions to address discriminatory hiring practices such as training labor ministries and businesses.

The evaluators would like to use this opportunity to address the use of polygraph tests. The use of polygraph tests as an employment screening tool is illegal in both Honduras and El Salvador. The polygraph test is a way of obtaining invasive personal information about the privacy of people that violates the right to honor, privacy and dignity and constitutes a discriminatory hiring practice.³¹ Since legislation in both countries prohibits discrimination, the use of polygraph, which is discriminatory, is not just a *bad practice* but illegal.

The use of the polygraph test is prohibited in criminal cases in both countries because a person who is accused of a crime has the right not to be subjected to techniques or methods that induce or alter their free will.³² If the use of polygraph tests in criminal cases are prohibited, it is only reasonable to assume that their use as an employment screening technique is prohibited by the same legislation. Furthermore, labor ministry representatives in El Salvador and Honduras told the evaluators that the use of polygraph tests is not only a violation of labor rights but is illegal. In fact, the STSS regional director in San Pedro Sula said that if a labor inspector found an employer using polygraph tests, the employer would be fined.

The evaluation team learned during field work that the project coaches YouthBuilder beneficiaries how to take polygraph tests. Since the use of polygraph tests in both countries is illegal, the evaluation team believes strongly that the project should not be coaching youth on how to take polygraph tests. Rather, the project should teach youth about discriminatory hiring practices including the use of polygraph tests so they are not viewed by youth as normal. In addition, the project should use training opportunities with labor ministry officials to train them on discriminatory hiring practices such as the use of polygraph tests. This is addressed in more detail as a recommendation in Section 5.

³¹ The ILO Code on Protection of Workers' Personal Data states that polygraphs, truth verification equipment or any other similar testing procedure constitutes a discriminatory hiring practice and should not be used.

³² Reference for El Salvador: Penal Code Article 262

http://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/mesicic3_slv_procesal.pdf;

https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/171117_072931433_archivo_documento_legislativo.pdf ; Reference for Honduras: Penal Code Article 101 No. 7

<http://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/CEDIJ/Leyes/Documents/PPP-RefDPI.pdf> ;

<https://www.juecesporlademocracia.org/document/revista-justicia-no-14/>

Internships

Internships is an important mechanism that can provide important experience to youth and facilitate employment. In Honduras, YPCA started arranging internship opportunities for YouthBuilder beneficiaries in December 2016 during the pilot phase of the project. In El Salvador, however, the project intends to begin an internship program during the April – September 2018 reporting period.

The evaluators identified several issues with the internship program that the project should address to avoid problems and ensure it operates within labor laws. In Honduras, Fe y Alegria use an internship form that it asks the business to sign. It includes the name of the intern, focus of the internship, and dates of the internship. Glasswing, on the other hand, sends a form letter to the business requesting an internship and asks the business to sign the letter acknowledging receipt. However, there is no written document describing the scope of work to be performed, the level of supervision, work days and hours including breaks, stipends for transportation, and responsibilities for risks such accidents.

The evaluators believe the internship program in both countries should have a standard set of criteria that are consistent with labor laws including a learning experience. These criteria should be incorporated in an agreement that is signed with the business providing the internship. This is addressed in more detail as a recommendation in Section 5.

YouthBuilder Participant Profile

Recruiting youth who meet the YouthBuilder profile is proving to be increasingly challenging. The project field teams told the evaluators that increased competition from other youth employment projects helps explain the difficulty recruiting. For example, In El Salvador, the Santa Ana field team had to recruit youth from surrounding rural areas because they could not find enough urban youth who meet the YouthBuilder profile. One field team member told evaluators that, before starting, the project should have conducted a mapping exercise to identify other employment projects operating near the proposed training centers and the availability of youth who meet the YouthBuilder profile. This would explain why field teams in both countries are requesting to increase the upper age range from 25 to 29 like many of the other youth employment projects, which would increase the pool of youth from which to recruit.

Meal and Transportation Policy

The other issue that is impacting program effectiveness is the YCPA's meal and transportation policy. In the initial budget, CRS budgeted two US dollars per participant for meals and transportation for two months of vocational training rather than the full six

In an article entitled “Internships: Head start or labour trap” the ILO states that:

“Internships should always have a training component since they are about on-the-job training. If they use young people for duties that are normally carried out by core workers this can be considered as disguised employment, which can be pursued in labour courts.”

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_187693/lang-en/index.htm

months of the YouthBuilder program.³³ Each partner is implementing different strategies to stretch the meal and transportation funds so they last for six months. In some cases, all of the participants receive snacks instead of meals. In other cases, a socio-economic survey determines which youth are eligible for meals and transportation. Several youth who were interviewed in Ciudad Arce, El Salvador, told evaluators that although the program started two and a half months ago, they are still waiting to receive help with transportation because the field team has not finished conducting the socio-economic survey.

The meal and transportation policy creates confusion among the beneficiaries. Several youth told the evaluators that they know that some receive meals and help with transportation but do not understand why. Others expressed concern because some youth who need the assistance do not respond truthfully to the survey because they are embarrassed. They drop out of the program because they do not have money for meals and transportation. The policy is also making it difficult to recruit youth because other employment projects provide meal and transportation stipends that are more generous such as *Jóvenes con Todo* in El Salvador and *Guardianes de la Patria* in Honduras.³⁴

As part of the project extension, the budget was modified to include \$150 for each YouthBuilder graduate who participates in an internship of approximately 20 days. The project reported that it is having difficulty providing meals because it cannot find a food service company to deliver meals to the interns. The evaluation team believes the project should find simple and less complicated mechanisms to provide meals and transportation such as providing a stipend each week as long as the intern attends work. Signing a receipt for the stipend and showing attendance at the place of work should be enough of a document trail to satisfy USDOL contracting officers.

Seed Capital

An important challenge that is affecting the ability of youth to start businesses or pursue self-employment activities is the lack of seed capital. YPCA does not have a specific line item in the budget for seed capital. The project initially envisioned that savings groups would generate enough funds to provide seed capital for some self-employment initiatives but the amount that the groups actually save is typically too small.

YPCA is actually making some progress in identifying sources of seed capital. In El Salvador, the director for *Jóvenes con Todo* explained that YouthBuilder graduates could access its seed capital provided by the National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprise (CONAMYPE) but that they would have to enroll in the *Jóvenes con Todo* entrepreneurship training and meet the requirements before receiving seed capital.³⁵ She

³³ The project extension increased the amount \$3 per beneficiary beginning October 2017.

³⁴ During the interview with the director of the *Jóvenes con Todo*, she confirmed that youth receive meal and transportation stipends of \$100 per month or \$5 per day. The director of Glasswing Honduras confirmed that *Guardianes de la Patria* provide full meals to participants.

³⁵ The evaluators understand that CRS signed an agreement with CONAMYPE after the evaluation field work that could make it easier for YouthBuilder beneficiaries to access CONAMYPE seed capital.

said that up to \$2,000 is available for basic self-employment initiatives and up to \$3,000 is available for larger business concepts that could generate employment for other youth. To date, nine YouthBuilder beneficiaries received seed capital from *Jóvenes con Todo*.

In Honduras, YPCA is collaborating with the El Progreso municipal government to provide seed capital to youth with viable business concepts. The mayor told the evaluators that he started his first business when he was 14 years old and is a firm believer that entrepreneurial initiatives can help lift youth out of poverty. The municipal government is sponsoring competitions where youth submit business plans to the El Progreso Chamber of Commerce for review. Youth with the winning business plans receive seed capital to start the business. The seed capital comes from the World Bank's Safer Municipalities grant for El Progreso.

Impressions of Youth

To better understand how youth perceive the YouthBuilder program, the evaluators asked youth Honduras and El Salvador what they learned from participating in the program. Below is a representative set of paraphrases from interviews describing what youth said they learned.

- *I learned to work in a team.*
- *How to communicate with others is the most important thing I learned.*
- *I learned how to interview. For example, don't arrive late, arrive early and don't chew gum.*
- *I learned how to develop my CV and how to send it to employers.*
- *The most important thing I learned is how to dress for an interview.*
- *After YouthBuilder program, I realized that I am nicer to people now and have more friends.*
- *I have more self-confidence now and am not afraid to talk in a group.*
- *I don't use bad words like I used to use.*
- *I believe I am more responsible and considerate of others.*
- *I learned to share my things with others.*
- *I know how to save money more now than before.*
- *I learned to get out of my comfort zone.*
- *Patience is important, I learned this.*
- *I learned to recognize my abilities and limitations.*
- *I used to associate with bad people and now I do not.*
- *One of my friends belongs to a gang, now I know I do not want that.*
- *I changed my way of viewing life and the world.*

Overall, youth that were interviewed believe that the project's field teams are excellent and have developed strong relationships with team members. The exception was a situation at the Fe y Alegria center in El Progreso. During two different focus group discussion, youth complained about one of the field team members who they said was rude and disrespectful. This person criticized some participants in front of the group, which caused

embarrassment. Apparently, a couple of participants dropped out of the program because of this treatment.

When asked about the YouthBuilder training, the vast majority of youth praised both the soft skills training as well as the vocational training. They said that the soft skills training, including skills for life and skills for work, was fun and dynamic. Youth also value the community service projects. Some youth complained that the academic classes, especially math and Spanish, was boring and opined that the field teams should find a way to make them more interesting. Other youth participating in the Fe y Alegria Honduras program complained because they were required to develop a business plan. One youth said “Why do we have to develop a business plan when I know I don’t want to start a business?”

Several youth participating in the Glasswing and FUNDADEH YouthBuilder program in Honduras told the evaluators that they would prefer to receive three months of soft skills and three months of vocational training. They said that the soft skill training was very engaging and useful but they need more training in their vocational area. Youth in both Honduras and El Salvador noted that they would like to have more vocational options from which to choose.

Overall, youth are pleased with their experiences with the savings groups. They believe savings groups are an effective mechanism to teach the benefits of savings and teamwork. Some youth and project field teams expressed concern that the savings groups exclude some youth who do not have money to make regular contributions. During the focus group discussions, the evaluators ask if anyone borrowed money from the savings to fund self-employment initiatives. Youth told the evaluators that the amounts saved were very small.³⁶ In most cases, savings group members used their portion of the savings to pay for transportation, buy airtime for mobile phones, and purchase medicines. It appears that the savings groups have not been an effective mechanism for generating even small amounts of seed capital for self-employment.

Impressions of Businesses

The evaluators interviewed a range of business owners, general managers, and human resource directors in both Honduras and El Salvador. In general, businesses that have employed youth from the YouthBuilder program are satisfied. Business representatives told the evaluators that they especially value soft skills such as values, leadership, teamwork, communication, and the ability to adapt to work conditions. Many of the businesses interviewed commented that youth who participated in the YouthBuilder program have stronger soft skills than their other employees.

³⁶ For example, the YPCA Technical Progress Report April 2018 reported \$2,600 of savings for 616 savings group participants, which is an average of \$4 per participant.

The evaluators interviewed the human resource director for a beauty salon in Santa Ana, El Salvador who employed four young women from the program. Although one of the women had to resign because her family moved to another city, the other three remain employed at the salon. The human resource director said she is very satisfied with the youth because they show initiative, confidence, and a willingness to learn. She congratulated the project for developing the young women's strong leadership and teamwork skills.

While business representatives are pleased with youth's soft skills, several believe their technical skills are lacking. A bakery owner in El Salvador told the evaluators that youth she employed could only make one kind of basic cake. She offered to send her pastry chefs to assess the training curriculum and make recommendations to make it more relevant. A beauty salon representative told the evaluators that youth she employed could only perform one type of cut and suggested spending more time training youth in popular haircuts and styling. Another large home supply store in El Salvador explained that it has not been able to hire

more youth from the project because they do not have the technical qualifications. The human resource director suggested that computer skills should be included along with vocational training.

A large textile company in Honduras has agreed to test the sewing skills of a group of YouthBuilder sewing graduates and hire them if they pass the test. The same company is considering providing *unpaid* internship opportunities for three months in the area of electricity and possibly sewing machine mechanics. The company has a workshop and would provide the training instead of INFOP. The evaluators believe these are promising employment opportunities that, if successful, could serve as models. One issue the project should discuss with the company is work hours, which is 12 hours per day for four days per week for the textile sector in Honduras. Twelve-hour work days could violate labor laws depending on the age of the youth.

Two business owners in Honduras who have hired YouthBuilder graduates told the evaluators that while they only provide employment contracts for up to six months, they intend to renew the contracts of the YouthBuilder graduates because they consider them to be valuable employees. These business owners stated that although they do not have many positions available, they would be willing to work with the project to provide unpaid internships to YouthBuilder graduates so they have the opportunity to learn and gain work experience.

In each interview, the evaluation team asked business representatives what they would recommend to increase the effectiveness of the project in terms of youth employment. Several mentioned that the project should publicize the project to businesses. They noted that many in the business community do not know about the project and the YouthBuilder program. One company representative suggested using *champions* from the business community to promote the project.

A bakery shop in Santa Ana had a different experience. The store manager told the evaluators that while the bakery interviewed 25 youth from the project and hired eight, only one remains employed. The manager said that the seven who left presented problems such as absenteeism, arriving late to work, and poor attitudes. Apparently, two of the youth developed interpersonal conflict and got into a fight. The manager said that he would not be opposed to hiring more youth from the project if they meet the company's profile but prefer to hire youth from other employment projects such as Agape.

<http://www.agape.com.sv/index.php>

The director of the Chamber of Commerce in El Progreso, Honduras said the project should meet with businesses that could potentially employ youth to explain the project and that he would be willing to help arrange the meetings. An owner of a drinking water company in Honduras told evaluators that the project should approach the owners of businesses instead of the human resource directors because owners have a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. Still other business representatives in El Salvador opined that the project should conduct regular follow up visits with businesses to monitor youth's work status and assess how they are performing.

Gender

To determine whether the project is closing the gender gap in terms of employment, the evaluators asked YouthBuilder graduates, as well as the field teams, if female and male graduates had equal opportunity for acquiring jobs or starting businesses. The YouthBuilder graduates, especially females, told the evaluators that they had not experienced discrimination during interviews. They noted that often employers advertise for either women or men depending on the job. For example, many businesses request females for administrative positions while they request men for machine repair. Several of the young women that were interviewed said that this practice seems sexist but that they did not feel that employers favored men or women but rather it depended on the job. One young woman told an evaluator that while she wanted to study motorcycle repair, her parents did not give her permission. Rather, they wanted her to receive training in hairstyling or cuisine.

The evaluators did not identify specific cases where youth felt they were discriminated against because they were female or male. Instead, it appears that many companies stereotype positions as either female or male. In businesses that employ large numbers of receptionists, administrative assistants, and customer service representatives, the preference would be to hire females. In other businesses that employ machine operators, mechanics, painters, and electricians, the preference would be to hire males. As noted above, parents also hold stereotypical views of vocations and some do not want their sons to work in jobs that are considered as work for females or their daughters working in jobs that are considered as work for males.

The project has taken several important steps to ensure gender equity and diversity mainstreaming as summarized below:

- Project staff participated in the Gender Assessment Reflection and Gender Analysis Training of Trainers Workshop held in July 2017. Based on the training, four team members replicated the gender analysis with project partners in El Salvador and Honduras and selected concrete actions that will strengthen gender equity.
- Gender capacity building workshops were conducted for field teams in Honduras and El Salvador.
- As part of the grant modification and expansion strategy, a special fund was created to assist young mothers and fathers with child care to facilitate their participation in the YouthBuilder program.
- CRS and its partners have codes of conduct for their staff that promote gender equity, sexual harassment prevention, and respect for diversity in the work place and in program implementation.
- The communication strategy and action plan includes activities to promote gender equity and the participation of young mothers.

It should also be noted that, according to the data from the monitoring and evaluation system, participation is well balanced between male and females. In the YouthBuilder program, 52 percent of the participants are female while 48 percent are male. In the Career Connect Clubs, 51 percent of the participants are female and 49 percent are male. The challenge, however, is overcoming the deeply embedded job stereotyping mentioned by the youth during interviews. Businesses and parents of youth believe that certain jobs and vocations are meant for males (e.g. mechanics) while others are meant for females (e.g. work in beauty salons).

3.4.3. Social Protection Services

The social protection services component is designed to provide special support to children and youth who are at increased risk that might include having a single parent household; an early pregnancy; or a relative who is already engaged in child labor or irregular work. Increased risk might also include a family member who has been convicted of participating in criminal groups, detained by police, or who has been a victim of authority abuse. The social protection services component consists of the Strong Families program and Community Youth Connect.

Strong Families

Vulnerable children and youth require the support, guidance and oversight of their family to remain in school or in their jobs. To ensure this level of support, project implements the Strong Families service model, in which a close relative of the child or youth is taught

about caregiving good practices that strengthens their relationship and guidance.³⁷ The Strong Families program aims to enhance positive relationships between parents and children through a series of six, two-hour counseling sessions.

The evaluation team interviewed parents who participated in the Strong Families program in both Honduras and El Salvador. Parents have a positive view of the program. They told the evaluators that they experienced important improvements in their relations with their children. Following is a representative set of paraphrases from the interviews.

- *We learned about the importance of establishing rules and respecting each other.*
- *The meetings taught me to listen to my child. Now, every night we sit together and take turns talking about our day.*
- *One of the most important things we practiced was improving communication.*
- *We played games together that really impressed me. I had not played games with my child since she was a baby.*
- *My daughter insisted that we participate in Strong Families. I did not really want to take the time to attend the meetings but now I am so glad I did.*
- *When we started attending the meetings, we were not a strong family, but now we are stronger, it was my daughter who convinced me to participate.*
- *I learned to set rules and limits on how often my children watch television and use their telephones.*
- *I used to hit my son but now I don't. Instead, we talk.*
- *Now I know that when my son wants to talk to me, I must take advantage and leave what I am doing to listen to him.*

The evaluation team also interviewed youth who participated in the Strong Families program. Like parents, most youth expressed positive opinions about the program and say that they have noticed important improvements in their relations with their parents. Following is a representative set of paraphrases from the interviews with youth.

- *I feel closer to my mother now, she does not get so angry anymore.*
- *One of the most important things we learned about was improving communication.*
- *Participating in Strong Families has definitely helped improve my relationship with my family.*
- *The relationship with my father has improved a lot. We used to not talk but now we talk about things that happened to us during the day.*
- *My parents used to criticize me all the time. Now they are more supportive and try to compliment me when I do something well.*
- *My mother participated with me in Strong Families but it really did not make a difference with our relationship. She still yells at me a lot.*

³⁷ http://www.paho.org/els/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=502:familias-fuertes-prevencion-conductas-riesgo-adolescentes-&Itemid=291

- *It would be good to continue giving talks, my mom needs more talks.*
- *Talking helps because my parents trust me more now.*
- *My parents did not come to the workshops because they did not have time, they had to work.*

While the vast majority of the comments made by youth regarding the Strong Families program were positive, several youth told the evaluators that participating in the program did not improve family relationships.

One of the major challenges facing the Strong Families program is the low participation rate. The evaluators estimate, based on the interviews, that approximately 20 percent of youth enrolled in the clubs and YouthBuilder program actually participate. The two most common reasons for not participating is conflict with work or religious activities and lack of interest.

Community Youth Connect

The project acknowledges that children and youth often face additional constraints beyond lack of jobs and the risk of dropping out of school. These might include the use of drugs, legal problems, or the absence of any parent control or guidance. To address these problems, the project offers additional attention to youth who need additional support such as counseling and psycho-social therapy. In other situations, youth and, in some cases their families, are referred to local institutions for support such as health centers, hospitals, law offices, and child support agencies.

YPCA has struggled to meet the indicator target for referrals. The field teams told the evaluators that youth and their parents often mistrust local institutions. They have to wait in long lines to face a highly bureaucratic process to receive services that are often times of low quality. According to some field team members, youth beneficiaries prefer to receive services, such as counseling, from the project psychologist.

The project envisioned providing sheltering to children and youth in emergency situations where their lives might be in danger. To date, only one youth has been placed in an emergency shelter. There are a couple of reasons why this component is not functioning. First, children under 18 years need parental approval and pass through a legal process to be placed in a shelter outside their home. Second, youth over 18 years, according to the field teams, decide to leave dangerous situations before they can be helped and *disappear* so they cannot be found.

Community Youth Connect also includes activities to provide services to migrants who have been deported from the U.S. or who have returned voluntarily. The YPCA project director explained that the project is examining ways to offer services to migrants who meet project eligibility criteria. In Honduras, project staff have met with the Center for Migrants, Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Family (DINAF). In El Salvador, project staff have met with the Government Office on Immigration and Aliens (DGME), the National Childhood Institute (INSA), the National Commission on Migrants (CONMIGRANTES), the

International Organization on Migration (IOM), and the U.S. Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

While YPCA is in the process of defining its strategy to provide services to migrants in both countries, the evaluators believe it would make most sense to leverage its core competencies including the YouthBuilder program for employment and the psycho-social therapy, counseling, and referral mechanisms offered under Community Youth Connect.

Migration Campaign

As part of the project extension, YPCA intends to implement a communication campaign, in coordination with U.S. Embassies and USAID, to increase awareness among children and youth and their families about the risks of migration in Central America and to the U.S. Risks include human trafficking, forced labor, and dangerous working conditions. The project recently hired a communication specialist to develop and oversee the campaign. However, at the time of the evaluation, the campaign had not yet started.

3.6. Effectiveness of Project Management

In this section, the effectiveness of project management is assessed. First, the project’s organization is examined to determine how well it fits managerial needs (Evaluation Question #10). Next, the effectiveness of the project’s field teams is discussed including the kinds and levels of support they require to be successful (Evaluation Question #11). This section also assesses the coordination and collaboration with key national and local level stakeholders (Evaluation Question #12). Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the M&E system are discussed (Evaluation Question #13).

3.6.1. Project Organization and Management Needs

Table 8 shows the personnel and responsibilities by country. The project’s leadership, project director and deputy project director are located in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The youth advisor responsible for overseeing project activities in Tegucigalpa area is located Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The project’s communications specialist and information specialist as well as the youth employment advisor, account and administrative assistant for Honduras are located in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. On the other hand, the project’s M&E specialist and training specialist and the youth employment specialist and accountant for El Salvador, are based in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Table 8: YPCA Personnel and Responsibilities by Country

Honduras		El Salvador	
Project Director	Overall management of project. Reports to program directors in Honduras and El Salvador.	M&E Specialist	Oversees M&E system and activities. Reports to project director.
Deputy Project Director	Assists project director with management; in charge of Outcome 3. Reports to project director.	Training Specialist	In charge of Outputs 1 and 2. Reports to the deputy project director.

Honduras		El Salvador	
Youth Advisor	Oversees strategic alliances with public and private sector in Tegucigalpa. Reports to project director. ³⁸	Youth Employment Specialist	Oversees and supports partner employment activities in El Salvador. Reports to deputy project director
Communications Specialist	Oversees communication strategy. Reports to project director.	Accountant	Responsible for accounting tasks in El Salvador. Reports to the finance manager and project director.
Information Specialist	Assists M&E Specialist with data analysis. Reports to M&E Specialist in El Salvador.		
Youth Employment Specialist	Oversees and supports partner employment activities in Honduras. Reports to deputy project director.		
Accountant	Responsible for accounting tasks in Honduras. Reports to finance manager and project director.		
Administrative Assistant	Provides administrative assistance to the project team as required. Reports to project director.		

In addition to the project’s personnel, each partner has project field teams that are based at the training centers. While the configuration of the field teams varies from partner to partner, they are designed to support the Career Connect Clubs, YouthBuilder program, and the social protection services including Strong Families and Community Youth Connect. Staffing for clubs typically include an overall coordinator as well as a coordinator at each school where the clubs are implemented. YouthBuilder staffing typically include an overall coordinator and technical staff for each component including life skills, work skills, entrepreneurship, basic education, and communication service. The social protection component, on the other hand, typically consists of a professional psychologist and social worker. In addition to the field teams, Fe y Alegria and Glasswing have national level coordinators in both countries.

In general, the evaluation team believes that the project’s staffing and organization is meeting its management needs. In addition to the project director and deputy director, the project has personnel for the Career Connect Clubs, the YouthBuilder program, and social protection services. The YouthBuilder program also has an employment advisor for each country. The project also has a two-person M&E team, a communications specialist, an administrative assistant, and an account in each country. To oversee strategic alliances in Tegucigalpa, the project employs a youth advisor.

³⁸ Note that t additional positions are based in Tegucigalpa that are paid with by CRS leverage funds: youth employment specialist and M&E officer. These positions will end in September 2, 2018.

During interviews with project staff, the evaluators identified some issues that could impact management effectiveness. The first issue is that the project’s project director and deputy director are located in San Pedro Sula and must travel to Tegucigalpa and El Salvador to oversee activities and attend events. Although, with the project extension, the majority of the project’s activities (training centers) are located in Honduras, the project still has a significant presence in El Salvador and the project leadership are not always available to attend key events. In addition to assisting the project director with administrative duties, the deputy director is responsible for overseeing the social protection component, which has increased her workload including travel. She explained that traveling to El Salvador and Tegucigalpa is difficult due to family responsibilities.

Also, as part of the project extension agreement, YPCA hired a part-time communication specialist to develop and lead the migration campaign. In addition to the migration campaign, she has been tasked with developing an overall communication strategy that includes standards and protocols for how YPCA communicates externally as well as internal communication. The evaluation team believes the communication specialist is a critical position and should have been included from the beginning of the project. However, the evaluators are concerned that structuring the position as part-time will decrease the specialist’s effectiveness. The evaluators recommend converting the communication specialist position to full-time and adjusting the job description to reflect leadership of the project’s comprehensive communication strategy.

During interviews with project partners and their field teams, internal coordination and communication was frequently mentioned as one of the factors affecting management effectiveness. The field teams believe that while internal coordination has considerably improved since the beginning of the project, it still is lacking at times. Project management as well as project field teams recommended streamlining communication so it is less bureaucratic, which would help them resolve problems quicker.

Interestingly, some field team members use social media to communicate with each other, which is a strategy the project might wish to promote and include in the overall communication strategy. Nevertheless, the evaluators noticed that the level of coordination and communication between Honduras and El Salvador, even within the same organizations, is weak at times. For example, the field teams do not always share good practices and lessons with teams in the other country, which the evaluators believe is a missed opportunity.

Some field teams believe that policies and protocols are unclear. They are not certain how to respond to certain situations they encounter. For example, what should be done if the police come to the training center and demand information about youth or what should the teams do if one of the beneficiaries has been raped by a gang member and the local institutions do not want to help because they are afraid of reprisal?

3.6.2. Project Coordinating Committee

Although the TOR does not include an evaluation question addressing the project’s coordinating committee, the evaluators would like to acknowledge that the coordinating committee, as described in the original project document, was established in 2017 in

Honduras and El Salvador and is functioning. According to the project director, the coordinating committee is comprised of the directors of each partner and is the highest governance body that provides oversight, cross-learning, and helps resolve problems. The committee also facilitates collaboration between the project's partners.

3.6.3. Effectiveness of Field Teams

The effectiveness of the field teams is extremely important because they are responsible for implementing activities with the children and youth beneficiaries. These include soft skills training, teaching, counseling, and organizing community service projects. They are also responsible for arranging internships and interviews with local businesses.

During interviews with the field teams, the evaluators asked if they were receiving the support required to perform their job responsibilities. Overall, the teams told the evaluators that they are satisfied with the level of supervision and support. The most common request made by the field teams involves professional development. While some team members that were interviewed recently received training in the Strong Families program, the vast majority of team members said that they required more training in their specialty to be effective. It should be noted that this is the first job for some of the field team members. The project director commented that high staff turnover among field teams, which is discussed in more detail below, resulted in the project providing on-going training especially on the YouthBuilder and Strong Families programs.

The next most common request involved self-care support. The technical teams are exposed to high levels of stress given security risks at the project sites. Working with troubled youth is also stressful. Project field teams believe training to help manage stress and heavy workloads and care for themselves will reduce burnout and make them more effective. The evaluators understand that the project included a line item in the project revision for trauma and self-care training and support. In fact, several teams in Honduras had been trained in self-care in April, 2018. The evaluators strongly encourage the project to ensure all of the field teams receive trauma and self-care training as well as access to counseling and other psychological support as required.

An issue observed by the evaluators that is affecting the effectiveness of the field teams is the relatively high turnover rate. During interviews the evaluators noted that the field teams had quite a few new members. The high turnover among field team staff was acknowledged by project management as well as the partners. The partners believe that some field staff leave because they are not qualified while others find better paying jobs. In some cases, they leave because they find the job too stressful. Since the field teams are critical to the success of the interventions, the evaluators suggest conducting a study to evaluate the qualifications of field team members and identify the reasons for the high turnover so the appropriate steps can be taken to create more stability.

Many of the field teams complained about the project's M&E system. Apparently, the teams are having difficulty entering and uploading data and managing the various data entry forms. Some teams complained about the lack of computers and poor internet connections that make uploading data burdensome while others complained about some of

the indicators, which they find confusing. The issues with the M&E system is discussed in more detail in Section 3.6.4.

Another issue that surfaced during interviews with field teams are problems that the employment specialists are having making connections with businesses. One team member explained that she needs to contact businesses to arrange internships and interviews but this is difficult for larger businesses because she is perceived as being at a junior level. She said that the arrangements with larger businesses should be handled by the youth employment specialist, not the field team level. On the other hand, the two youth employment specialists noted that they were spending too much time approaching businesses instead of carrying out more strategic activities such as negotiating broader partnerships with businesses and supporting the field teams.

3.6.4. Stakeholder Coordination and Collaboration

To assess the coordination and collaboration with key national and local level stakeholders, the evaluators met with and interviewed the majority key stakeholders. The exception was those national level stakeholders located in Tegucigalpa. To due time constraints, the evaluation team did not travel to Tegucigalpa. In Honduras, the evaluators interviewed representatives of the STSS, INFOP, municipal governments of El Progreso and Choloma, and the chambers of commerce in El Progreso and Choloma. In El Salvador, the evaluators interviewed representatives of the MSTP in San Salvador and Santa Ana, municipal government in Soyapango, INSAFORP, INJUVE, and the Technological University (UTEC). Coordination and collaboration with these stakeholders are discussed below by country.

Honduras

STSS. The regional director in charge of STSS operations in San Pedro Sula told the evaluators that he has a positive impression of the work that CRS and its partners are doing to assist youth with employment. He said he appreciates the effort the project is making to collaborate with STSS. He mentioned that STSS representatives attended project training events and shared information about business that might be interested in employing youth graduating from the YouthBuilder program.

When asked about his impression of the project, the regional director opined that it should not continue training youth in traditional trades. He emphasized that the project should innovate and align training with the sectors that the government is promoting. These include the garment sector, construction, tourism, agriculture, and call centers. For example, the regional director told the evaluators that he just received two requests for call center employees, one for 1,000 positions and another for 900. He said that if YPCA prepares young people in these areas, STSS can help arrange internships, job placements, and provide transportation.

INFOP. The INFOP deputy director explained that the training center in San Pedro Sula offers several kinds of vocational training programs. The one that is most closely aligned with YPCA is what INFOP calls *popular workshops* that last for three to five months. The

popular workshops are designed to prepare participants to learn a traditional trade that can generate income quickly. Typically, INFOP provides certified trainers to organizations requesting training services, which are called *operators*. The operators are responsible for providing soft skills training while INFOP provides the technical training. He considers Fe y Alegria, Glasswing, and FUNADEH to be *operators*.

While INFOP has focused largely on traditional vocations such as bakery, carpentry, hair styling, and electricity, the deputy director explained that INFOP is beginning to train in new vocations based on labor market demand. These include environmental protection, cruise line cooks, sailors, waiters, and bar tenders. In addition, INFOP is interested in expanding its offer to include soft skills. The evaluation team believes YPCA has an interesting opportunity to help build the capacity of INFOP to offer the YouthBuilder model or at least a modified version of the model that combines soft and technical skills.

El Progreso Municipal Government. One of the evaluators met with the mayor and his staff to discuss collaboration with the project. As mentioned previously, the mayor believes that self-employment is the key to lifting youth out of poverty. He is a strong supporter of the YouthBuilder program, especially the entrepreneurship component. In fact, he participated in the study tour to the United States, sponsored by the project, to visit YouthBuild International.³⁹

The municipal government, which has funding from the World Bank’s Safer Municipalities program, has designated \$250,000 as seed capital for promising business plans including those submitted by YouthBuilder beneficiaries. The El Progreso Chamber of Commerce reviews and selects the most promising business plans for funding. The evaluator reviewed several business plans that were recently submitted by YouthBuilder beneficiaries. In the opinion of the evaluator, the business plans are comprehensive and well written.

El Progreso Chamber of Commerce. The executive director, who participated in the study tour to the United States, is also a strong supporter of the YouthBuilder program in Honduras. He told the evaluator that he has agreed to help Fe y Alegria identify businesses where YouthBuilder graduates can be placed for internships and jobs. The director emphasized that while he is willing to help contact businesses, Fe y Alegria has to take the initiative. He also explained that the El Progreso Chamber of Commerce sponsors the *Saturday Bazar* where micro-enterprises can display, promote, and sell their products. He suggested that YouthBuilder graduates take advantage of the *Saturday Bazar*.

Choloma Municipal Government. The Municipality of Choloma is collaborating with YPCA as one of its strategies to address crime and violence. One of the mayor’s staff told the evaluators that the municipality is committed to the YouthBuilder program because he has seen important changes in youth who participate in YouthBuilder activities. In fact, the

³⁹ “The study tour to the US was implemented to support sustainability objectives. Participants learned how YouthBuild in the US gained funding and technical support from federal and state governments, and how different implementation sites link with the business community to train and offer employment opportunities to YouthBuild program participants.” YPCA Technical Progress Report, October 2017.

municipality has allocated approximately \$57,000 to support 135 YouthBuilder program beneficiaries. The funding will fund activities and provide transportation and meals for beneficiaries in two training centers. He also recommended that YPCA use the Nocturno Héctor Estrada and Centro Tecnología Mario Huarte vocational training centers to train more youth. He said he would help arrange an agreement if the project is interested.

Choloma Chamber of Commerce. One of the evaluators met with the executive director who explained that the chamber collaborated with YPCA to conduct training and provided logistical support. He also noted that the chamber is willing to help the project contact businesses for internships and potential employment. The director said that the chamber is in a partnership with Banyan Global to implement the USAID funded *Empleando Futuros* project, which recently conducted an extensive labor market survey for the Choloma municipality. The study, which should be available towards the end of May 2018, identified demand in certain specialized areas including specialized welding, sales, installation of networks, and graphic design. He highly recommends reviewing the study to help inform the kind of training YPCA should provide youth to increase the likelihood of employment.

El Salvador

MTPS. CRS has an existing cooperation agreement with MTPS that the project has leveraged for collaboration, which included training for 15 MTPS employment advisors on entrepreneurship. The project helped pay for instructors, materials, and per diem for trainees. According to MTPS officials that were interviewed, the number of entrepreneurs that received advisory services increased from 700 in 2016 to 3,608 in 2017. YPCA and MTPS is planning a second workshop with the same group of employment advisors that will focus on strengthening competencies for entrepreneurs such as commercialization.

In Santa Ana, the project is collaborating with MTPS are a variety of activities including a breakfast for businesses to present the YouthBuilder program, development of a testimonial video, and a visit to the MTPS office where employment advisors talk to youth about interviewing techniques and register them in the MTPS job bank. The MTPS representative believes the YouthBuilder program is complete and consists of sound methodology and materials to help youth acquire jobs.

The MTPS representative in Santa Ana made several recommendations. First, he recommended that the project not be overly paternalistic with youth; rather it should allow youth to take initiative to search for jobs. Second, he believes the project should take advantage of *apprenticeship contracts*, which is a legal mechanism that allows employers to hire and train youth in a vocation at less than full salary during the first two years.⁴⁰ He said if the project is interested in placing youth in businesses using the *apprenticeship contracts* as a learning experience, MTPS would help fine interested businesses. Finally, he noted that the labor market for bakery workers is saturated and that the project should

⁴⁰ Typically, youth are paid 50 percent of full salary in year one, 75 percent in year two, and 100 percent in the third year and after.

focus on industrial machine operators, residential electricity installation and repair, and installation of solar panels.

Soyapango Municipal Government. One of the evaluators interviewed the youth employment advisor for the Soyapango municipality. He said that the municipality has collaborated with the project in several ways. The first collaboration involved sending municipality social promoters with Fe y Alegria project staff to visit households to try to recruit youth to participate in the YouthBuilder program. In addition, the municipality provided free transportation to youth for about six weeks as well as security officers for project events such as job fairs.

INSAFORP. The INSAFORP executive director told evaluators that it developed a relationship with CRS in 2010 when it started to collaborate on the YouthBuilder model. He said he liked the YouthBuilder’s integrated approach and decided to develop a modified YouthBuilder model as one of INSAFORP’s offerings. While the modified YouthBuilder model includes the mix of soft and technical skills, the number of hours has been reduced so the program can be delivered in three months instead of six months. INSAFORP has certified five organizations that it can contract to train youth using the modified YouthBuilder model.

INJUVE. The evaluators interviewed the director of INUVE’s *Jóvenes con Todo* program who explained that CRS collaborated with her program to develop the vocational training approach that includes many of the YouthBuilder characteristics. *Jóvenes con Todo*, which is aligned with national employment policy, is operating 11 training centers in 55 municipalities that reaches 1,000 youth with personalized services including vocations, entrepreneurship, and seed capital that are aligned with local labor market demands. Approximately \$2,000 of seed capital, which is provided by CONAMYPE, is available for self-employment initiatives while up to \$3,000 is available to start a business that has potential to provide employment to more youth.

The director told the evaluators that her program has decided to focus on helping youth acquire jobs with small to medium sized businesses because large businesses have been less responsive and interested. She said the major challenge that *Jóvenes con Todo* faces is providing longer term support to youth who graduate and are in jobs or who have started businesses. She said she would like to have help from CRS to develop a strategy to provide effective long-term support and assistance to these youth.

UTEC. UTEC, which has a vibrant social responsibility program, approached Glasswing El Salvador to discuss potential collaboration. The discussion led to a collaboration agreement where UTEC is providing two classrooms and an office, free of charge, that serves as one of Glasswing’s training centers. The director for UTEC’s social programs told the evaluator that he would be interested in broadening the relationship with Glasswing that might include offering technology training to youth as well as other ways to involve university professors and students. The evaluation team recommends that the project explore ways in which it could transfer the YouthBuilder model to UTEC who, in turn, would commit to provide scholarships to vulnerable youth and train them using the

YouthBuilder model. Although not envisioned as part of the strategy, the evaluators believe these kinds of alliances are highly strategic and promising.

3.6.5. Monitoring and Evaluation System

Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The CMEP is a complete and complex document describing the causal relationship of the projects objectives, outputs, and activities as the proposed theory of change. The CMEP also includes the performance monitoring plan, data collection table, data quality checklist, evaluation plan, and internal project guidelines. The CMEP provides the roadmap and tools to monitor and report on the achievement of the project’s objectives and outputs.

According to the M&E specialist, CRS developed a complete and comprehensive M&E system as part of the proposal. Only after being awarded the grant did CRS realize that it would be required to develop the CMEP. On one hand, the project’s M&E team believe the CMEP is a rigorous M&E system that includes a variety of useful tools and processes to measure the project’s objectives. On the other hand, however, the team opined that the CMEP process is long, complex, and difficult for project staff to understand. The M&E specialist explained the long development process delayed project implementation, which eventually caused CRS to decide to implement a set of pilot projects, approved by USDOL, so the partners would not have to wait for the CMEP to be completed.

Problems with Data Entry

As discussed in the previous section, the project’s field teams are having difficulty completing data forms and uploading information. Most of the field teams who were interviewed complained that completing the data forms is complicated and time consuming. Due to low bandwidth in some places, uploading data can take several hours. If field teams lose the internet connection, they have to start over. Project partners also complained about the lack of compatibility between the project’s two primary databases: Zoho and Google Drive and difficulties entering data in Google Drive. Several field teams commented that sometimes they spend more time filling out data forms and uploading data than training youth.

M&E Challenges

We have also faced challenges in properly utilizing the beneficiary registration form and the baseline in a timely manner. We have experienced delays in the process of hiring enumerators who are required to process these forms, making it difficult to track how many beneficiaries are in child labor or who may be at-risk of involvement in child labor. To overcome this issue, the project will hire more enumerators to expedite the process. *YPCA TPR April 2018.*

One of the M&E team members, on the other hand, believes that Zoho and Google Drive are appropriate and effective databases and that they are meeting the needs of the project. The problem is that the technical teams do not have a background in information systems and data management that make data collection and entry more difficult than it needs to be. The evaluation team acknowledges that the majority of the field team members have limited experience using technologies because they are educators, psychologists, and social workers; not information specialists. For this reason, the evaluation team recommends that

the project review and simplify the data collection forms and, at the same time, train field teams in the CMEP, especially how data they collect are used to measure objectives and make decisions. Field teams should also be trained in how to use technology such as iPads and smart phones to manage data.

Several technical team members commented that they have received mixed messages from CRS on how to interpret indicators. For example, can a business plan be counted as completed if it is hand written or does it have to be generated by a computerized form? Another example is whether a counseling session with youth can count if it is conducted in a back yard under a tree rather than in an enclosed private space such as an office room? Also, to be counted as collaboration, can a business be contacted or does a youth have to be placed at the business for an internship, interview, or job? Based on these comments, the evaluators also recommend training the technical teams on indicators during the CMEP training noted in the previous paragraph.

3.7. Sustainability

The following section begins with an overview of the project’s current sustainability plan, which is followed by an assessment of those outcomes and outputs that appear to be most sustainable. In the process, the degree to which the project has built the technical capacity of its partners and local stakeholders to reach vulnerable youth is discussed including how to provide them with vocational training opportunities (Evaluation Question #14) once the project ends. Finally, a recent post project impact study is reviewed that identifies four key factors associated with sustainability that YPCA might consider in its efforts to sustain key outcomes.

3.7.1. YPCA Sustainability Planning

YPCA conducted a sustainability workshop in July 2016, which identified a set of actions and indicators for each outcome and serves as the current project sustainability plan. The evaluators believe that conducting a sustainability planning workshop early in the project is an excellent idea because it allows the project both time and resources to help ensure key outcomes have a chance of being sustained. In the opinion of the evaluators, the sustainability plan is still somewhat broad and lacks some key elements such as timeframes and responsible parties. Nevertheless, the project has laid important groundwork to build on and develop a more comprehensive sustainability plan.

3.7.2. Sustainability of YPCA Outputs and Outcomes

To help assess which of the project’s primary strategies and outcomes are most sustainable, the evaluators included sustainable specific questions in the interview guides for project staff, partners, and government stakeholders. Based on the interviews and the evaluators’ own assessment, the potential sustainability of each strategy and outcome is discussed below.

Career Connect Clubs

Overall, the Career Connect Clubs will be very difficult to sustain. The project is currently paying for a club coordinator as well as materials such as art supplies. In some cases, the project is providing incentives to club volunteers. The majority of school directors that were interviewed told the evaluators that they do not have funds to support the clubs once the project ends. However, at least two school directors explained that they would be interested in trying to continue the clubs once the project ends. They opined that dedicated teachers and parents could serve as volunteers to keep the clubs operating but the schools would need training from the project.

One possible way to sustain the Career Connect Clubs would be for Fe y Alegria, who operates seven schools in El Salvador, to agree to implement the clubs in its schools in El Salvador. If Fe y Alegria is interested in the clubs, the project would need to train school directors and teachers in the club methodology and help establish the clubs in those schools that did not participate in YPCA. The options for Honduras are more limited since Fe y Alegria operate only two schools in El Progreso and Tegucigalpa.

The evaluators believe that the impact that the clubs have had on the participating students will, for the most part, be sustained until the students graduate. The evaluators interviewed both teachers and students who stated that the clubs have helped motivate students to improve their grades and remain in schools. The exception would be those cases where parents decide to take their children out of school to work, care for younger siblings, or move to other areas. In these cases, the parents are the decisionmakers, not the students.

YouthBuilder Program

The project has several interesting ways to try to sustain the YouthBuilder model and the impact it has on youth. The first is to ensure that the three project partners have the capacity and commitment to continue to use the YouthBuilder model in their youth employment initiatives. Glasswing and FUNADEH could look for opportunities to use the YouthBuilder model in future projects. Fe y Alegria, however, offers the best chance for long term sustainability since it not only operates vocational training centers but is a vocational training service provider in Honduras and El Salvador. Fe y Alegria will likely have the opportunity to use the model in training contracts it has with both government and non-governmental organizations.

In addition to the project partners, YPCA can sustain the YouthBuilder model through agreements with institutions responsible for training youth in vocations. In El Salvador, INSAFORP has agreed to include a modified version of the YouthBuilder model as one of its offerings and has certified five organizations to use the model. CRS also provided technical assistance to INJUVE's *Jóvenes con Todo* program to develop an approach and policy heavily influenced by the YouthBuilder model. YPCA also has an opportunity to transfer the YouthBuilder model to UTEC.

In Honduras, the municipal governments of El Progreso and Choloma show strong commitment to the YouthBuilder program including allocation of resources to pay for

transportation and meals as well as seed capital. Those municipal governments that show interest and commitment are strong candidates to continue using the YouthBuilder model to train youth but would require more capacity building from the project. INFOP is another institution that could use the YouthBuilder model as one of its offerings similar to what INSAFORP is doing in El Salvador.

The impact that the YouthBuilder program is having on most youth is impressive. Based on interviews with youth, employers, parents, and the field teams, the evaluators learned that the program transformed the lives of many youth. Even those youth who have not found jobs or have not started a business, told the evaluators that the program changed them in important ways and that they are better persons. While intangible, these apparent transformations are important. The more tangible impact of the program is employment and education opportunities provided to youth that the evaluation team believe are largely sustainable.

Social Protection Services

The social protection services are primarily implemented through the Strong Families and Community Youth Connect interventions, which are discussed below.

Strong Families

The best chance to sustain the Strong Families program is if the project partners decide to include it in future projects. However, the evaluators do not think that communities can sustain the program because it requires an entity to organize and facilitate the workshops along with resources. On the other hand, the impact that Strong Families have had on youth and their parents is important and will likely be sustained in the medium term. The problem with longer term sustainability, based on research, is that behavior change needs to be reinforced or it will become extinct.⁴¹ If parents and their children are not receiving reinforcement through refresher workshops, there is a strong chance that important behavior changes will not be sustained in the long term.

Community Youth Connect

The services that YPCA provides through Community Youth Connect such as counseling, psycho-social therapy, and referrals to local institutions is not sustainable because once the project ends, there will not be an entity in place to continue to provide these services. What could be sustained, however, are the linkages that the project helps make between youth and their families and local institutions.

To be sustainable, youth and their families must value the services. In some cases, the evaluators learned that youth do not trust some local institutions because of the poor quality

⁴¹ <http://www.uk.sandler.com/downloadc/53420>

of services, poor customer service, long wait times, and overly bureaucratic processes. These are threats to sustaining the referrals to local institutions made by the project.

3.7.3. Sustainability Success Factors

USAID’s Food for Peace Office, through the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) project, commissioned a post project impact study to evaluate the sustainability of 12 USAID funded projects in four countries.⁴² The evaluation team believes that this post project impact study provides a useful sustainability roadmap for the YPCA because the project interventions include services such as livelihoods and education. In fact, one of the projects was implemented by CRS India.

The study, which was conducted by Tufts University, concluded that project achievements at the time of the endline survey did not necessarily translate into sustained benefit for project beneficiaries. In fact, focusing exclusively on achieving targets during the life of the project could jeopardize longer term sustainability. Other important findings are discussed below.

Replacement resources, capacity building, and motivation were critical to achieving sustainability. Identifying cash or in-kind resources to replace resources provided by the project; building the management and technical capacity of partners (both organizational and individual) to continue to implement activities; and maintaining high levels of partner and beneficiary motivation were not only critical but interrelated success factors

Gradual transition from project supported activities to independent operation was important to achieve sustainability. Sustainability was more likely when projects gradually phased out activities and resources and allowed partners and beneficiaries to operate independently well before the project ended. A significantly long disengagement process allowed local partners and beneficiaries to gain operational experience and confidence.

Creating linkages, especially vertical linkages, between community and institutional structures was critical for effective phase-over and sustained support. Creating linkages between project beneficiaries and partners and corresponding public and private sector institutions to support them is one of the most important sustainability success factors.

The evaluation team believes that the sustainability success factors identified by the USAID post project impact study have important implications for YPCA’s efforts to sustain key outcomes in the long-term. This is discussed in more detail as a recommendation.

⁴² Sustaining Development: A Synthesis of Results from a Four-Country Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among Development Food Assistance Projects, Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, October 2016 <https://www.fantaproject.org/research/exit-strategies-ffp>

3.8. Lessons Learned and Best Practices

This section lists and discusses best practices and lessons learned that could benefit similar projects. The evaluators reviewed best practices and lessons learned sections of the TPRs and included best practice and lessons learned questions in the interview guides. The list of best practices and lessons learned discussed are based on these sources of information.

Distribution of Leadership and Technology

The project's leadership (project director and deputy director) are based in Honduras. The project does not have a leadership position based in El Salvador that means when there is a key event the project director or deputy director must travel to El Salvador, which is not always possible. In addition, the project does not have a leadership position to interact with its two partners in El Salvador. The lesson for future projects that are implemented in two countries is that the leadership positions should be split between the countries.

To address the fact that the project's leadership is based in Honduras, the project has effectively used technology such as Skype and social media to facilitate individual and as well as group meetings. The use of technology allows the director and deputy director to participate in some key meetings and workshops held in El Salvador and, on the other hand, allows the M&E coordinator and training specialist to participate in key meetings and other events held in Honduras.

Division of Neighborhoods and Teams

On several occasions the project started to operate in areas under heavy gang control, which made it difficult if not impossible for youth from outside the area to enter and participate in YouthBuilder activities. The lesson is that, if possible, the project should select neutral areas where youth from different neighborhoods can attend project activities without being threatened. To address the problem of gang-controlled areas, the project divided the field team into two sub-teams. One sub-team worked with youth from one gang-controlled area while the other sub-team worked with youth from the other gang-controlled area. This strategy, which the evaluators consider to be a good practice, allowed youth from the two gang-controlled areas to participate.

CMEP Development and Pilot Projects

The development of the CMEP was a long and complicated process that took approximately one year. According to USDOL policy, a project cannot begin providing direct services to project participants until the project has collected baseline survey data in project areas. For this project, USDOL and CRS agreed to conduct a longitudinal study of project participants beginning with a baseline survey of enrolled participants, with periodic follow-up surveys throughout the life of the project. The process of agreeing on the design of the longitudinal study, hiring a contractor to carry out the study, and creating and finalizing the baseline survey forms meant that direct services began nearly one year after the project was funded. To address the delay, the project implemented pilot activities for the Career Connect Clubs, YouthBuilder program, and Strong Families in late 2016 while

the baseline methodology and data collection forms were still in draft form. The pilot activities allowed project partners to gain valuable experience and adjust methods and tools in preparation for formal implementation.

Informal Local Labor Market Surveys

YPCA hired consultants to conduct labor market surveys in both Honduras and El Salvador. While the survey reports contain some useful information, the findings and recommendations are, for the most part, broad and do not reflect labor market conditions in and around the neighborhoods where the project's training centers are located. To address the lack of labor market information, Glasswing El Salvador started to conduct informal surveys by visiting and interviewing local businesses and manufacturers to determine the job opportunities and the required skill sets for those jobs. The informal surveys served as a means to introduce the project to the businesses while gathering information to inform the kind of vocational training the project should offer local youth.

Career Connect Club Volunteers

The project has had difficulty keeping volunteers for the Career Connect Clubs. While some of the university students have dropped out of the clubs due to security concerns, the majority leave because they find jobs or other opportunities. To address the high attrition rate of club volunteers, the project started to recruit teachers, parents, and other community members because they have stable jobs and live near the schools. It appears that high attrition rates have started to decrease in many schools, which is largely attributed to using teachers and parents.

Teacher Involvement in Career Connect Clubs

The Career Connect Club coordinators reported strained relations with some teachers and noted that they were not supportive of the clubs and were not referring students. Apparently, some teachers who did not understand the objectives of the clubs and viewed them as competition. To address this problem, the club coordinators started to orient the teachers about the club objectives and activities and involve them. Many club coordinators are now involving the teachers from the time the project enters a school with club activities to gain their support.

Career Connect Club Offerings

In El Salvador, Glasswing and Fe y Alegria discovered that some of the Career Connect Clubs being offered were not popular and, consequently, had low enrollment rates. To address this problem, they started to offer other kinds of clubs that students showed more interest in such as English language, robotics, and communication. According to Career Connect Club coordinators, offering more club options of interest to students helped improve overall enrollment rates.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Following are the evaluation team’s conclusions based on the findings. The conclusions are organized according to relevance, validity of project design, project performance, effectiveness of strategies, effectiveness of project management, sustainability, and lessons and best practices.

4.1. Relevance

By focusing on employment, YPCA is addressing the key priorities of the project beneficiaries as well as the priorities and policies of governments in both Honduras and El Salvador to address violence in high-crime neighborhoods. The project is being implemented in two countries that has benefits and challenges. The benefits include the opportunity to share lessons and learn from different country contexts. The challenges include the management structure that has the project director and deputy director located in Honduras making it difficult, at times, to attend key events in El Salvador. Another challenge is that government agencies in Honduras and El Salvador are structured differently with different policies. Finally, the project’s partners’ experience and capacities to implement the YouthBuilder program and Career Connect Clubs vary from country to country.

Project partners are providing a combination of training in both traditional and non-traditional topics. Fe y Alegria tends to provide training in more traditional vocations such as bakery, hairstyling, cuisine, electricity, motorcycle repair because these kinds of skills will help youth earn income quickly. Glasswing and FUNADEH, on the other hand, provide training in less traditional vocations such as sales, graphic design, basic accounting, and customer service in response to what local businesses are requesting. However, it is not clear which approach, if any, is more effective in helping youth find jobs or start businesses.

4.2. Validity of Project Design

The project’s theory of change states that IF children and youth are motivated to remain in school, have access to education or employment or self-employment opportunities, and benefit from social protection services THEN their participation in formal or non-formal education and *acceptable employment* or self-employment will increase, which will, in turn, decrease the prevalence of child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work. Although the term *acceptable employment* does not exist in the labor field, the project’s CMEP defines *acceptable employment* as work that meets at least two of the following criteria: income equal to or greater than the minimum wage, full-time work, verbal or written contract, and social insurance or pension.⁴³

⁴³ “YPCA Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Employment that does not meet decent work standards runs the risk of perpetuating child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work, which seems to be happening in the project. The percent of children (less than 18 years of age) engaged in child labor increased from 16 to 36 percent; the percent of children involved in hazardous child labor increased from 14 to 32 percent; and the percent of youth (more than 18 years of age) involved in irregular work increased from 12 to 47 percent. While the project has been successful at helping children and youth find employment, the quality of the employment often does not meet the hazardous child labor and irregular work standards set by the project.⁴⁴

The evaluation team should point out that the longitudinal study is not a formal impact evaluation with a control group and, therefore, increases in child labor cannot be attributed to the project. In fact, some youth who were not working before and during the project interventions can be expected to enter the labor market.

The project, through the YouthBuilder program, provides a comprehensive and effective set of soft skills such as values, leadership, communication, teamwork, and job interviewing that help prepare youth for jobs or self-employment. The program also provides youth vocational skills that are somewhat limited and do not always align with local labor market demand as well as the abilities and interests of youth beneficiaries.

4.3. Project Performance

The performance of Outcome 1 is mixed. While the project is meeting or exceeding indicator targets for the number of children and youth provided educational or vocational services and the percent of Career Connect Club participants who regularly attend classes, only 54 percent of the participants complete the clubs, which is well below the target of 80 percent. The project has not measured and reported two indicators for Outcome 1 that include percent of club members that improve social skills and improve perception about school activities.

The project is generally on track to meet its indicator targets for Outcome 2. However, the project is underachieving one of the most important indicators, which is the percent of YouthBuilder program participants who obtain employment. The project set a target of 30 percent but has only achieved 18 percent. On the other hand, the project set a target to graduate 80 percent of all YouthBuilder participants and is achieving 72 percent, which is close to the target and reflects that participants are overall satisfied with the program.

The performance of Output 3 is also mixed. The project is underachieving the number of households benefiting from social protection services (30 percent) while overachieving the number of households enrolled in the Strong Families program and the percent of families that complete the program (105 percent). However, the project is significantly

⁴⁴ Standards for child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work are defined in the project's comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (CMEP).

underachieving the indicator targets for the number of youth and families referred to local institutions (15 percent) and the number of youth provide emergency shelter (one percent).

4.4. Effectiveness of Strategies

Career Connect Clubs. The clubs are very popular among students who participated in them. Many of the school directors and teachers credit the clubs to improving motivation and grades. While those students who participate attend class regularly, the clubs have a high dropout rate that often times is the result of parents deciding to take their children out of the clubs to work or, in some cases, the family moves to another location. Since the clubs are often conducted over the noon lunch hour, not providing meals to club members could be an important reason for why students drop out or decide not to participate. The project has had difficulty recruiting and keeping volunteers, which are critical to the success of the clubs. The decision, however, to use more teachers and parents as volunteers has helped address this problem.

YouthBuilder Program. The YouthBuilder program appears to be effective at preparing youth for employment. The soft skills component is especially effective at improving confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, self-awareness, and attitudes toward both life and work. The program has been less effective at placing youth in jobs or self-employment situations including starting businesses. Challenges that the project faces include many employers require employees to have a high school diploma, which is not the typical YouthBuilder beneficiary profile. Other challenges are well-documented discriminatory hiring practices, difficulty recruiting youth due to competition from other employment projects, and the lack of seed capital. The amount the project has budgeted for meals and transportation is inadequate for six months of training, which has created confusion among beneficiaries and made recruiting youth difficult.

Youth Community Connect. Project field teams provide effective and well received counseling and psycho-social therapy to children and youth beneficiaries. The project has been less effective at linking these beneficiaries and their families to local institutions that provide social protection services. Placing children and youth in emergency shelters is not functioning due to a variety of legal obstacles.

Strong Families. The Strong Families program is another project intervention that appears to be transformational for those who participate. The Strong Families workshops have helped improve the relationships between children and youth beneficiaries and their parents. One of the few weaknesses of the program is a low participation rate among parents, many whom have work responsibilities. Moving the workshops to Saturdays has helped improve the participation rate in some places.

Migrant Campaign. The project's strategy to address returning migrants and implement a migrant campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the dangers associated with migration such as child labor, hazardous working conditions, and forced labor was only beginning at the time of the midterm evaluation. Thus, it is too early to assess its effectiveness.

4.5. Effectiveness of Project Management

YPCA’s organization structure is generally appropriate given the project’s strategies and the fact that the project is being implemented in two countries. Since the project’s director and deputy director are located in Honduras and the project does not have a leadership position in El Salvador, it is not possible for project leadership to attend some key events in El Salvador. The staffing of the implementing partner field teams also is appropriate. A communications specialist was recently hired to develop and oversee the migrant campaign and has started to develop an overall communication strategy, which is highly appropriate. In fact, a communication specialist should have been included from the beginning of the project.

Internal communication and coordination has improved since the beginning of the project. However, communication and coordination between implementing partner field teams (both within and between countries) is still weak at times and should continue to be improved as well as streamlined in some cases. The turnover rate for field team staff in both countries is high, which should be studied along with whether they have the appropriate profile for their positions.

The CMEP is a complex and comprehensive M&E system that is providing information to track and report on the project’s objective and performance indicators as well as the USDOL common indicators. The project field teams, who are responsible for gathering and uploading beneficiary data, are having difficulty using some of the data collection forms, uploading them, and accessing information in the databases. The field teams would benefit from training on the CMEP as well as the technologies.

4.6. Sustainability

The project’s components, as designed, are not sustainable because they require substantial resources to pay staff to implement them, purchase materials, provide incentives to club volunteers in some cases, and pay meals and transportation for YouthBuilder beneficiaries. The implementing partners nor other stakeholders are able to assume responsibility for continuing to implement project activities as currently configured. However, some of the strategies and their impacts have strong chances of being sustained once project funding ends.

The best chance to sustain the Career Connect Clubs is if Fe y Alegria decides to adopt the clubs and implement them in its educational centers. The next best chance to sustain the clubs is to build the capacity of those schools interested in continuing to implement the clubs once the project ends. The clubs’ impact on those students who participated in the clubs is sustainable in the short-term or until the students graduate.

CRS has taken important steps to sustain the YouthBuilder model. In El Salvador, CRS has provided technical assistance on YouthBuilder approaches and policies to INJUVE that influenced its *Jóvenes con Todo* program. CRS supported INSAFORP who decided to offer a modified version of the YouthBuilder model and has trained five organizations to use the model. In Honduras, INFOP has expressed interest in adopting the YouthBuilder model

and adding it to its vocational training offerings. The municipal governments of El Progreso and Choloma show promise for sustaining some elements of the model. The impact the YouthBuilder program has had on its beneficiaries, especially soft skills, is sustainable in the medium term while jobs and self-employment are highly sustainable in many cases.

The Strong Families and Community Youth Connect strategies will be difficult to sustain. However, the impact these strategies have had on children, youth, and their families is sustainable in the short to medium term. It is not clear whether the behavior changes can be sustained in the longer term. The referrals and linkages the project makes between beneficiaries and their families and local institutions could be sustained if they value the services that the local institutions provide.

4.7. Lessons and Best Practices

Distribution of Leadership and Technology. The project has effectively used technology such as Skype and social media to facilitate individual and as well as group meetings to address the fact that the project’s leadership is based in Honduras.

Division of Neighborhoods and Teams. To address the problem of gang-controlled areas, the project divided the field team into two sub-teams that allowed youth from the two gang-controlled areas to participate.

CMEP Development and Pilot Projects. The project implemented pilot activities that allowed project partners to gain valuable experience and adjust methods and tools in preparation for formal implementation while it was waiting for the CMEP to be completed and approved.

Informal Area Labor Market Surveys. Glasswing El Salvador conducts informal surveys by visiting and interviewing local businesses and manufacturers to determine the job opportunities and the required skill sets for those jobs. The informal surveys served as a means to introduce the project to the businesses while gathering information to inform the kind of vocational training the project should offer local youth.

Career Connect Club Volunteers. To address the high attrition rate of club volunteers, the project started to recruit teachers, parents, and other community members because they have stable jobs and live near the schools. It appears that high attrition rates have started to decrease in many schools, which can be largely attributed to using teachers and parents.

Teacher Involvement in Career Connect Clubs. To gain the support of teachers, club coordinators have started to orient the teachers about the club objectives and activities and involve them. Other coordinators are now involving the teachers from the time the project enters a school with club activities to ascertain their support.

Career Connect Club Offerings. In El Salvador, Glasswing and Fe y Alegria offer a variety of clubs that students show interest in such as English language, robotics, and communication, which has helped improve overall enrollment rates.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, which are based on the findings and conclusions, are intended to provide the YPCA project staff and USDOL with specific actions that can further strengthen project outputs and outcomes and increase the potential for sustainability.

5.1. Internship Program

YPCA should develop a set of standards to guide its internship program to ensure that the internship experience is a learning opportunity and that labor rights are protected. The standards should include job descriptions, learning objectives, workdays, work hours including breaks, supervision, and roles and responsibilities including who is responsible for paying medical bills in case of an accident. Once the standards are defined, the project should use them to develop a standardized internship agreement form that all of the implementing partners sign with employers providing internships. The internship program standards should also include meal and transportation policy that is practical to implement. The evaluators recommend providing weekly meal and transportation stipends to interns with a document trail consisting of signed receipt of the stipends and the attendance records at the place of work.

5.2. Discriminatory Hiring Practices

YPCA should clearly indicate discriminatory and illegal hiring practices during the YouthBuilder program so youth understand their labor rights. These include discrimination based on residential areas, strip searches looking for tattoos, pregnancy tests, and polygraph tests. The project should make clear to youth that these practices are not permitted by national labor laws and international labor conventions and if labor ministries find employers implementing these practices, they will be fined. In particular, the project should not coach youth on how to take polygraph tests, which the evaluators believe is contrary to the values that are taught during the YouthBuilder program. Instead, the project should use opportunities such as breakfast meetings with businesses and trainings for labor ministry staff to reinforce the fact that discriminatory hiring practices are a violation of an individual's labor rights and should be stopped.

5.3. Strengthen the Definition of Acceptable Employment

YPCA and USDOL should discuss how to strengthen the definition of *acceptable employment* so it complies with national labor laws and approximates the ILO's definition of decent work. Although the project is operating within an extremely difficult labor environment, it should aim to place youth in jobs and self-employment opportunities that provide fair remuneration and safe working conditions while protecting labor rights. These would be jobs that meet the minimum requirements established by labor law, which is a written contract, minimum wage, and access to social security that guarantees medical assistance in case of illness or accident.

5.4. Revise Employment and Education Targets

YPCA should consider reclassifying the employment and education insertion targets so that the employment indicator target is reduced while the education target is increased. The evaluators believe it will be very difficult to achieve the employment target of 30 percent given the profiles of YouthBuilder beneficiaries, the difficult labor markets, and competition from other employment projects that often offer more economic incentives. On the other hand, if the project works with the education ministries in both countries to aggressively promote continuing education opportunities for out-of-school youth while improving their academic skills, the evaluators believe it is feasible to increase the education reinsertion rate beyond the 20 percent target. The project is already achieving an average education target insertion rate of 21 percent.

5.5. Monitoring and Evaluation Training

The YPCA M&E team should train implementing partners and their field teams in the basics of the CMEP focusing on how information they gather are used for both decision-making and reporting including how indicators are measured. The teams should also be trained in how to complete data collection forms, how to use tablets and smart phones to enter and upload data, and how to use the project's databases to access information and generate reports for their own decision-making purposes. In the process, the M&E team should work with the field teams to resolve problems they encounter as well as identify opportunities to simplify the data collection process. The YPCA M&E team and the implementing partners' M&E teams should also work in a more coordinated and integrated manner.

5.6. Child Care for Young Mothers

YPCA should develop a range of simple and easy to implement child care options for young mothers who want to participate in the YouthBuilder program. After nearly two years of implementation, the project still does not have child care options in most of the training centers, which limits the participation of young mothers. The most feasible option for child care is to provide a stipend to the mothers and allow them to use the money to arrange child care with relatives, friends, or neighbors. When appropriate, several mothers might combine their stipends and pay someone in the community to provide child care services, which is something the project could help facilitate. In some cases, municipal governments or non-government organizations might operate child care facilities near the YouthBuilder training centers that would be willing to provide child care. In any case, the evaluators recommend that the project not take responsibility for providing child care itself due to the range of legal requirements in both Honduras and El Salvador for child care facilities as well as legal risk in case of accidents.

5.7. Professional Development for Field Teams

YPCA should assess the professional development needs of the field teams and, based on the findings, provide training and other professional development activities to ensure the teams have the knowledge and skills they require to deliver the project's interventions.

Professional development should include training on decent work, labor rights, child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work. The project has provided training to some field teams in new areas such as cognitive behavioral therapy, drug and alcohol counseling, and gender. However, given the high turnover among field teams and the fact that some field team members received only one training when they were initially hired, the project should provide refresher training as needed. In addition, the professional development of field teams should be continuous so they have updated knowledge and skills to help them effectively interact with the beneficiaries.

5.8. High Field Team Turnover Study

YPCA should work with the implementing partner organizations to conduct a study to determine the reasons for the high turnover of project field team staff. The turnover of project field team staff, who are critical in delivering the interventions, appears to be quite high and negatively affecting implementation. The study should calculate overall turnover rates including the positions most affected and, at the same time, assess the adequacy of the staffs technical profiles and qualifications. The study should also include interviews with a representative sample of staff who have resigned to determine the reasons and solicit recommendations to address the high turnover rates. Based on the findings of the study, the project, including CRS and the three implementing partners, should develop a plan to address the factors contributing to high staff turnover.

5.9. Employment Strategy

YPCA, including the implementing partners, should review each partner's approach to identifying internship and employment opportunities and placing YouthBuilder graduates in these opportunities to determine the most effective strategies and lessons. This information should be used to revise the project's employment strategy that would serve as a road map for each implementing partner. In turn, the YPCA youth employment specialists should oversee the implementation of the employment strategy and provide technical assistance as required. The revised employment strategy should include guidelines to ensure that field teams do not place youth in jobs that are considered child labor, hazardous child labor, or irregular work and to help ensure that youth's labor rights are protected. Pursuing education opportunities such as high school diplomas should be considered as one of the primary strategies to acquiring decent work.

5.10. Communication Specialist and Strategy

YPCA should convert the communication specialist from a part-time to full time position so she has the time to develop and oversee an effective project communication strategy. The communication strategy should include how the project communicates to key stakeholders and other external audiences, how it promotes itself to communities and recruits beneficiaries, and how project staff communicate internally. Internal communication should focus on streamlining communication protocols to facilitate quick decision-making as well as sharing lessons and good practices that can be implemented in a timely fashion. The communication strategy should also consider establishing a website where it can post project information such as videos, testimonials, and human-interest

stories. Finally, the communication specialist should work closely with the project field teams to incorporate key messages about decent work, labor rights, discriminatory hiring practices, child labor, hazardous child labor, and irregular work into the projects communication materials.

5.11. YouthBuilder Ability and Interest Tracks

YPCA should develop different tracks that respond to the different abilities and interests of YouthBuilder beneficiaries. Currently, the project recruits youth who comprise a cohort that participate in the program's interventions. Although, the composition of the cohort is highly diverse in terms of education, abilities, and interests, all members of the cohort receive the same interventions including vocational training. Once a cohort has been recruited, the project should conduct an assessment to determine the ranges of abilities and interests in the cohort. Based on this information, the project should develop at least three tracks. One would be an educational track that focuses on preparing and assisting youth to continue their education. Another track would be for youth who are only interested in acquiring a job instead of starting a business. The third track would be for youth who are not interested in acquiring a job or whose profile would make it difficult. This track would focus helping more entrepreneurial youth start a business or providing basic self-employment skills to those youth who are less entrepreneurial.

5.12. Review and Revise Indicators

YPCA M&E team should review the current set of indicators in the CMEP to determine their utility in measuring key outcomes and make the appropriate adjustments. In particular, the project should review the following indicators: 2.3 (business plans); 2.1.2 (local labor markets); 2.2.1 (psychological scales); 2.2.2 (youth starting YouthBuilder); 2.3.1 (businesses contributing to the program); 2.4.2 (public officials attending training events); and 3.1.1 (families starting Strong Families). In some cases, the indicators might not be necessary while in other cases, the indicators might need to be reformulated to measure changes in behaviors or practices instead of counting events such as trainings.

5.13. Local Labor Market Surveys

YPCA, including the implementing partners, should identify the different approaches being used to assess local labor markets, the successes and challenges, and how that information is used to determine the vocational training topics. The project should also review the two labor market studies conducted for Honduras and El Salvador to determine whether information contained in the reports are being used or could be used by the implementing partners. Based on this information, all project partners should collaborate to develop a relatively standardized approach, adjusted to local situations, to identify local job and self-employment opportunities and the required skill sets, which would help determine the kinds of vocational training that the project provides to YouthBuilder beneficiaries. The evaluators believe that the Glasswing El Salvador approach of conducting informal labor market surveys can serve as an important input to the discussion.

5.14. Comprehensive Sustainability Plan

YPCA should update its current sustainability plan and matrix so it provides a current and clear roadmap to sustainability. The revised sustainability plan should define the intervention or outcome to be sustained noting that not all strategies and outcomes can be sustained. In addition, the plan should state the government agency or partner organization responsible for the different outputs or outcomes, the timeframe for implementing the them, and the required resources. To the extent possible, the plan should incorporate the sustainability success factors identified and discussed in the USAID post-project impact study (discussed in Section 3.7.3). Like the project’s sustainability matrix, the sustainability plan should include a set of indicators or benchmarks to measure progress in achieving sustainability targets. The sustainability plan should be developed by CRS and its implementing partners in an integrated and synergic manner.

5.15. Meal and Transportation Policy

YPCA should work with the implementing partner organizations to develop an inclusive and competitive meal and transportation policy, including a budget, that provides nutritious meals and safe transportation to all Career Connect Club and YouthBuilder beneficiaries. The policy should contemplate providing an adequate and nutritious meal that will sustain beneficiaries during afternoon classes or training sessions as well as safe transportation or a transportation stipend for those beneficiaries that cannot walk to school or the training center. The policy should also contemplate providing a small breakfast snack to YouthBuilder beneficiaries since most arrive to the training centers without breakfast. In developing the policy, the project should review meal and transportation policies of other employment projects to ensure that the YPCA policy is competitive. In addition to the policy, a budget should be developed that determines the cost to implement the policy. Since the cost will represent an increase over the current amount budgeted for meals and transportation, the project should discuss the policy and its cost with USDOL to determine how the overall project budget might be adjusted to accommodate the increase in meals and transportation.

5.16. Technological University, El Salvador

YPCA should use the agreement that it signed with UTEC to develop an alliance where the project transfers the YouthBuilder model to UTEC who agrees to use the model to train vulnerable youth in soft and technological skills and place them in internships and jobs using its rich connections with the private sector. The alliance would leverage UTEC’s technologies, facilities, and faculty to introduce new non-traditional vocations that are in high demand such as software design. UTEC and the project should recruit vulnerable youth who are interested and have an aptitude for technologies. The alliance would be an effective way to sustain the YouthBuilder model and its positive impact on youth.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Terms of Reference

Midterm Evaluation

Youth Pathways Central America (YPCA)

Implemented by CRS

1. Background and Justification

The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). OCFT activities include research on international child labor; supporting U.S. government policy on international child labor; administering and overseeing cooperative agreements with organizations working to eliminate child labor around the world; and raising awareness about child labor issues.

Since 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated over \$1 billion to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects to combat exploitive child labor in more than 93 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL range from targeted action projects in specific sectors of work to more comprehensive projects that support national efforts to eliminate child labor. USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects generally seek to achieve five major goals:

- Reducing exploitative child labor, especially the worst forms through the provision of direct educational services and by addressing root causes of child labor, including innovative strategies to promote sustainable livelihoods of target households;
- Strengthening policies on child labor, education, and sustainable livelihoods, and the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, address its root causes, and promote formal, non-formal and vocational education opportunities to provide children with alternatives to child labor;
- Raising awareness of exploitative child labor and its root causes, and the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;
- Supporting research, evaluation, and the collection of reliable data on child labor, its root causes, and effective strategies, including educational and vocational alternatives, microfinance and other income generating activities to improve household income; and
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The approach of USDOL child labor elimination projects – decreasing the prevalence of exploitive child labor through increased access to education and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable families – is intended to nurture the development, health, safety, and enhanced future employability of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor.

USDOL-funded child labor elimination projects are designed to ensure that children in areas with a high incidence of child labor are provided with appropriate formal and non-formal education opportunities, and that they persist in their education once enrolled. In parallel, the projects seek to avert at-risk children from leaving school and entering child labor. The projects are based on the notion that the elimination of exploitative child labor depends, to a large extent, on improving access to, quality of, and relevance of education. Without improving educational quality and relevance, children withdrawn/prevented from child labor may not have viable alternatives and could resort to other forms of hazardous work.

In FY2010, Congress provided new authority to ILAB to expand activities related to income generating activities, including microfinance, to help projects enhance income generation and address poverty more effectively. The addition of this livelihood focus is based on the premise that if adult family members have sustainable livelihoods, they will be less likely to have their dependent children work and more likely to keep them to school.

Project Context (As described in the Project Document)

The 34,648 unaccompanied minors from El Salvador and Honduras detained at the U.S. border in 2014 were emblematic of a complex humanitarian crisis in the region⁴⁵. Young people were fleeing violence (murder rates in Honduras and El Salvador rank 1st and 4th in the world), responding to lack of livelihood opportunities, or seeking family reunification⁴⁶. Studies indicate that the main causes of youth violence in Latin America include inequality, high unemployment for youth, increased school dropout rates, and disintegration of family structures⁴⁷. In addition, according to the ILO, 56 percent of Salvadorans and 71 percent of Hondurans are employed in the informal sector.⁴⁸

High income inequality and slow growth mean that there are few economic opportunities for young people in El Salvador and Honduras⁴⁹. In addition to limited opportunities, there is a mismatch between skills and available jobs⁵⁰ and many youth lack the basic academic skills they need to enter the workforce or continue their education. In Honduras and El Salvador, the average number of years of schooling is four and six years respectively. Only

⁴⁵US Customs and Border Patrol. <http://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children-2014>. May 2015/CIA Factbook 2015.

⁴⁶ Pew Research Centre. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/01/dhs-violence-poverty-is-driving-children-to-flee-central-america-to-u-s/> July 2014.

⁴⁷ PNUD, (2013) Informe Regional de Desarrollo Humano 2013-2014 *Seguridad Ciudadana con Rostro Humano: diagnóstico y propuestas para América Latina*. Nueva York, PNUD,

⁴⁸ <http://www.elsalvador.com/noticias/negocios/455326/en-ultimo-ano-solo-se-crearon-solo-6723-empleos-formales/>

⁴⁹ J. Johnston and Lefebvre, S. “Honduras Since the Coup: Economic and Social Outcomes” Center for Economic and Policy Research Washington D.C. November 2013. Honduras now has the most unequal distribution of income in Latin America. Between 2010-2013, average annual growth was only 3.5 percent. El Salvador has had growth between 1 and 2 percent for nearly a decade.

⁵⁰ USAID & GIZ. (2011). Private Sector Survey on Youth Employment: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations, Final Report. San Salvador: USAID.

27.1 percent of Honduran youth aged 15-17 attend school⁵¹, and secondary school graduation in El Salvador is around 30 percent⁵². National household surveys indicate that in 2013, over 250,000 youth in El Salvador were unemployed and out of school; a 2010 survey in Honduras reported over 762,230 Honduran youth in the same situation. While youth in rural areas generally have fewer educational and livelihood opportunities and are at risk for more common worst forms of child labor, youth in high-crime urban areas are in the constant shadow of violence and at risk for another worst form of child labor: recruitment into and exploitation by gangs.

Beyond the systemic barriers above, youth are limited by individual, peer, family and community risk factors ranging from low academic performance and aggressive behavior, to dysfunctional families, deep trauma from long-term poverty, and threats of gang violence, all of which limit youth's development of social and academic skills. Employer hiring practices often exclude youth living in crime-ridden neighborhoods, and businesses' routine use of polygraph tests is another obstacle in an already challenging path. Gang control over many areas means that youth from one area are frequently unable to cross rival territory to access jobs or training centers without a beating and death threats. Those starting a business face extortion threats.

New policies and programs like *Mi Primer Empleo* (My First Job) in El Salvador or *Empleo por Hora* (Work by the Hour) or *Con Chamba Vivis Mejor* (Live Better with a Job) in Honduras, do not focus on at-risk youth, nor do they reach into the poorest crime-ridden neighborhoods. They are often disconnected from national vocational training institutes, formal education programs and the private sector. In El Salvador, new policies that created the National Institute for Youth (INJUVE) and the National Council on Childhood and Adolescence (CONNA) have established multiple mandates without connecting government institutions, building institutions' capacity or providing the funding to allow them to become operational. From 2011 to 2013, the Honduran Council for Youth and Child Violence Prevention created a national policy, but the policy operational framework has fallen through the cracks following the Council's replacement by an inter-ministerial Cabinet for Prevention, Peace and Coexistence.

Project Specific Information

Youth Pathways Central America (YPCA) is a project that aims to improve the livelihoods of children and youth in Honduras and El Salvador who are either engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor, hazardous work or illicit or irregular work. To contribute to this goal, the project provides direct services to increase education and job-related skills. The project also aims to improve the youth workforce development system by aligning training services and job skills in an effort to increase youth employment opportunities.

⁵¹XLIV Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples-Mayo 2013, Institutoo Nacional de Estadística de Honduras

⁵²OECD Development Pathways Multi-dimensional Review, United Nations. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014

The project implements two approaches that have been proven successful in enhancing youth leadership, employability, and school performance including graduation. One is the Youthbuilder model which has been implemented by CRS in Central America since 2010. It has reached more than 5,000 youth between the ages of 16 to 25 years old from high-crime areas, most of them unemployed and not attending school. This methodology provides vocational and life skills, as well as job seeking orientation services. The project fosters linkages between employers and national institutions related to youth employability and vocational service providers in order to improve government services and better align them to labor market needs in both countries.

The other approach is the Glasswings School Connection Clubs, which are designed to provide supplementary educational activities to core school curriculum. More than 22,000 school-aged children have benefited from the clubs across Central America. In addition, the project provides emergency residential services to youth under imminent threat, follow-up services to beneficiaries after the training is over and links returned migrant children and youth to project educational and employment services. The project also supplies Case Management Services for those youth and families who report higher levels of risk.

Project Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes

YPCA expects to serve 6,490 youth ages 14 to 20, and other beneficiaries, including 1,000 of their immediate family members – parents or guardians – who live in some of the region’s most marginalized neighborhoods of the metropolitan areas of San Salvador and San Pedro Sula. The YPCA project will be implemented over a period of four years, from August 2015 to August 2019 and its direct services will start by approximately October 2016.

The Goal of the project is to achieve reduced prevalence of child labor (CL), hazardous child labor, and irregular work among at-risk children and youth in El Salvador and Honduras. The primary objective designed to achieve the goal is increased participation by at risk children and youth in formal/non-formal education, acceptable employment or self-employment. Dropping out of school or remaining unemployed for extended periods of time increases the likelihood of engaging in child labor or irregular work, because these forms of vulnerable work represent means of livelihood for these children and youth. They also face barriers to obtaining decent work because they lack the skills that these jobs require. For these reasons, the project poses that keeping children in school or helping them to return for those who have dropped out helping youth to obtain and maintain employment, will have a positive effect on educational progress, livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability.

The project’s design also consists of the following outcomes/sub-outcomes, which are summarized below.

Outcome 1: Motivation to attend school increased among at risk children and youth.

Outcome 2: Increased access by at-risk children and youth to employment and self-employment opportunities.

- Outcome 2.1: At-risk children and youth have acquired technical skills related to labor market demands.
 - Outcome 2.2. Strengthened life skills and workplace skills for children and youth at risk.
 - Outcome 2.3. Private sector support generated for youth training programs.
 - Outcome 2.4. Strengthened existing public programs and services for employment and self-employment.
 - Outcome 2.5. Increased access to resources that support attainment of employment or self-employment.
3. Children, youth and their families benefit from the network of social protection services.
- Outcome 3.1: Increased family support for children’s and youths’ educational and employment plans.
 - Outcome 3.2 Supportive services for at risk children and youth increased.

It should be noted that based on a recent allocation of funds, the project will enrich services including new curricula in Cognitive Behavior Therapy, academic skills, and prevention of drug use. These new services will be assessed during the midterm evaluation.

2. Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

Midterm Purpose

The main purposes of the Midterm evaluation are:

1. To assess the project’s effectiveness, efficiency, relevancy, and sustainability.
2. To identify gaps and adjustments required at the midterm evaluation point to accomplish the project’s objectives by the end of the project.
3. To identify those activities and actions that are contributing to achieving the project’s objectives.
4. To identify lessons and good practices that can be leveraged in the remaining life of the project to more effectively and efficiently achieve the project’s objectives.

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will focus on the YPCA project mentioned above, its achievements, strategies and its contribution to improve the livelihoods of children and youth in Honduras and El Salvador who are either engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor, hazardous work or illicit or irregular work. The evaluation should identify intended (i.e. planned) and unintended results in terms of outputs and outcomes. Some unintended changes could be as important as the ones planned. Therefore, the evaluation team should reflect on them for learning purposes.

The analytical scope should include identifying levels of achievement pertaining to project objectives and explaining *how* and *why* they have been attained in such ways (and not in

other alternative expected ways, if it would be the case). The purpose is to help the stakeholders to learn from the on-going experience.

Intended Users

This final evaluation should provide USDOL, CRS, the Governments of El Salvador and Honduras, sub-grantees and other project stakeholders an assessment of the project’s experience in implementation, its impact on project beneficiaries, and the likelihood of sustaining key outputs, outcomes, and impacts. It should also provide an assessment of USDOL/OCFT, CRS management, and sub-grantees will use the evaluation results as a learning tool for similar projects in the region, and globally.

The report will be published on the USDOL website, so the report should be written as a standalone document, providing the necessary background information for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of the project.

Evaluation Questions

Category	Evaluation Questions
<i>Relevance</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have been the benefits and challenges of developing the project in two countries? 2. How has the project ensured the vocational training it provides to youth is market-relevant and likely to lead to future employment?
<i>Project Design and Validity</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How relevant is the project’s design and Theory of Change (ToC) as stated in the Project Document in El Salvador and Honduras? Does the project design address the real livelihood needs of youth given the labor market conditions in both countries, particularly for youth in marginalized urban areas?
<i>Project Effectiveness</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How effective is the project, in both countries, in reaching youth who are the most vulnerable to hazardous child labor? How do these youths perceive the quality of services that the project is delivering? What are the main reasons why youth drop out of Youthbuilder and Career Connect Club? What current conditions in the context may be affecting program effectiveness? 5. Do preliminary results from the first (and second for SV) cohort of graduates show the project has been effective in helping youth access good (non-hazardous) jobs or pursue further education? 6. Is the project meeting its objectives and targets for E1, L1, and CMEP performance indicators? Please highlight particular successes or challenges with respect to the different sites where the project operates. 7. Have the Career Connect Clubs helped improve the motivation of at-risk children to attend school and increase other social skills? Do youth perceive that their families support them especially those whose relatives are participating in other project services? Do they perceive that the case management support has help them (for those who have benefited from the services)? 8. Related to gender equity, are we closing the gender gaps regarding access to employment, education and self-employment? 9. What are the main gaps and opportunities that project can serve related to migration?

Category	Evaluation Questions
<i>Effectiveness of Project Management</i>	10. How has the project coordinated activities with other key stakeholders at the local and national levels, including government entities? 11. Does the project’s organization (organigram) fit the project ‘s managerial needs? Are field staff receiving the kinds and levels of support they require to be successful? 12. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the project’s participant monitoring system, which is integrated with the longitudinal study of participant outcomes? Is it delivering useful and relevant information to drive the project decisions?
<i>Sustainability</i>	13. To what degree has the project built up the technical capacity of its sub-grantees and local stakeholders, who will continue in the area even after the project is over, to reach vulnerable youth and provide them with vocational training opportunities?
<i>Lessons and Good Practices</i>	14. What are best or innovative practices that are taking place to implement the project services?

3. Evaluation Methodology and Timeframe

The evaluation will be conducted by an evaluation team consisting of 3 members. The lead evaluator will be responsible for managing the evaluation team, ensuring reliable and accurate data collection including the use of key informant and focus group discussion guides, data analysis, and the evaluation report including conclusions and recommendations. The lead evaluator will also conduct key informant interviews and focus group discussions in both Honduras and El Salvador. In addition to the lead evaluator, two assistant evaluators will assist in conducting key informant interviews and focus group discussions. One assistant evaluator will conduct interviews in El Salvador and Honduras while the other assistant evaluator will conduct interviews in El Salvador only. The assistant evaluators will help the lead evaluator conduct certain analyses of qualitative data and provide input to key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. However, the lead evaluator will be ultimately responsible for the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The lead evaluator will develop key informant interview and focus group guides and protocols based on the evaluation questions in the TOR. He will train the two assistant evaluators in the use of the guides and protocols. The training will help ensure that accurate and reliable data are collected during interviews. Key informant interviews will be conducted with project staff, partners, business representatives, representatives from the labor ministries in both Honduras and El Salvador, representatives of local government, the national vocational training institutions (INFOP and INSAFORP), and other government institutions (DINAF in Honduras, INJUVE in El Salvador), and migrant returnees committees. Focus group discussion will be conducted with children, youth, and adult beneficiaries.

The evaluation methodology will consist of the following activities and approaches. While the evaluation team may propose changes in the methodology, any such changes should be discussed with USDOL and the project, provided that the research and analysis suggest changes and provided that the indicated range of questions is addressed, the purpose maintained, and the expected outputs produced at the required quality.

The evaluation approach will be qualitative and participatory in nature, and use project documents including CMEP and target table data to provide quantitative information. Qualitative information will be obtained through field visits, key informant interviews and focus group discussions as appropriate. The sample of focus group discussion participants will be representative based on the various services that are provided and on demographics served (livelihood services for adults and education services for children). The focus groups will typically consist of 8-12 persons of the same sex and of approximately the same age to facilitate participation in the discussion.

Quantitative data will be drawn from the CMEP, budget, Performance Reporting Form (PRF), and project reports (such as TPRs, Federal Financial Reports, and research reports) to the extent that it is available and incorporated in the analysis. The qualitative data ascertained from the key informant interviews and focus group discussions will be used to enrich and help explain the qualitative data.

The evaluation approach will be independent in terms of the membership of the evaluation team. Project staff and implementing partners will only be present in meetings with stakeholders, communities, and beneficiaries to provide introductions. They will not be present during the actual interviews. The following additional principles will be applied during the evaluation process:

- Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives will be triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions.
- Efforts will be made to include parents' and children's voices and beneficiary participation generally, using child-sensitive approaches to interviewing children following the ILO-IPEC guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor (<http://www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=3026>) and UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children (http://www.unicef.org/media/media_tools_guidelines.html).
- Gender and cultural sensitivity will be integrated in the evaluation approach.
- Consultations will incorporate a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, allowing additional questions to be posed that are not included in the TOR, whilst ensuring that key information requirements are met.
- As far as possible, a consistent approach will be followed in each project site, with adjustments made for the different actors involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality.

Evaluation Team

Dan O'Brien, founder and president of OAI, will serve as the lead evaluator. Dan is a seasoned labor evaluation expert that has conducted more than 25 evaluations for USDOL and the ILO. He has evaluated USDOL-funded child labor prevention projects in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, and Uganda. He also evaluated USDOL and State Department-funded labor strengthening

programs in Honduras Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bangladesh, Jordan, and Indonesia.

In addition to his experience evaluation experience, Dan served as OAI's primary consultant on three USAID economic projects between 2011 and 2014 in Central America that included El Salvador and Honduras. Dan was responsible for establishing partnerships with the private sector that focused on employment (including youth employment) and market creation. In 2015, Dan conducted an assessment for USAID's LAC Education Bureau to inform the design of an education program focused on academic and vocational training for youth as well as job placement in Central America and Mexico.

Dan will serve as the team leader for this evaluation. He will be responsible for managing the evaluation team, ensuring reliable and accurate data collection including the use of key informant and focus group discussion guides, data analysis, and the evaluation report including conclusions and recommendations. Dan will also conduct key informant interviews and focus group discussions in both Honduras and El Salvador.

Ena Lilian Nunez. Ena Lilian Nunez will serve as the first evaluation assistant. She is one of OAI's associates in Latin America. Ena is a labor lawyer with extensive labor rights experience in El Salvador and the Latin America region including Honduras. She is also an experienced evaluator. She co-conducted the final evaluation of the *Todos y Todas Trabajamos* project funded by USDOL and implemented by Catholic Relief Services. The evaluation covered project activities in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. She also co-conducted the final evaluation of the Strengthening Unions to Protect Worker Rights in Peru project and the Strengthening the Labor Inspection System in Peru. Both projects were funded by USDOL.

In addition to her evaluation experience, Ena has been involved in a range of consultancies addressing child labor and youth employment. For example, she conducted an assessment and developed an apprenticeship plan for youth employment for the Ministry of Labor, designed and implemented a training plan on labor legislation for youth workers, conducted an assessment of youth migration in Central America for SICA, conducted training for trade union organizations in El Salvador on worse forms of child labor and how to use collective bargaining to eliminate child labor.

Ena served as the legal advisor to the President's Office where she coordinated the interagency team of government and cooperation agencies on the issue of youth employment and worked jointly with the ILO and UNDP to develop the National Council for Employment, Growth and Productivity Plan. She was also a member of National Education Council and the National Security Council that addressed using education and employment as strategies to address youth violence.

Given her knowledge and understanding of the various youth employment projects in Central America and the related government and non-government actors, Ena would take the lead on interviews and other data collection activities with these actors as well as youth and family focus group discussions in Honduras and support efforts in El Salvador.

Cecelia Hernandez. Cecelia Hernandez will serve as the second evaluation assistant. She has recently joined the OAI team of associates for Latin America. Cecelia has more than 15 years working on child labor and youth employment issues in the region. Cecilia served as the National Project Coordinator for the Eradication of Child Labor in Garbage Dumps and Public Markets in El Salvador from 2003 to 2006. She also served as Project Director for the *Citizen Security and Coexistence Program in the Municipalities of Sonzacate, Sonsonate and Acajutla* from 2009 to 2009. This project specifically addressed community security and youth violence.

In 2009, Cecelia served as the ILO Technical Coordinator for the *Reducing Youth Violence and Building Social Capital* where she designed and coordinated strategies to reduce youth violence including youth employment. From 2011 to 2016, Cecilia served as the ILO Education Officer for El Salvador where she designed and monitored a range of educational interventions to address youth violence. Specifically, she provided technical support to the Ministry of Education for the incorporation of educational strategies for working children within the full-time inclusive school model as well as technical assistance CODE know how curriculum. Cecilia also worked closely with EDUCAME to identify flexible education models for youth who have repeated or dropped out of school in target municipalities.

In implementing ILO projects in El Salvador, Cecilia has worked closely with communities, youth, and their families. Given her knowledge and understanding of youth violence and both education and employment programs to address youth violence, Cecilia would take the lead on interviews and other data collection activities with community leaders, youth and family members in El Salvador.

Data Collection Methodology

The data collection methodology will consist of document reviews, key informant interviews with key stakeholders, and focus group discussion with beneficiaries (children, youth, and adults). These are summarized below.

Document Review

- Pre-field visit preparation includes extensive review of relevant documents
- During fieldwork, documentation will be verified and additional documents may be collected
- Documents may include:
 - M&E documents (provided by USDOL and the project) including monitoring reports against the CMEP, PRF and Performance Monitoring Report;
 - Needs assessments—both technical and institutional needs assessments;
 - Project document and revisions (or revision requests);
 - Cooperative Agreement;

- Management Procedures and Guidelines FY 2013⁵³
- Technical Progress and Status Reports;
- Relevant Federal Financial Reports and up-to-date Outputs Based Budget;
- Work plans;
- Correspondence related to Technical Progress Reports;
- Research or other reports undertaken (baseline studies, etc.);
- Project files (including school records) as appropriate.

Interviews with stakeholders

Key informant interviews will be held with as many project stakeholders as possible. The evaluation team will solicit the opinions of national and local government representatives, legal authorities, NGO officials, private sector, project implementing partners, and project staff regarding the project's accomplishments, design, effectiveness, efficiency, management and sustainability.

Depending on the circumstances, these meetings will be one-on-one or group interviews. Technically, stakeholders are all those who have an interest in a project such as implementers, private sector, government officials, and donors. Thus, it is anticipated that meetings will be held with:

- OCFT staff responsible for this evaluation and project prior to the commencement of the field work
- Implementers at all levels, including any official project partners involved
- Headquarters, country director, project managers, and field staff of grantee and partner organizations
- Government ministry officials and local government officials who have been involved in or are knowledgeable about the project
- International NGOs and multilateral agencies working in the area
- Other child protection and/or education organizations, committees and experts in the area and region
- U.S. Embassy staff member

Focus group discussions with beneficiaries

The evaluators will visit a selection of project sites in El Salvador and Honduras to conduct focus group discussions with children, youth, parents, teachers, and community members

⁵³ The 2017 MPG will be referred to for review of endline and other relevant M&E documentation

in project intervention areas. The sites will be representative of the services provided and the demographics of the beneficiaries. CRS will present a list of project sites where the project experienced successes and others that encountered challenges. Based on the discussion of potential project sites, the lead evaluator will make the final decision on which sites to visit. For each site to be visited, CRS will provide a list of beneficiaries by intervention or service received. The lead evaluator will discuss the list of beneficiaries and select the beneficiaries that should participate in the focus group discussions. As noted earlier, the focus groups will be comprised of 8-12 members of the same sex and similar ages.

Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The evaluation mission will observe utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure a maximum freedom of expression of the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and beneficiaries, implementing partner staff will not be present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff may accompany the evaluator to make introductions whenever necessary, to facilitate the evaluation process, make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

Stakeholder Meeting

Following the field visits, the evaluators will conduct a stakeholders' meeting that brings together a wide range of implementing partners and other interested parties. The list of participants to be invited will be drafted prior to the evaluator's visit and confirmed in consultation with project staff during fieldwork.

The meeting will be used to present the major preliminary findings and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, and obtain clarification or additional information from stakeholders, including those not interviewed earlier. The evaluator will determine the meeting agenda, in consultation with project staff. Some specific questions for stakeholders may be prepared in advance to guide the discussion, which may include a brief written feedback form.

The agenda is expected to include some of the following items:

- Presentation by the evaluator of the key preliminary findings.
- Feedback and questions from stakeholders on the findings.
- Opportunity for implementing partners who were not interviewed to present their views on progress and challenges in their locality.
- Discussion of recommendations to improve future USDOL child labor prevention projects especially those with similar objectives and strategies.

A debrief call will be held with the lead evaluator and USDOL after the stakeholder workshop to provide USDOL with preliminary findings and solicit feedback as needed.

Limitations

Fieldwork for the evaluation will last three weeks, and the evaluator will not have enough time to visit all project sites. As a result, the evaluator will not be able to take all sites into consideration when formulating findings. All efforts will be made to ensure that the evaluator is visiting a representative sample of sites, including some that have performed well and others that have experienced challenges.

This is not a formal impact assessment. Findings for the evaluation will be based on information collected from background documents and in interviews with stakeholders, project staff, and beneficiaries. The accuracy of the evaluation findings will be determined by the integrity of information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

Furthermore, the ability of the evaluator to determine efficiency will be limited by the amount of financial data available. A cost-efficiency analysis is not included because it would require impact data, which is NA. An assessment on project efficiency is expected to be included in the evaluation (inputs to outputs); see evaluation questions above.

Timetable

The tentative timetable is as follows. Actual dates may be adjusted as needs arise.

Task	Date
Background project documents sent to contractor	Dec 14
Evaluation purpose and questions submitted to contractor	Feb. 13
Draft TOR sent to OCFT and grantee for comment	Feb. 26
Cable clearance information submitted to USDOL	Mar. 11
Finalize TOR with USDOL and Grantee and submit to both parties	Mar. 12
Conference call to discuss logistics and field itinerary	Mar. 21
Finalize field itinerary and stakeholder list for workshop	Mar. 27
Fieldwork	Apr. 9-27
Post-fieldwork debrief call	May 2
Conduct interviews with USDOL	May 10
Draft report to USDOL & Grantee for 48-hour review	May 21
USDOL & Grantee send 48-hour review comments	May 23
Revised report to USDOL & Grantee for 2-week review	May 25
USDOL & Grantee send comments after full 2-week review	June 8
Final draft report to USDOL with evaluator comments/responses	June 15
Final report sent to USDOL (edited and 508 compliant)	June 30

4. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

Fifteen working days following the lead evaluator’s return from fieldwork, a first draft evaluation report will be submitted to USDOL and CRS for the first (48 hour) review. The report should have the following structure and content:

1. Table of Contents
2. List of Acronyms
3. Executive Summary (providing an overview of the evaluation, summary of main findings/lessons learned/good practices, and key recommendations not to exceed 5 pages)
4. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology
5. Project Context and Description
6. Findings (answers to evaluation questions with supporting evidence)
7. Conclusions (interpretation of facts including criteria for judgements)
8. Recommendations (critical for successfully meeting project objectives; judgments on what changes need to be made for future projects)
9. Annexes - including list of documents reviewed; interviews/meetings/site visits; stakeholder workshop agenda and participants; TOR; etc.

The total length will not exceed 40 pages for the main body of the report, excluding the executive summary and annexes.

The first draft of the report will be circulated to OCFT, CRS, and subgrantees for their review. Comments will be consolidated and incorporated into the final report as appropriate, and the lead evaluator will provide a response to OCFT, in the form of a comment matrix, as to why any comments might not have been incorporated.

While the substantive content of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the lead evaluator, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB/OCFT in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR.

5. Evaluation Management and Responsibilities

The evaluators are responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (TOR). They will:

- Review project background documents
- Review the evaluation questions and refine the questions, as necessary
- Develop and implement an evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions, including a detailed discussion of constraints generated by the retrospective nature of this evaluation methodology and data collection and how those constraints could be avoided in future projects

- Conduct planning meetings/calls, as necessary, with USDOL and CRS.
- Cover international and national travel (airline tickets), hotels, meals, taxis to and from airports, and other incidental travel expenses.
- Decide composition of itinerary, field visits, and interviews to ensure objectivity of the evaluation.
- Present verbally preliminary findings to project field staff and other stakeholders as determined in consultation with USDOL and CRS.
- Prepare initial drafts (48-hour and 2-week reviews) of the evaluation report and share with USDOL and CRS.
- Prepare and submit final report.

USDOL is responsible for:

- Providing project background documents to the evaluator.
- Providing evaluation questions and other input.
- Approving the TOR.
- Obtaining country clearance.
- Briefing CRS on evaluation to ensure coordination and preparation for evaluator.
- Reviewing of and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports.
- Approving the final draft of the evaluation report.
- Participating in the post-trip debriefing.

CRS is responsible for:

- Reviewing and providing input to the TOR.
- Providing project background materials to the evaluator.
- Providing information on all project sites for the evaluator to choose from in deciding the evaluation itinerary.
- Preparing a list of recommended interviewees.
- Scheduling meetings for field visit and coordinating all logistical arrangements.
- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports.
- Participating in the post-fieldwork stakeholder debrief to review and discuss preliminary findings.
- Provide local ground transportation to and from meetings and interviews including visits to project sites requiring ground transportation.
- Organizing, participating in, and paying for the stakeholder meeting.
- Translating final report's conclusions, recommendation, and promising good practices into Spanish for dissemination among partner organizations and relevant stakeholders

Annex B: Interview Guides

Master List of Questions

1. What have been the benefits and challenges of implementing the project in two countries?
2. Is the project's design and theory of change (ToC) relevant and does to address livelihood needs of youth?
3. Is the project providing services to youth who are most vulnerable to WFCL? How do these youths perceive the quality of services?
4. What are the main reasons why youth drop out of Youthbuilder and Career Connect Club?
5. Have graduates been able to find non-hazardous jobs or pursue higher education opportunities? Note successes and challenges where the project operates.
7. Have the Career Connect Clubs helped improve the motivation of at-risk children to attend school and increase other social skills?
8. Do youth think that the case management support has helped them? Please explain.
9. Do you think that girls are benefiting as much as boys in terms of employment and education?
10. What role can the project play to address migration? What are the gaps and opportunities?
11. How has the project coordinated activities with other key stakeholders at the local and national levels, including government entities?
12. Is the project's management system effective and meet the needs of the project?
13. Are field staff receiving the kinds and levels of support they require to be successful?
14. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the project's M&E plan? Is it delivering useful and relevant information for decision-making?
15. Has the project been effective at building the capacity of partners and other local stakeholders to continue providing services once the project ends? Please explain
16. What are some of the best or innovative practices? What are important lessons learned so far?

Annex C: List of Documents Reviewed

- Cooperative Agreement
- YPCA Project Document
- YPCA Project Revision Document
- YPCA Project Revision Budget
- Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- YPCA Sustainability Plan
- FUSADES Baseline Study Cohort 1
- FUSADES Longitudinal Study Cohort 1
- Labor Market Study Honduras
- Labor Market Study El Salvador
- YouthBuilder Competency Model
- Study Tour to US Report
- YPCA Technical Progress Report October 2015-March 2016
- YPCA Technical Progress Report April-September 2016
- YPCA Technical Progress Report October 2016-March 2017
- YPCA Technical Progress Report April-September 2017
- YPCA Technical Progress Report October 2017-March 2018
- YPCA Grant Modification 1
- YPCA Grant Modification 2
- YPCA Grant Modification 3
- YPCA Grant Modification 4

Annex D: List of Persons Interviewed

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