



## FACT SHEET

# JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROJECT

The Juvenile Justice System Strengthening Project promotes alternative sentencing within the juvenile justice system and helps keep youth from becoming repeat offenders or attempting to illegally immigrate.

While youth in El Salvador are guaranteed special rights, too often first-time juvenile offenders are sentenced to prisons, where they face harsh and life threatening conditions, including overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, placement with violent criminals, gang recruitment, and violence. Rather than reducing the likelihood of future offences, these conditions may push youth in conflict with the law towards further, more serious criminal activity or illegal immigration.

USAID provides assistance and training to improve the process of juvenile justice through four key areas of intervention: 1) developing a case management system that can track youth in conflict with the law throughout the process, including case management of alternative sentencing and building a national platform to engage the private sector; 2) training and support for government officials and private and community-based representatives; 3) communication to change attitudes of juvenile justice stakeholders and the general public towards alternative sentencing; and 4) building the evidence base on alternative sentencing to inform policy and practice.

The project also supports community, religious and other civil society organizations working with youth in conflict with the law through rehabilitation programs adapted to local contexts. World Vision’s “Ready for Life” program, which provides tools for the reinsertion of youth in conflict with the law, will be adapted and piloted. “Ready for Life” includes significant one-on-one mentoring on social communication, higher-order thinking, self-control, self-esteem, and reflecting on past mistakes. The program helps youth develop life plans with positive trajectories including continued education, employment, and entrepreneurship. The project builds partnerships with the private sector to offer economic opportunities for these youth.

Using research on the effectiveness of alternative sentencing in reducing recidivism and the costs of incarceration, the project will increase support for alternative sentencing among juvenile justice stakeholders.

The Juvenile Justice System Strengthening Project is expected to reach 500 youth in conflict with the law, in five high-crime municipalities under the Salvadoran government’s national security plan: San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana, Zacatecoluca and Colón.

Providing first-time juvenile offenders with alternative sentencing, rehabilitation, and economic opportunities will help reduce crime and violence, a major driver of illegal immigration.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROJECT

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$10.6 million

TIME PERIOD: September 2017 – September 2022

GEOGRAPHIC AREA: Nationwide

GRANTEE: World Vision

### SUB-GRANTEES:

- SSG Advisors
- National Foundation for Development (FUNDE)
- American Bar Association–Rule of Law Initiative (ABA–ROLI)

### PARTNERS:

- Ministry of Justice and Public Security
- Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ)
- Attorney’s General Office (FGR)
- Public Defender’s Office (PGR)
- National Judicial Council (CNJ)
- Salvadoran Institute for Integral Development for Children and Adolescents (ISNA)
- National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONNA)
- National Civil Police (PNC)
- Executive Technical Unit of the Justice Sector (UTE)
- Human Rights Ombudsman (PDDH)
- Five municipalities
- Civil society organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Private sector

For more information on USAID El Salvador and USAID Central America Regional Programs, please call: (503) 2501-3411; 3344; 3432 or visit [www.usaid.gov/el-salvador](http://www.usaid.gov/el-salvador)