

History of Project Remittances:

We, ALPIMED, HELP International, and Balsamo, have combined our efforts to bring about awareness of the better use of remittances to help the cumulative economy of El Salvador by aiding and educating local economies and the Salvadorian people in the use of their remittances. To pursue our aim we have targeted the rural community of San Cayetano Istepeque in the department San Vicente to conduct a competition among the school children. Having collaborated with the Mayor of the town San Cayetano Istepeque, we will use this town to conduct a competition as well as bring media attention to the day of the awards ceremony. Through these two mediums, the competition and the media, we will educate the local families of San Cayetano Istepeque and the general public about the better use of their remittances.

The contest involves nine schools located in San Cayetano Istepeque. Two age groups are targeted. The younger age group, fourth to sixth grade, is invited to draw pictures about the question, "Why are remittances important for me and for my community," while the older age group, ages thirteen to seventeen, write essays on the same topic. One winner is chosen from each age group and each participating school itself receives a prize.

ALPIMED and HELP International presented the competition to each of the participating schools in their school assemblies. ALPIMED explained to the children that we were hosting a competition that revolved around remittances, or money sent from a relative living in the United States to the families in El Salvador. To create excitement among the students for the competition at each school HELP International presented a skit dramatizing the journey of a person traveling to the United States to send back remittances to support their family in El Salvador. After the explanation of the competition and the skit we registered each student that wanted to participate in the competition.

As volunteers from HELP International, who are in El Salvador for the first time from the United States, we enjoyed the experience of presenting the skit to the students. We enjoyed their captivation and appreciated their attention as we presented the socio-drama to them. We were surprised to find that the majority of the children that we presented to received remittances. We were educated about the effects that remittances have in society and local economies as we drove through poverty stricken neighborhoods that occasionally included grandiose houses.

On 15 July, 2006 we will present to the community the winners of the competition and present the winners their prizes. The town center and surrounding streets will be shut down to through traffic from the hours of nine AM to twelve PM for this presentation. ALPIMED will conduct the awards ceremony while HELP International will again perform a more formal skit for the audience. The school bands will play music for the event and small local entrepreneurial business owners helped by micro credit loans will be located around the town square exhibiting their businesses and showing how remittances can be used to create small businesses and improve the economic status of the community.

This project fulfills the overall aims and purposes of the institutions ALPIMED and HELP International. This fulfills the aim of ALPIMED to better the quality of life for the El Salvadorian people because it aims at promoting the economic improvement and eventually self sufficiency of the economy of El Salvador. It fulfills the purpose of HELP International as an institution because it is aimed at helping eliminate poverty, creating family self sufficiency, and promoting local solutions to overcome poverty. We feel that through the execution of this project our aims will be met on both a project level and institutional level.