

**MERIDA INITIATIVE
CENTRAL AMERICA
FY 2009**

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

**BELIZE, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA,
HONDURAS, NICARAGUA AND PANAMA**

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 1.1: Break Power/Impunity of Criminal Organizations

Program Name: **Regional Maritime Interdiction:** Maritime Assistance for Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama

Funding: **FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$4,000,000 (FMF)**
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$17,000,000 (FMF)

FY09 Program Description:

Funds will strengthen the maritime interdiction capabilities of Central American countries and complement on-going U.S. maritime security efforts in the region by providing assistance to Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Key USG and Central American objectives are:

- a. The enhancement of each nations' ability to patrol their sovereign waters in accordance with international and domestic laws;
- b. To improve interoperability among participating countries so that they are capable of collective and synchronized action should a threat arise.

Funds will specifically be used to:

- Belize: Funding will be used to acquire up to two new interceptor boats and related support packages, equipment and training; radios and other communications equipment; small arms; and maritime operations and maintenance training.
- Costa Rica: Funding will be used for maritime operations and maintenance training; radios and other communications equipment; trucks to move the boats; and boat spares.
- El Salvador: Funding will be used to provide up to four interceptor boats and related support packages, equipment and training; patrol boat refurbishment; radios and other communications equipment; aircraft spare parts and maintenance support; vehicles and spares; and maritime operations and maintenance training.

- Honduras: Funding will be used to provide radios and other communications equipment; boat spares; interdiction and patrol boat refurbishment; maritime operations and maintenance training; and aircraft spare parts and maintenance support.
- Nicaragua: Funding will be used to provide radios and other communications equipment; boat spares; interdiction and patrol boats refurbishment; aircraft spare parts and maintenance; maritime operations and maintenance training; and vehicles and spares.
- Panama: Funding will be used to provide radios and other communications equipment; boat spares and maintenance support; patrol boats refurbishment; vehicles and spares; and individual personnel equipment.

Impact of Program:

These funds will contribute to U.S. efforts to help improve the maritime security and stability of the Central American region, which is threatened by transnational crime. The goal is to enhance the interoperability and interdiction capabilities of regional forces so that they can better control their territorial waters and work together against common maritime threats. In doing so, it will also allow the governments in the region to control the southern approaches to the United States and deny those approaches to such transnational threats as drug traffickers, arms smugglers and terrorists. This assistance will provide El Salvador with a viable maritime interdiction capability that complements, and is compatible with, similar capabilities in other Central American countries. It will provide Belize with additional interdiction boats. It will also strengthen the other countries' existing interdiction capability and enhance other organic maritime security resources of these countries through refurbishments.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.2 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 1.2: Modernize/Enhance Law Enforcement/Intelligence

Program Name: Secure Communications/Connection with INTERPOL

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$2,500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) serves as a clearinghouse for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on organized crime and criminal organizations, monitoring organized crime on a global basis.

FY09 Merida Initiative funds will enable the existing secure INTERPOL Network architecture to be used as the platform to connect multiple databases currently operated by Central American countries. This effort will enhance the ability of law enforcement entities in Central America to combat organized crime. Support will help implement an upgraded IT infrastructure required to facilitate regional database connectivity and will include the purchase and installation of hardware and software, the extension of existing local area networks, and the connection of local infrastructures to INTERPOL's network. Funding will also be used to support system maintenance and training.

Impact of the Program:

The INTERPOL network will enhance co-operation among countries in the Central America region and advance information sharing between national and international law enforcement bodies to target and combat organized crime and corruption. The regional information networks will build the capacity and capability of Central American law enforcement by advancing the database systems and infrastructure currently employed.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.2 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 1.2: Modernize/Enhance Law Enforcement/Intelligence

Program Name: Improved Policing/Police Equipment

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$7,148,000 (INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$11,485,000 (INCLE)**

FY09 Program Description:

Police in Central America are chronically under-equipped, lacking even basic communications and transportation assets. The need to address this shortfall will become more urgent as additional law enforcement personnel are added to security services across the region. FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will continue to support the critical needs of law enforcement. This program will provide equipment, technical assistance, and training to law enforcement officials throughout the Central American region. Equipment purchases will be determined in conjunction with host-country governments. The following list is illustrative:

- Protective Equipment (such as ballistic vests and face protection): required for police facing well armed criminals.
- Basic Communications Equipment: critical to effective investigations and operations. Remote rural areas are under-served by police, and reliable communications are necessary for increased police presence
- Improved Transportation Assets: allow for better patrol coverage, more effective investigations and improved interaction with the communities served by the police.
- Computer/IT Equipment: will help modernize the police operations, criminal records management and reporting to improve operational efficiency.
- Law Enforcement Tools: include contraband and narcotics inspection kits, explosives detection equipment and metal detectors.
- Maritime Interdiction Support (for items not covered by Enduring Friendship support packages): will include spare parts, repairs and the repurposing of seized vessels.

Impact of the Program:

The program will improve the effectiveness of policing and reduce crime, while simultaneously addressing chronic equipment problems and deficiencies throughout Central America, including shortages in basic communications and transportation equipment. The need to address this shortfall will become more urgent if additional law enforcement personnel are added through increased pre-service training for expanding security services throughout the region. This request focuses on the basic operational equipment that can be productively used and sustained by host nation security services.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

**Merida Strategy Objective 1.3: Strengthen Law Enforcement
Professionalization/Cooperation**

Program Name: International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA)

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,500,000
(INCLE)

FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$5,200,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

The International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) San Salvador currently operates from two temporary facilities owned by the Public Security Ministry and the Public Security National Academy. They are less than adequate for the full range of training and activities provided at ILEA San Salvador.

The Government of El Salvador has designated a twelve-acre plot of land in the suburb of El Espino to serve as the permanent site of the ILEA. Up to \$4 million will be used to complete the construction of the ILEA facility. This new complex will enable a significant increase in the number of students trained from the region and will be utilized as a venue for other anti-crime and related training initiatives. Once construction is complete, students will be able to stay at the facility – significantly reducing student lodging costs.

With FY09 Merida Initiative support, the ILEA will offer a complete schedule of activities benefiting all countries in Central America. The total number of graduates trained is projected to exceed 700 per year to include:

- Five iterations of the six-week mid-level Criminal Justice Management Core program.
- Five iterations of Anti-gang programs covering advanced investigative techniques, forensics, witness and judicial security and prevention and rehabilitation.
- Two iterations of the Culture of Lawfulness program.
- International Post Blast Investigations course.
- Small Arms Trafficking course.
- Incident Command System course.
- Advance Forensics course.

- Tactical Safety course.
- Chemical Precursors course.
- Combating Economic Fraud course.

Impact of the Program:

ILEA helps advance USG interests through international and regional cooperation while promoting social, political, and economic stability by combating crime. To achieve these goals, the ILEA provides high-quality training and technical assistance, supports institution building and enforcement capabilities, and fosters relationships among and between Central American and United States law enforcement agencies. ILEA graduates will become the leaders and decision-makers in their respective countries, affecting positive change in their institutions and enhancing cooperation with the USG on issues of common interest.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 2.1: Operational Control of Borders and Ports

Program Name: **Regional Programs in Border Controls and Security (Ports, Aviation, Document Fraud, Immigration, Customs) – Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE)**

Funding: **FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,100,000 (NADR)**
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

The Organization of American States' (OAS) Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) promotes and develops cooperation among OAS member states to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism through training courses and technical assistance. Funds will strengthen Central American states border security through proven CICTE programs. FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will support additional security training and workshops, crisis management exercises, and scholarships for security related courses. CICTE programs may include:

- Aviation Security Program – Includes courses such as Basic Security Training, Advanced Security Training, Crisis Management Workshops, National Development Workshops, and the provision of scholarships for participation in ICAO training courses, with emphasis on crisis management and the provision of training for front line inspection and enforcement personnel and their supervisors, as well as for senior aviation security officials and other appropriate government officials.
- Port Security – Includes Port Facility Security and Training Needs Assessments and Follow-on Training, Crisis Management Exercises, and Central America Best Practices Workshops.
- Document Security and Fraud Prevention – Courses designed to support and strengthen government anti-fraud initiatives by enhancing relevant officials' expertise, strengthening border and customs controls essential for document security, and enhancing communication and institutional links and the sharing

of best practices among customs and border security agencies in Central America.

Impact of the Program:

Resources for CICTE technical assistance programs and courses in the areas of aviation, port, and document security will enable CICTE to increase the capacity of Central American governments to meet international standards in key border security and counterterrorism functions. These funds will enable CICTE to provide technical assistance and training to the Central American states in the critical areas of aviation, port, immigration and customs, and document security.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 2.1: Operational Control of Borders and Ports

Program Name: Regional Firearms Advisor

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,000,000
(NADR)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$750,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will extend support for an ATF Special Agent, with expertise in firearms trafficking, to serve as a regional advisor in Central America for an additional year.

This advisor will enhance the capacity of the seven governments of the Central American region to combat arms trafficking and encourage the marking and tracing of all firearms manufactured, imported, confiscated or seized in the region. The advisor will continue to manage a program of assistance to police and other justice sector entities involved in reducing firearms crime and violence, based on the comprehensive national threat assessments conducted with FY08 assistance. The advisor will work with counterparts throughout Central America and with ATF staff in Mexico to address the illicit trafficking challenges that plague the region. The regional advisor will also train customs, police and court officials in firearms investigative, tracing and forensic techniques based upon the results of comprehensive national firearms legislative and capacity assessments.

Unlike Mexico, within Central America the sources of weapons largely originate from weapons stocks utilized in past conflicts and from internal government arms stocks (police and military). Some U.S. sourced illicit firearms are also present. All signs point to trafficking patterns dissimilar to Mexico with more “home grown” firearms turning up in crimes (home grown insofar as the firearms were once legitimately owned by a Central American government but have since been illegally diverted to local criminals).

Mission and Duties

The Advisor will have the following responsibilities, which complement the activities initiated utilizing FY 2008 Merida Initiative funding:

- I. The advisor, supplemented by TDY ATF staff, will provide training and technical assistance based on previously conducted assessments, on an individual country and regional basis. Training plans will be completed within three months after the completion of assessments and will include identification of training resources and a plan to identify individuals and units to be trained.
- II. Provide technical assistance to appropriate ranking law enforcement and other justice sector officials to develop a long-term strategy to strengthen anti-trafficking activities.
- III. In conjunction with host country and other USG organizations, evaluate the most effective way to increase the availability of information on illicit trafficking and traffickers. This will include tools such as the use of eTrace and ballistic identification technologies, as well as the analysis of recovered firearms and ammunition. The goal will be to increase regional and U.S. access to accurate information.
- IV. Provide advice and assistance in the preparation of documentation for the procurement of technical services, training and commodities and the monitoring of procurement actions, including drafting source-origin waivers, bid solicitations, scopes of work, and delivery and acceptance of items procured. This includes equipment, including hardware and software, needed to facilitate information sharing, such as eTrace access.
- V. Facilitate the implementation of training and technical assistance, including monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of such assistance.
- VI. Implement anti-trafficking prevention activities, ensuring that law enforcement and prevention activities are part of an integral program.
- VII. Provide support to other USG anti-trafficking programs in the region on an as-needed basis. Promote U.S. programs that seek to focus Central American states in their efforts on identifying and curbing the sources and methods of the illicit trade through the tracing of firearms used in crimes, enhanced national and regional law enforcement cooperation, and efforts to

expeditiously destroy excess stocks and safeguard legitimate stocks from theft or illegal transfer.

Impact of the Program:

A regional advisor for Central America will support firearms trafficking interdiction efforts and gang prevention, and provide law enforcement training, including firearms and explosives identification and serial number restoration.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 2.1: Operational Control of Borders and Ports

Program Name: **Organization of American States (OAS) Arms Stockpile Management and Destruction**

Funding: **FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,295,000 (NADR)**
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will continue to support the OAS Stockpile Management and Destruction program; specifically, to collect and channel financial resources to Central American states for small arms collection, destruction, and related training programs, through multi-year stockpile destruction programs underway in Central America. Additionally, funding will support member states' efforts to reach full compliance with the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA). The OAS will also provide legislative assistance and training for national authorities in arms trafficking prevention.

Impact of the Program:

These funds will enable the OAS to contribute its significant expertise to arms stockpile management and security in Central America, furthering the goal of elimination of excess stockpiles in the region and addressing the mandates of the OAS special fund on small arms/light weapons.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 2.1: Operational Control of Borders and Ports

Program Name: Improved Border Inspection (Equipment, Training, Port and Container Security)

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$2,143,000 (NADR)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$3,700,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Border and mobile inspection stations play an important role in deterring and detecting drug smuggling and the reverse flow of bulk cash. Using low tech and relatively inexpensive devices, adequately trained police can perform intelligence-driven and random checks on traffic transiting the Central American isthmus, including drugs landed from boats transiting the Pacific and Caribbean corridors. These efforts will utilize the expertise of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

FY09 Merida Initiative funds will provide support for a pilot program providing mobile inspection x-ray units in vans equipped with disassembly tools and other inspectional equipment for deployment to key transit points that have significant traffic in narcotics, improperly documented individuals, bulk cash, and other contraband.

On-site operational assistance will be provided by DHS officers for port and airport security. This assistance will be provided on a recurring basis to encourage sustainable results, including formal presentations on the identification of hidden compartments, fraudulent document interdiction, techniques for intercepting smuggled narcotics, weapons, bulk cash, and other contraband. The program will also include the temporary embedding of DHS officers at checkpoints and with mobile units to provide operational assistance and training.

Impact of the Program:

The program will strengthen border security and the detection of smuggling in all seven Central American nations. Since many border ports of entry are not

actually at the border, but are instead located internally within the countries (often on the Inter-American Highway), this program will enhance border security and improve detection of contraband smuggling in Central America.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 2.1: Operational Control of Borders and Ports

Program Name: **Firearms Interdiction Training**

Funding: **FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$462,000 (NADR)**
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

ATF will support law enforcement training on tracking and seizing illegal firearms in Central America. ATF will work with the individual countries to assess and analyze their specific challenges. On-site training will be conducted for law enforcement agencies on-site in all seven Central American countries so that actual law enforcement situations and confiscated firearms can be used as training examples.

Impact of the Program:

Firearms Interdiction Training will provide Central America's law enforcement personnel with a process in how to conduct firearms investigations, including the proper mechanics of firearms tracing. With the implementation and deployment of eTrace in the region, law enforcement personnel will be capable of linking suspect firearms to criminal investigations, as well as the identification of interstate and international patterns in the sources and types of weapons being trafficked.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: Central American Fingerprint Exchange (CAFE)
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,500,000
(INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$1,500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Criminals, including gang members, move among countries of the region and the United States using different aliases to avoid arrest. This poses a serious problem for law enforcement officials of the region as well as of the United States.

The FBI, through the joint efforts of the MS-13 National Gang Task Force and the Criminal Justice Information Services Division, has initiated a program designed to evaluate the use of fingerprints for law enforcement purposes and promote the consistent use of fingerprints for criminal identification purposes. This initiative, known as the Central American Fingerprint Exchange (CAFE), includes an assessment of existing fingerprint programs within a country followed by a targeted assistance program that includes the introduction of automated fingerprint technology, basic and advanced fingerprint training, and technology, procedure, and policy support. Through CAFE, the fingerprint identification capabilities of a country are enhanced and the United States gains access to the fingerprint-based criminal records of that country. These records are searched in the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) with resulting matches shared with the contributing country for investigative lead purposes.

Under the INL Regional Gangs Program, the USG is supporting the CAFE initiative by providing AFIS for Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, with technical assistance being provided by the FBI. In an effort to enhance the overall regional fingerprint identification capability, the FBI is using FY08 Merida funds to complete CAFE in Honduras and Guatemala. In addition, the FBI will complete the automated fingerprint identification evaluation of four Central American States: Belize, Costa Rica, Panama and Nicaragua. FY09 Merida Initiative funds

will support continuing efforts to introduce FBI and international fingerprint identification standards by moving beyond the basic systems and supporting additional remote stations. Funds will provide technical assistance on AFIS technology and facilitate the regional networking of criminal fingerprint records.

Impact of the Program:

Automating the fingerprint identification capabilities within the region will facilitate the interchange of information about criminals, establishing true identities and linking them to crimes. It will also provide USG law enforcement at the federal, state, and local level with much wider access to international biometric criminal identification data, the analysis of which will be shared with host country law enforcement. The enhancement to the CAFE initiative will provide training, resources, maintenance and infrastructure to enable countries to operate on a similar level and to conduct significant and viable fingerprint analysis and identification.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.4 Counter-Narcotics

Merida Strategy Objective 1.2: Modernize/Enhance Law Enforcement/Intelligence

Program Name: Central American Vetted and Sensitive Investigative Units (SIU)

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$4,000,000 (INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$6,000,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Sensitive Investigative Units and vetted units are groups of host country investigators who are polygraphed, trained and equipped to conduct complex multinational investigations. FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will continue support to vetted units guided by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), support DHS sponsored host-nation vetted investigative and enforcement units, and support on-going INL programs.

Vetted units are a critical component of DEA's efforts to combat the production and trafficking of narcotics and the diversion of precursor chemicals. The requested funding will provide for operating costs, investigative and office equipment, and training for host nation investigative and enforcement units. FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will continue programs initiated with FY08 Merida Initiative funding in El Salvador (\$500,000), Guatemala (\$1,200,000), Honduras (\$1,000,000), Nicaragua (\$500,000), and Panama (\$1,200,000), as well as support the creation of a Special Investigative Unit (vetted unit) in Belize (\$300,000).

FY09 assistance will support similar operating costs, investigative equipment, and training for DHS-sponsored host-nation vetted investigative and enforcement units in El Salvador (\$200,000), Honduras (\$200,000), and Panama (\$200,000), as well as help to establish a new unit in Guatemala (\$400,000). These vetted units will conduct complex multinational and multidiscipline investigations in areas such as firearms and narcotics trafficking, bulk cash smuggling, and money laundering.

\$300,000 will support ongoing INL programs in Nicaragua and El Salvador. In El Salvador, the counternarcotics police (DAN) will be provided with

equipment such as tactical radios and bullet proof vests. In Nicaragua, funds will provide communications equipment, such as the I2 database and basic PC-compatible workstations for the Nicaraguan National Police (NNP). Within Nicaragua, the NNP vetted unit works on high-profile trafficking and corruption cases. This equipment will enable the unit to develop intelligence on money laundering and drug trafficking that can be used for interdiction, arrests, and identifying and dismantling criminal organizations and seizing their assets.

Impact of the Program:

This funding is vital to the continued development of these specialized law enforcement units. Without this assistance, host nations cannot afford to actively participate in bilateral investigations and enforcement/interdiction operations in the transit zones that are essential to addressing the flow of drugs and arms to the United States. The enhancement of existing vetted drug task forces within Central America will contribute to overall stability within the region, encourage cooperation among law enforcement agencies, and add to ongoing initiatives associated with judicial reform and the rule of law. By enhancing their ability to conduct investigations, these units will more effectively target, disrupt, dismantle, and prosecute the highest level drug traffickers and trafficking organizations that operate in the Central American region and impact the United States. Since DEA does not conduct unilateral investigations in any foreign country, the success of DEA's international investigations continues to be based on its partnerships with SIUs and vetted units.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.4 Counter-Narcotics

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: Demand Reduction (Including the Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD))

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$1,000,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Drug abuse is a growing problem throughout Central America, in particular among gang members. This project will support the training and certification of addiction counselors to better administer treatment programs through OAS-CICAD's regional program, the Central American Institute for Training in Prevention/Treatment of Drug Abuse and Violence. FY09 Merida Initiative funds will enable the OAS to expand its program to Panama, Nicaragua, Belize and Costa Rica, while maintaining training activities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Funding will also continue to support the Nicaragua Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program.

Impact of the Program:

With increasing movement of drugs throughout the Central America region, drug prevention and treatment programs are key to combating the potential for rising drug abuse. Therefore, as law enforcement and justice sector institutions increase their pressure on drug traffickers, this program will concomitantly provide training on resisting drugs and improve administration of treatment efforts.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.5 Transnational Crime

Merida Strategy Objective 1.2: Modernize/Enhance Law Enforcement/Intelligence

Program Name: Financial Crimes and Bulk Currency Smuggling

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$1,000,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Financial crimes and bulk currency smuggling are threats to stability and security, as criminal organizations continue to disguise their illicit financial activities. As an example of the critical nature of this issue, in 2008, in conjunction with U.S. counterparts, Central American governments seized roughly \$24 million in suspect funds. FY09 Merida Initiative funds will support technical experts who will provide additional training to host government law enforcement, including vetted units, for the identification and targeting of southbound bulk cash smuggling, enabling regional intelligence and enforcement coordination between the partner nations.

This program will expand Operation Firewall to Central America, and provide the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama with training and equipment to establish vetted Bulk Cash Smuggling Units (BCSU). Guatemala's border with Mexico is strategically significant. Costa Rica and Panama are major airline regional hubs connecting passengers and commercial cargo between Mexico and South America. The vetted units will be able to conduct multilateral BCS and cash courier interdiction in conjunction with the USG and foreign counterparts. This program will provide training and equipment necessary to disrupt, dismantle, and prosecute organizations that utilize cash couriers to launder illicit proceeds. These joint BCS operations will facilitate and bolster coordinated intelligence and enforcement efforts between the partner nations.

In August 2005, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) initiated Operation Firewall, a strategic Bulk Cash Smuggling (BCS) operation that increased outbound enforcement activity at selected Ports of Entry (POE). Firewall's enforcement efforts target illicit cash couriers utilizing all modes of transport, to include commercial and private passenger vehicles, commercial airline shipments, commercial airline

passengers, and pedestrians transiting the border in order to suppress the illicit transfer of money. Since its inception, Operation Firewall has resulted in the seizure of more than \$144 million and the arrests of 342 individuals. With foreign operations, ICE special agents and CBP officers provide hands-on training to law enforcement partners on passenger analysis and other investigative techniques that have proven effective in the United States.

Impact of the Program:

The establishment and development of vetted investigative units, focused on bulk currency shipping and money laundering, will enhance border security and law enforcement success against the money flow of narcotics and organized crime throughout the region. The units will be able to better operate at air, land, and sea ports, as well as at consignment facilities (e.g. FedEx, UPS, DHS, etc.), and will be trained and equipped to detect and interdict illicit bulk cash. This program will supply the units with necessary inspection and related support equipment.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.5 Transnational Crime

Merida Strategy Objective 1.2: Modernize/Enhance Law Enforcement/Intelligence

Program Name: Asset Forfeiture Capacity Training

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative funds will support training and technical assistance that will establish and enhance institutional capacity within the Central American governments to address financial investigations, deter the laundering of criminal proceeds, support criminal prosecutions, provide for effective asset seizure/forfeiture programs, and ensure that regulation, supervision, and the training of staff are sufficient to protect the financial sector from misuse and abuse by criminals.

Impact of the Program:

This program will strengthen the institutional capacity of the Central American governments to combat financial crimes by advising and providing oversight during the implementation of FIUs and Case Management software as appropriate. Also, by working closely with the Central American Ministries of Finance and the Ministries of Justice, the program will be assist these ministries in revising and updating current Penal Codes and the Penal Procedure Code for better and stricter regulations.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.5 Transnational Crime

Merida Strategy Objective 1.3: Strengthen Law Enforcement Professionalization/Modernization

Program Name: Capacity Enhancement (all In-Service Training, including Anti-Gang/Transnational Anti-Gang Units)

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$3,400,000 (INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$5,175,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative support will enhance the capacity of operational level law enforcement and justice sector actors throughout Central America through in-service training and anti-gang support. In-service training on investigation, operations, officer safety, community policing, and other courses, will be provided. The training will complement the management-level training provided by ILEA and will introduce concepts that are taught to new recruits in the academies.

This program will also enhance the Transnational Anti-Gang (TAG) program that was initially supported through FY08 Merida Initiative funding by providing technical expertise and specialized equipment such as computers, software, protective gear, radios, and vehicles to law enforcement agencies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, augmenting their investigative and operational capabilities. The funding will also support polygraph expenses and officer exchange.

Anti-gang training at the operational police, prosecutor, and community level will be provided to complement managerial level training offered at ILEA. U.S. personnel managing anti-gang programs and host country counterparts will review current programs and their results, and identify additional training needed. The courses will take into account lessons learned and best practices for policing programs, including those developed by the Villa Nueva community policing project in Guatemala, the planned program in Honduras, and the TAG program. The training will include street level police and mixed units of police, prosecutors, and prevention workers. While some training may only include one partner

country, most will be regional, to maximize sharing of information on approaches. Between 14 and 21 courses will be conducted.

The TAG program was developed to combine the expertise and resources of the jurisdictions and agencies involved in countering transnational criminal gang activity in the United States, Central America, and Mexico. The goal is to provide technical assistance to aggressively investigate, disrupt, and dismantle violent gangs whose activities rise to the level of criminal enterprises, and who pose the greatest transnational threat, while enhancing the capabilities of the law enforcement agencies involved. As outcome results of the FBI assistance, Central American law enforcement agencies will be able to acquire and disseminate valuable information to law enforcement in the region, including the United States, plan effective law enforcement actions, and carry them out with full respect for human rights.

Funds will also directly support the Foreign Officer Exchange Program, an international exchange program designed to enhance information/intelligence sharing and encourage constructive discourse on best practices in gang investigation and dismantlement. The pilot program is currently based upon a partnership between the FBI, the Los Angeles City Mayor's Office, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and the Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) of El Salvador. Ultimately, the program will expand throughout the Central American region and offer exchange opportunities throughout the United States for participating foreign officers. Funding will be extended to both foreign and domestic agencies participating in the Foreign Officer Exchange Program to encourage diversity and to allow for the greatest number of participants.

Impact of the Program:

This program will enable the United States to contribute its significant expertise to address criminal gangs and build operational-level law enforcement and justice sector capacity in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.5 Transnational Crime

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: Improved Information on Criminal History

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,000,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$1,500,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative assistance will continue efforts to provide countries with relevant criminal background information for the impending arrival of repatriated nationals. Support will continue programs established in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala to provide more information about deportees convicted of crimes while in the United States, and extend this program to other countries as warranted by the number of deportees with U.S. criminal records. The funds will pay for DOJ-contracted analysts to gather the criminal histories of deportees with U.S. criminal records, and transmit the records to appropriate law enforcement authorities in Central America.

Impact of the Program:

The program will provide the Central American countries with relevant criminal background information on nationals returned from the United States. This program will help develop an efficient way to provide countries with criminal history and gang affiliation.

Foreign Assistance Program Area: Peace and Security

1.5 Transnational Crime

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: U.S.-SICA Dialogue - Technical Coordination Consultations and Vice-Ministerial Engagement

Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$252,000 (INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$50,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Merida Initiative funds will support Technical Coordination Consultations and Vice-Ministerial U.S.-SICA Dialogue meetings, allowing for follow-up and continued coordination on agreed objectives outlined in the US-SICA Declaration on Security issued on July 18, 2007. The U.S. and Central American Integration System (SICA) member states established a strong common agenda to tackle the transnational threats of criminal gangs, drugs and arms trafficking. A technical working group meeting and the second US-SICA Vice-Ministerial Dialogue on Security was hosted in Washington December 11-12, 2008. U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 564 adopted on October 2, 2007 encouraged “Central American and United States officials... to meet on a regular basis to further cooperation in combating crime and violence in Central America.”

Impact of the Program:

Funding will allow for the institutionalization of the Dialogue, as well as greater coordination and follow-up implementation of agreements with meetings of the technical working body of the U.S.-SICA Dialogue as well as vice-ministerial meetings.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

**Merida Strategy Objective 1.3: Strengthen Law Enforcement
Professionalization/Modernization**

Program Name: Improved Police Academies and Entry Level Training

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$3,075,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

Police academy curricula across Central America are outdated, inconsistent, and do not adequately prepare recruits to confront today's crime or carry out their law enforcement functions effectively. FY2009 Merida Initiative funds will support an academy curriculum development expert who will work closely with officials from basic recruit academies throughout the region to emphasize the vital role that uniformed police play in the investigative process. This expert will conduct curriculum assessments and provide recommendations for reforms. The program will also support a regional curriculum reform workshop to bring curriculum reform experts together with police academy instructors and police investigators from the region to identify areas for modernization and improvement.

Impact of the Program:

This program will help ensure police are adequately prepared to combat crime and corruption at an early, and critical, stage of law enforcement development by evaluating and improving curricula at police academies. The effort will complement ILEA management-level, and other operational-level training, to create a holistic and targeted effort which builds capacity and capabilities of law enforcement throughout the Central American region.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

**Merida Strategy Objective 3.1: Improve Justice System
Efficiency/Effectiveness**

Program Name: Prosecutorial Capacity Building

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$1,000,000
(INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$4,279,000 (INCLE)**

FY09 Program Description:

Security objectives are achievable only if arrests translate into effectively prosecuted cases that move efficiently through the court system, with closure and due process protections. Across the areas of assistance, anti-corruption, transparency and accountability of justice and security sector institutions will be emphasized.

FY09 Merida Initiative support will continue efforts started in FY08 to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the region's prosecutors and encourage cooperation between the prosecutors, judges and police in Central America. This assistance will be coordinated and facilitated by an experienced U.S. prosecutor who will serve as a Resident Legal Advisor based in the region. The programmatic assistance will focus primarily on regional training of prosecutors to improve investigations and prosecutions of violent crime cases, especially gang related violence, but will also include training of prosecutors, police and judges in specific countries. Practical training will also include investigating and prosecuting complex financial crimes, money-laundering, asset forfeiture, and corruption. The Resident Legal Advisor will coordinate technical assistance throughout the region, focusing on improving the quality of violent and organized crime cases through the use of forensic evidence in court; witness security; and information sharing between police and prosecutors within each country and within the region.

Assistance will also focus on improving techniques to investigate and prosecute members of the federal police who have been credibly alleged to have committed violations of human rights and those credibly alleged to have committed crimes that violate public integrity. In addition, assistance will strengthen the management of prosecutor offices at the national and local level;

establish policies and procedures to monitor and review the ethical conduct and integrity of prosecutors and support personnel; and prepare policy and procedure manuals for prosecutors. This training will include regional training programs for all countries as well as specialized training for individual countries most affected by gang violence: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Training will include participants from all sectors of the criminal justice sector including judges, police and prosecutors, to increase the likelihood of sustainable results.

Funds will also support police, prosecutors, and judicial investigators through technical assistance and training, including efforts that address judicial reforms, best practices, and information sharing.

Impact of the Program:

This program will enhance the ability of criminal courts to secure convictions and protect human rights. The transparency and accountability of security sector institutions will be increased. This program will have a significant positive impact on the security of the Central American region and the United States by enhancing the ability of regional law enforcement agencies and personnel to effectively investigate and prosecute violent and organized crime. Moreover, it will encourage coordination and cooperation among law enforcement agencies within each country, throughout the region and with the United States.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

**Merida Strategy Objective 3.1: Improve Justice System
Efficiency/Effectiveness**

**Program Name: Juvenile Justice Systems and Post-Prison
Rehabilitation**

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$2,000,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY2009 Merida Initiative funds will support technical assistance to develop strategic regional plans with long term goals for juvenile detention, including the development of coordinated programs outside of detention facilities to help host governments with their planning for:

- Rehabilitation and Treatment: job skills and vocational training, drug and alcohol treatment and education, development of literacy skills and achievement of minimal education standards;
- Alternatives to Incarceration: operationalizing alternative sentencing, establishing juvenile drug courts and intensive probation programs; case management for juvenile offenders; community service, court supervision and/or probation, supervised early-release;
- Reintegration Support: workforce development, employment readiness, micro credit and programs of personal development, tattoo removal, follow-on medical and mental health treatment programs.

Impact of the Program:

This program will strengthen and increase public confidence and accountability of the Central American juvenile public sector institutions. It will improve professional capacity and overall management capabilities within the institutions by developing internal structures within the organizations combined with periodic training of staff.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

**Merida Strategy Objective 3.1: Improve Justice System
Efficiency/Effectiveness**

Program Name: Courts Management

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$4,666,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

FY09 Merida Initiative funds will support technical assistance that will address justice sector administration, case management and tracking systems. The project will emphasize anti-corruption, judicial transparency and accountability of justice and security sector institutions.

Impact of the Program:

This project will assist in assuring cases move expeditiously and transparently through Central American courts. Over time, this project will contribute to lowered levels of corruption and enhanced access to justice.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

**Merida Strategy Objective 3.1: Improve Justice System
Efficiency/Effectiveness**

Program Name: Forensics Laboratories Regional Assessment

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$200,000 (INCLE)

FY09 Program Description:

While each of the Central American countries would like to have their own advanced forensic laboratory capacities, it is neither practical nor cost effective at this time. In addition, police and prosecutors sometimes maintain separate forensic laboratories that do not communicate with each other on evidence processing. FY2009 Merida Initiative funds will support an assessment to determine current forensic laboratory capabilities throughout the Central American region and to develop a plan for sharing existing facilities to avoid expensive duplication. Forensic assessors will carefully examine laboratory facilities, instrumentation, personnel, quality assurance procedures, and the needs of investigators. The assessment results will be used to create a forensic development plan outlining short-and long-term training and equipment needs.

Impact of the Program:

This program will help ensure law enforcement entities are provided with adequate facilities, training, and equipment to conduct efficient and effective investigations using forensics.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

Merida Strategy Objective 3.2: Bolster Rule of Law/Human Rights

Program Name: WHA Rule of Law Regional Fund

Funding: FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$6,000,000 (ESF)

FY 09 Program Description:

The Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, in coordination with its inter-agency partners and Embassies in Central America, will manage the disbursement of \$6 million in Regional Economic Support funds. Funding will support regional capacity enhancement and rule of law initiatives, such as court management, crime victim assistance, witness protection programs, judicial training, hardened and 24-hour courts, etc. The disbursement of these funds will both complement existing Mérida Initiative activities and address gaps in our planned programming, while simultaneously providing the Department with the ability to respond to emerging threats in the region as identified by our Embassies and host nation partners.

Funded programs and initiatives will be short-term in duration (typically, tasks which can be achieved within one year from the disbursement of funding to an implementing partner or Embassy), narrow in scope to address a clearly defined requirement, and will directly support a critical host nation or Embassy requirement for which funding has not already been allocated under another Merida Initiative capacity enhancement or law enforcement assistance program.

Impact of the Program:

The disbursement of assistance from the WHA Regional ESF fund will provide the Department and inter-agency community with a critical resource to address emerging issues which threaten the stability of host nations, represent challenges to citizen security, or to provide assistance in eliminating gaps in host nation capabilities.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

Merida Strategy Objective 3.3: Sever Influence of Incarcerated

Program Name: Improved Prison Management

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$3,000,000 (INCLE)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$3,000,000 (INCLE)**

FY09 Program Description:

Technical Assistance in Prison Management

Prisons in much of Central America have come under the control of gangs and other criminals, who also utilize them as bases from which to consolidate their power and commit crimes outside prisons through intermediaries and cell phones. Prison officials need techniques, training and equipment to regain control of prisons, especially those housing violent gangs.

This program will build on Phase I prison management training funded under prior-year INL funding for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and FY08 Merida Initiative funding that expanded the program to Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. Phase I activities included prison assessments, prison officer exchange programs, the identification of prisoners and gang affiliations to support prisoner classification training, and the establishment of sensitive vetted units within key prisons.

Phase II improved prison management activities utilizing FY09 Merida Initiative funds will extend training, including train-the-trainer and management training for prison directors and decision makers, and work with senior officials on strategic planning for the prison systems. Teams of experienced prison advisors/mentors will oversee vetting of foreign government personnel, procurement and installation of necessary equipment and repairs/modifications and implement training, including training of trainers.

Training topics will include: classification of inmates and separation of at risk juveniles, control of prisoners, excluding contraband (especially cell phones), riot control, and other issues as identified. Executive level training will be

provided to top administrators in subjects to include: strategic planning, appropriately classifying inmates according to level of threat (which determines the cost of incarceration), budget preparation and execution, as well as how to work with news media and community leaders to enhance the corrections process. Advisors will also provide technical assistance in identifying appropriate technologies to conduct prison surveillance, search, and contraband control to improve security.

Impact of the Program:

Improved prison management will improve public security of all countries in the region and the U.S. by preventing crimes from being committed from prisons via proxies. Reasserting government control of prisons will eliminate the influence of criminal leaders in prisons. Separating out youthful offenders will protect them from pressures to become violent members of gangs and provide opportunities for rehabilitation.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.1 Rule of Law and Human Rights

Merida Strategy Objective 3.2: Bolster Rule of Law/Human Rights

Program Name: Community Policing

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$2,500,000 (ESF)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$1,800,000 (ESF)**

FY 09 Program Description:

To promote good governance within Central America, the program will strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of local governments through improved collaboration between the police and the community. Assistance will focus both on community organizations and the police, and on joint activities. Training, technical assistance, and grants will be provided to community organizations to improve their communication with the police and facilitate their participation in crime prevention, detection, and reaching vulnerable youth. Examples include patrolling directed at vulnerable areas as identified by the community, tip lines to report criminal activity such as extortion, and joint activities such as sport leagues. It will also include community education about gangs and prevention strategies. Training and equipment to enhance police effectiveness for gang prevention activities will be provided, such as handheld radios and bicycles for community patrolling. Opportunities to involve judges, prosecutors and other government actors into training and/or outreach activities will be pursued. Citizen engagement with local government will be managed through open communication forums and civil society organizations.

This program will be closely coordinated with community crime and gang prevention and community action fund activities to ensure maximum impact and effect. The community crime and gang prevention program is aimed at helping communities and the private sector better integrate youth-at-risk, thereby reducing gang recruitment, crime and violence. The community action fund addresses root causes predisposing youth to gang membership

Impact of the Program:

Results of the program include undermining gang effectiveness and recruitment, successful arrests of gang members and greatly improved cooperation and trust between the police and the community.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.2 Good Governance

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: Community Crime and Gang Prevention Program

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$8,000,000 (ESF)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$4,700,000 (ESF)**

FY 09 Program Description:

The USG approved anti-gang strategy recognizes that prevention is an essential element to combating criminal gangs. This program provides funding to local governments to establish and strengthen activities that prevent youth from joining gangs, including activities based on the *Central America and Mexico Gang Assessment* conducted by USAID in April 2006. This funding is also coordinated with the Community Action Fund and the Community Policing line items to ensure maximum impact and effect. The Community Action Fund addresses governance weaknesses and socio-economic conditions that make communities vulnerable to drug traffic, crime, violence and gangs. The Community Policing program will improve the trust, communication and collaboration between the community and law enforcement officials leading to reduced levels of crime and violence.

Activities will enable municipal governments to act as a catalyst in making communities safer for youth. Areas of emphasis include:

- Small grants to municipalities, communities and NGOs (including faith and community-based organizations) to develop innovative, community specific responses for at-risk youth and gang prevention. Examples of the approaches that these grants may develop include integrated community centers to bring residents together to discuss community issues and design joint solutions, community crime-mapping, and courses and training for police on community intervention. Grants will allow time for local governments, communities and NGOs and their private sector partners to assume management and direct financial support for the activity themselves.
- Support for community focus groups and regular consultative practices to identify gang recruitment practices and vulnerable areas or groups. This

process will include local government and law enforcement, parent groups, youth organizations and other community groups.

- Regional activities under gang prevention will involve funding to strengthen cities to take a bigger role in crime prevention through the following types of activities: a) exposing municipal authorities to violence prevention strategies through conferences, training programs, and exchanges with counterparts in the region and U.S.; b) strengthening coordination and policy dialogue among government authorities (e.g. police, public ministries, forensics) and between national police with local government authorities, and assist in the decentralization of social funds and community-policing to target violence prevention strategically; and c) fostering regional peer and knowledge networks. Other regional funds under this component will be used to conduct special sample surveys in communities (both communities where Merida activities will be conducted and control communities) to gauge the impacts of our programs; these surveys will involve citizen perceptions of security, community violence, and citizen safety. A third component of our regional funds will involve using media and innovative partnerships to reach at-risk youth and extending funding to support donor coordination efforts by the Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence.

Funding for this activity will concentrate on the countries identified in the USAID gangs assessment and the inter-agency, anti-gang strategy as having the highest need for gang prevention activities: El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. It may also include smaller amounts for countries with emerging gang problems.

Impact of the Program:

The Central America Gang Prevention program will increase security by helping communities and the private sector better integrate at-risk-youth, thereby reducing gang recruitment, crime and violence in the region. The program will also build the capacity of communities and governments to prevent gang recruitment and enhance law enforcement efforts. These programs support the prevention pillar of the U.S. Strategy to Combat Gangs.

Objective: Governing Justly and Democratically

2.2 Good Governance

Merida Strategy Objective 4.1: Curtail Gang Activity/Diminish Demand for Drugs

Program Name: Community Action Fund

**Funding: FY08 Supplemental Appropriation: \$9,500,000 (ESF)
FY09 Omnibus Appropriation: \$5,500,000 (ESF)**

FY 09 Program Description:

Among the root causes of gangs and organized crime are a lack of economic opportunity, poor academic or vocational skills, weak local governance and fractured communities. The Community Action Fund will seek to address these root causes in targeted, low-income areas, including rural communities that are particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking and related violence and organized crime. The Community Action Fund will work with and complement the community crime and gang prevention program which is aimed at helping communities and the private sector better integrate youth-at-risk, thereby reducing gang recruitment, crime and violence; and the community policing program which will improve the trust, communication and collaboration between the community and law enforcement officials leading to reduced levels of crime and violence. Wherever possible, corporate and business sponsorship will be sought for community action fund activities to supplement or mitigate the need for dedicated USG assistance.

Successful, innovative solutions will be examined for replication in the development of program activities. Areas of emphasis include:

- Targeted Education for At-Risk Youth: basic/secondary education to at-risk youth in gang hot spots in urban areas; scholarships for at-risk youth to stay in school; after-school and community outreach programs.
- Vocational Training: market-driven youth training opportunities in key urban hot spots and mobile training units to reach rural areas.
- Job Creation: micro-credit and micro-enterprise training and mentoring, partnerships with private sector, including business associations and small-

and micro-enterprise support organizations, to place at-risk youth in apprenticeships and jobs.

- Small community infrastructure projects to create safer and inviting environments for citizens such as street lighting, improved accessibility and community spaces.
- Technical assistance to build capacity within local and municipal governments to focus on youth-at-risk.

Impact of the Program:

The Community Action Fund will increase security by providing at-risk youth in targeted areas with positive education, training, and job opportunities, thereby reducing gang recruitment, crime and violence in the region. The program will also build the capacity of communities and create an enabling community environment.