



Changing lives in one of the most dangerous cities in the world

Background

Honduras is one of the poorest and economically unequal countries in Latin America. According to data from the Household Survey of Multiple Purposes (2012), over 50 percent of the unemployed are youth ages 15-24¹. Challenges related to high unemployment rates and inequalities are exacerbated by the fact that Honduras also has one of the highest murder rates in the world². Children as young as nine years old are used as *banderas* or *posteros*, or gatekeepers who watch over gang-controlled territory, and become increasingly engaged in kidnappings, extortion, drug trafficking, and other crimes as they get older. There is a significantly growing population in the country, and in urban areas such as San Pedro Sula, who are not engaged in school or work. This issue is severe because young people who are out of school and unemployed are highly susceptible to gang recruitment as a source of income³. In San Pedro Sula, young people tend to rarely feel safe and are often scared to leave their homes.

Partners' Approach

Partners of the Americas (Partners) began implementing its *A Ganar* program in Honduras in 2012. The program, which reached over 1,300 participants, implemented *A Ganar*'s sport-for-development methodology, providing quality life skills and technical training to youth in Honduras's vulnerable communities. Of the 1,300 participants, 952 youth completed the program, a graduation rate of 72 percent. Of these, over 600 youth and young adults were positively engaged, meaning that either they found a job, started their own business, or went back to school within nine months of the end of the program. Partners worked with seven local organizations, including FUNADEH, and collaborated with over 250 private sector organizations.

¹ <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fesamcentral/10748.pdf>

² <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/insight-crime-homicide-round-up-2015-latin-america-caribbean>

³ <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34112.pdf>



Impact

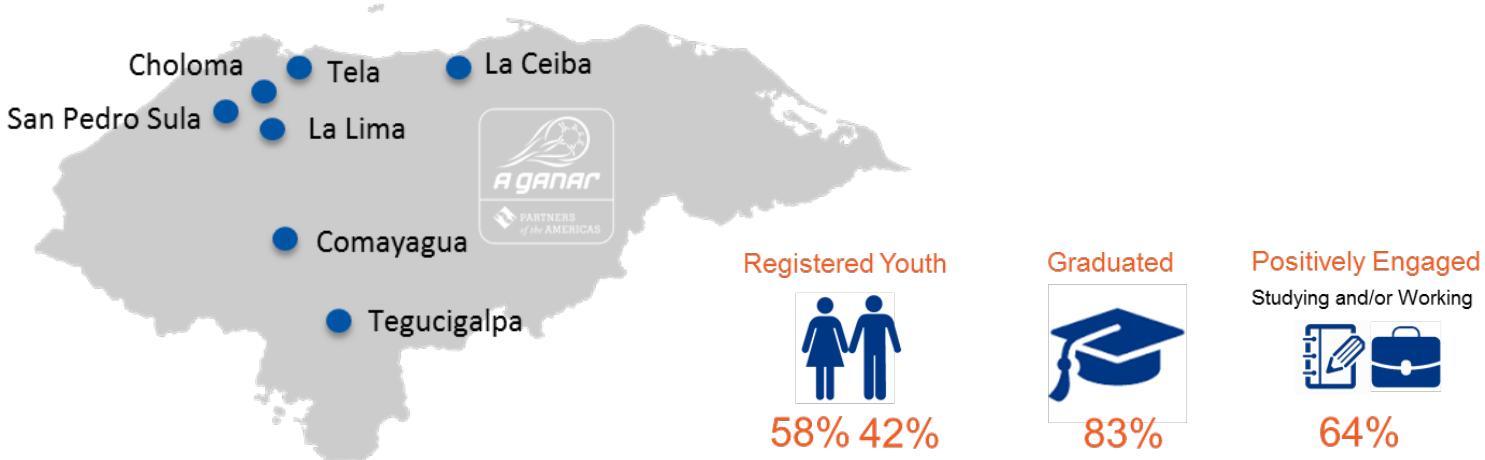


Marcos is a 22 year old living in Colonia Santa Ana, one of the most dangerous neighborhoods of San Pedro Sula. Colonia Santa Ana is dominated by the Mara Salvatrucha gang (MS). He has to walk past gang-driven territorial conflicts daily to go to class, to go to work, or just to visit friends. He constantly worries about the safety of his family and while it may be safer for him to stay home, he knows that he and his friends and family need opportunities to socialize, exercise, and develop their own relationships and abilities.

In June 2012, Marco took the risk of participating in the *A Ganar* program at FUNADEH. Marcos completed 80 hours of his internship at *Restaurante El Molino*, where he learned to apply and strengthen the professional cooking skills that he learned in his Culinary Skills training through the program. After graduating from *A Ganar* in 2012, Marcos found a job at *Restaurante Cayos Grill*. Then in 2013, Marco

began working at *Restaurante Taco Inn*. Marcos was able to gain permanent employment in his technical area interest, and in 2016, he is still employed. It is evident that the *A Ganar* program was able to provide Marcos with the tools needed to secure a better future. Four years since graduating the program, Marcos has sought out and successfully found employment opportunities relating to his vocational training, he has strengthened his professional experience, and he earns a steady income.

Partners' *A Ganar* program reached over 1,300 youth ages 16-24 in the cities of San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, Choloma, Tela, La Ceiba, and Comayagua in Honduras from 2012 to 2015. *A Ganar* not only helped youth in Honduras find a job, go back to school, or start their own business, but it also helped in providing safe spaces for learning and empowerment opportunities at a much needed time. "A Ganar sessions did not just teach me teamwork, they taught me that I can play outside with my friends without being scared....[I learned that] only together we can change our reality for the better," *A Ganar* participant Cintia said.



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