



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **“SCHOOL MEDIATION PROJECT STARTS ITS PHASE 2”**

**SAN SALVADOR-** This morning, representatives of the Ministry of Education (MINED) and the Public Defender Office (PGR) signed the extension and expansion of the School Mediation Project, an initiative that since its beginning has been supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). With this act, the second phase of the project, in which 32 San Salvador Metropolitan area public schools participate, has begun.

“Thanks to the determined effort of the Ministry of Education and El Salvador’s Public Defender Office, on 2008 coexistence committees on the subject of school mediation were formed in 32 schools. The results have already had a multiplying effect, when 8 additional schools joined the initiative. The goals established by the participant institutions have been exceeded: 500 people have received training and we have now 160 new school mediators” said Larry Brady, USAID/El Salvador Mission Director, during the inauguration ceremony that took place at a hotel in San Salvador.

The Minister of Education Darlyn Meza, and the General Defender Marcos Gregorio Sanchez Trejo, signed the School Mediation Project extension and expansion Agreement for a period of up to 12 months. The project has received the technical guidance of the MINED’s Youth National Directorate and the Pro Special Education Foundation.

With an investment of about one million dollars, USAID Mediation Program supports El Salvador’s efforts to strengthen the rule of law in general. With this, USAID seeks to improve the existing mediation centers network and the School Mediation Program as a way of increasing justice access and helping to reduce social and youth violence in the mentioned geographic area. Among the types of conflicts resolved through this network are family, labor, civil, community, school and a limited number of criminal cases.

As a result of the first phase of the School Mediation Project that started on 2007, only during the last two months of the 2008 school year, the new mediator teams managed to perform 96 successful mediations.

In general, with the support of the USAID Mediation Program 28 Mediation Centers have been established throughout El Salvador, including the opening of 4 centers in universities that were interested in including mediation as a subject in their curricula.

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