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FOSTERING A CULTURE OF LAWFULNESS: Multi-Sector Success in Pereira, Colombia, 2008-2010

The culture of lawfulness project in Pereira, Colombia has demonstrated the feasibility of launching and equipping a community to develop societal support for the rule of law. Over the past three years, municipal governmental and nongovernmental leaders have been mobilized to provide Pereirans well into the future with a vision of how the rule of law can improve their quality of life. These leaders now serve as role models and are investing time, staff, and resources to mobilize Pereirans as active proponents of the rule of law. With technical assistance from NSIC's Culture of Lawfulness Project, these leaders have embedded cross-sector educational programs in multiple sectors of society. This has paved the way for the continuity of this effort. Lessons learned from the Pereira project can guide others in strengthening democratic governance and human rights in urban environments.

Pereira—a mid-sized Colombian city of half a million citizens—is the capital of the country's coffee growing region. As in other Colombian municipalities, the local government is struggling to integrate a significant portion of the population into the formal work force. The unemployment rate of 21.5 in 2010 is one of the highest in the nation. Pereira is also typical of other small to medium-sized urban areas confronting difficult public security challenges. Despite a reduction in the homicide rate in recent years, local drug trafficking, street muggings, underage prostitution, small arms sales, and youth gang violence pose difficult challenges for the city.

Prior to this project, rule of law principles had few public advocates and were not well understood by the people of Pereira. Apathy and fatalism were the norm for large segments of the population, and many engaged in or tolerated illicit behavior.

Pereiran governmental and civil society leaders recognized these challenges and wanted to confront them. They sought assistance from the National Strategy Information Center (NSIC)—a nongovernmental educational organization that has pioneered the culture of lawfulness approach in Colombia and elsewhere. In partnership with USAID and US foundations, NSIC introduced these Pereiran leaders and their colleagues to the culture of lawfulness vision. The Center shared lessons learned from effective culture of lawfulness initiatives on various continents. NSIC also worked closely with municipal leaders to develop a Pereiran rule of law narrative based on local history, customs, and culture, and to integrate it into new and existing educational programs that reach a broad cross-section of society.

This report provides (1) a description of the culture of lawfulness approach, (2) the specific goals of the Pereira project, (3) methods employed, (4) accomplishments, (5) lessons learned to date, and (6) a guide to replicating the Pereiran experience.

1. Culture of Lawfulness Approach

Effective and sustainable democracy requires the rule of law.¹ It is the rule of law that protects basic rights and due process, providing an environment for social, political, and economic development and conflict resolution. When the law is equally applied, individual liberties are safeguarded, and a system is in place to redress social wrongs, human rights are protected. Enhancing the capacity of both the state and law enforcement is, of course, necessary to develop the rule of law. But this alone is not sufficient. To be effective, these efforts need to be accompanied by societal support for the rule of law—a culture of lawfulness.

A culture of lawfulness (CoL) exists when the majority of people believe in and act in accordance with the rule of law. They believe that it is the best means to secure their fundamental human rights and obtain justice. As a rights-based approach, individuals in such a society come to view themselves as active agents helping to address public security challenges and to improve the quality of their lives. They become empowered, recognizing that no person or institution is above the law—including government officials and local elites.

A culture of lawfulness also fundamentally alters the dynamics of state institutions, making them more efficient, effective, and just. Lawless behavior is marginalized as more citizens begin to defend the rule of law and act according to its principles. This enables law enforcement and the judiciary to focus on serious crime and corruption. Their efforts are enhanced by the cooperation of ordinary citizens who report crimes, serve as witnesses, and help prevent corrupt practices. At the same time, government agencies are held accountable for upholding the rule of law and respecting human rights.

A decade ago, the NSIC team developed this culture of lawfulness approach. They studied societal experiences in various parts of the world—most notably Sicily and Hong Kong—that demonstrated that it is possible in economically disadvantaged, corrupt, and violent regions to shift a culture in the direction of lawfulness over a relatively short period of time.² In a series of NSIC-sponsored conferences, leaders from these societies discussed their experiences. The term “culture of lawfulness” emerged from these exchanges. So too did the development of innovative and replicable techniques for strengthening freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. At the national level in Colombia, NSIC has been working to apply this knowledge through two sectors since 2004, the Colombian Ministry of Education and the Colombian National Police.

2. Goals of the Pereira Project

In September 2007, NSIC received a three-year grant from USAID to develop a concentrated, multi- and cross-sector culture of lawfulness approach in a Colombian municipality and to identify a set of techniques and lessons learned that can be applied flexibly elsewhere in the region to strengthen local democratic governance and the rule of law.³

Initially, five municipalities in different geographic regions of the country were identified as possible candidates. Following meetings with local government and civil society leaders in these cities, preliminary research, and consultation with USAID, it was decided to focus on Pereira.

Three goals were established for the three-year project, with the newly elected mayor, the multiparty city council, and several civil society leaders.

- ***Develop a core group of government, business, and civil society leaders*** with (a) the ability to articulate culture of lawfulness principles to a diverse audience in their city; (b) a personal commitment to its promotion within and outside their own sector; (c) the capacity to secure resources to support culture of lawfulness education; and (d) a commitment to sustainable programming beyond the three-year project.
- ***Institutionalize formal and informal CoL education in multiple sectors and create cross-sector synergy.*** Formal education includes classroom instruction in schools, police academies, businesses, or nonprofit organizations. It provides the in-depth content essential to understanding how rule of law principles enhance the quality of life. Informal education takes place outside the classroom in many forums and is intended to reinforce the classroom experience. It includes social messaging used by different sectors to engage the public and influence daily activities.

The involvement of multiple sectors of society was sought so that a broad spectrum of Pereirans would come to appreciate the benefits and responsibilities of the rule of law. To enhance the effectiveness of this approach, cross-sector initiatives were to be developed in which different institutions collaborated to reinforce specific rule of law educational messages. These could be expected to resonate with Pereirans from 10 to 70 years of age in various spheres of their lives.

This education was to be developed and institutionalized by pairing the capabilities and reach of local NGOs and government institutions with NSIC's technical expertise. These programs would place Pereira on a trajectory to societal support for the rule of law without requiring continued substantial external support.

- ***Create measurable change in popular knowledge and attitudes supportive of a culture of lawfulness.*** It was not expected that the city's culture would be changed in three short years. However, rule of law education was expected to significantly increase the percentage of citizens familiar with culture of lawfulness and its basic concepts. Over time, there would be growth in societal support for the rule of law, with more citizens promoting it through their daily actions.

This report examines NSIC's and Pereira's accomplishments in achieving the first two goals. A Colombian polling/market research company and independent evaluation specialists are currently assessing the impact of the project – Goal #3. Their findings will be available in late 2010.

3. Methods Employed

To inspire a critical mass of citizens to become supporters of the rule of law, NSIC began to enhance the culture of lawfulness capacity of multiple organizations through technical and pump

priming assistance. NSIC mentored NGO and governmental leaders as they developed into articulate advocates for the rule of law and a culture of lawfulness.

The project was implemented by a full-time Pereiran team with guidance from NSIC. Two members of the Pereira local team – a program coordinator and a communications/outreach coordinator – were funded with support from USAID and US foundations. The Pereira municipal government funded a third member to coordinate government culture of lawfulness programs and create synergy with civil society efforts.

Year 1—Securing Commitments and Leadership Development (June 2008 – May 2009)

NSIC first established a relationship with the city of Pereira through its partnership with the Colombian National Ministry of Education. In 2004, the ministry designated school-based culture of lawfulness education as a national priority, concluding that it was one of the most effective programs to foster democratic citizen participation and to help prevent crime and corruption. With NSIC assistance, the ministry worked with select municipal secretaries of education to incorporate the CoL course into their middle school curriculum.⁴ Pereira was one of these cities.

In early 2008, Pereiran school authorities and CoL classroom teachers helped present the CoL approach to the newly elected mayor (Israel Londoño) and the multiparty city council. The Pereiran CoL school program was used to illustrate what could be accomplished with a modest investment of time and resources. As a result, the city's elected leadership became convinced that Pereira could and should develop a culture supportive of the rule of law that would improve the quality of life for its inhabitants. They committed substantial financial and political support for a citywide, multisector program.

An assessment was conducted to determine how best to adapt and tailor the CoL approach to the realities of Pereira and to establish programmatic priorities.⁵ In identifying opportunities and challenges to CoL development the assessment examined the city's history, culture, and demographics. It also identified potential CoL leaders from a broad cross section of nongovernmental and governmental organizations with the capacity to reach large segments of the population. Many of these leaders are role models, well known in the community, and able to informally and formally reinforce educational messages.

These leaders attended a series of lengthy educational seminars. Multinational specialists familiarized them with successful approaches developed in other societies and prepared them to mobilize citizens to promote the rule of law in their daily actions. NSIC's mentoring focused on three themes:

- ***Raising awareness about individual responsibility for building a safer, more just society.*** Individual actions, when viewed collectively, often have a significant impact—positive or negative—on society. Citizens need to understand and directly experience how their daily decisions and actions in support of rule of law principles have an exponentially positive effect on society. This bolsters their faith in their ability to make a difference and reduces the apathy and fatalism that plague many societies.

- ***Highlighting the efforts of individuals exemplifying the rule of law in their daily lives.*** These individuals can serve as inspirational role models, illustrating that change is possible. Experience shows that these positive portrayals increase the willingness of others to stand up for the rule of law. Further, those who defend transparency and honesty often feel alone. Publicly highlighting their efforts provides much needed encouragement, sustaining their willingness to persevere. They also need opportunities to collectively look for solutions.
- ***Giving voice to the obstacles and frustrations citizens face along their “journey” to a culture of lawfulness.*** Change is hard. People need to recognize that the challenges and frustrations they will encounter are not unique and that they should not become discouraged; others have taken a similar journey and have succeeded.

The NSIC team consulted closely with Pereira leaders, collectively and individually, to forge consensus on mutually reinforcing educational activities. In letters of agreement, leaders committed to create and institutionalize CoL educational programs in their own institutions and in collaboration with other sectors.

Year 2—Piloting Educational Programs and Developing Synergy (June 2009 – May 2010)

The focus was on turning these commitments into sustainable programs that would reach large segments of Pereira society. Priority was placed on key sectors:

- **Schools:** By influencing the attitudes and knowledge of the next generation of leaders, students become important promoters of the rule of law. Moreover, school-based programs have a ripple effect, influencing teachers, administrators, parents, politicians, and the community at large.



This poster is one of many entries in a culture of lawfulness art competition in Pereira schools. It reflects the toll of violence and corruption, and the student artist’s aspirations for a culture of lawfulness

- **Mass media:** Print and electronic entertainment and news media can provide large segments of the population with a favorable understanding of a culture of lawfulness and their vested interests in embracing it. Documentaries, soap operas, game and talk shows have been used to reinforce CoL messages, reduce public fatalism, empower citizens, and foster rule of law habits.
- **Centers of moral authority:** They are the faith-based and secular nongovernmental organizations that carry a significant weight in the community because of the respect many citizens have for them. They interact with a significant percentage of the population on a

daily basis. Through their formal and informal educational activities, these institutions can create sympathy for and understanding of a culture of lawfulness.

- Public servants and law enforcement: If they have the trust of citizens, public servants have the potential to play a critical role in shaping public perceptions and behavior. Some government agencies, e.g., the police, have their own academies and training centers, which if prompted, can play an enormously influential role.

NSIC worked with leaders in each sector to develop specific projects that engage citizens and government officials in addressing local rule of law challenges. For example, the municipal government, with the support of UNE television (the second largest local TV network), and the Pereira branch of the Colombian National Police created “The Most Legal and Safe Neighborhood Contest.” Neighborhood leaders rallied their communities to implement the CoL vision. Projects addressed grassroots issues and tangibly demonstrated the benefits of following the rule of law. These included reclaiming abandoned parks for the community, providing safe recreation opportunities for young people, and creating neighborhood crime prevention campaigns.

Through multisector programs, CoL education was reinforced. For example, ninth grade students taking CoL courses at school encountered CoL mimes on the streets encouraging them to use the crosswalk. Youngsters were also invited to outdoor music festivals featuring CoL-supportive rap music. Students and their parents joined with police officers to rebuild and maintain neighborhood soccer fields that had been home to local drug traffickers, transforming them into safe and functional playgrounds.



Police officers and mimes work together to encourage citizens to follow traffic rules.

Cross-sectoral programs demonstrated the importance of the rule of law for all members of society. The city’s main public transportation system, Megabus, carries 110,000 riders every day. The management was persuaded to conduct, at their expense, a year-long educational campaign in cooperation with the municipal government, faith-based organizations, the local Bank of Bogotá, and the city council. The focus was on the responsibility of each individual to change the then predominant culture in the city. The campaign included electronic messages in bus stations and billboards throughout the city, slogans on fare cards, newspaper publications, radio announcements, and workshops for riders. To reinforce and complement this effort, the city council—consisting of multiple parties who do not always agree—convened in an extraordinary session to recognize the accomplishments of six ordinary citizens⁶ whose actions made a

positive, tangible difference in strengthening a culture of lawfulness in the city. Newspaper and television reports on these individuals in turn encouraged others to follow rule of law principles in their personal and professional lives.

Year 3—Consolidation and Institutionalization (June 2010 – present)

Sector leaders continue to work individually and collectively to complement each other’s educational activities. The focus is on program continuity, assisting these leaders to embed CoL education into their existing activities and mission.

To maintain program quality and momentum, Pereira needs both the municipal government and a local nonpartisan organization to assume the roles of capacity builders and cross-sector coordinators. Pereira’s mayor and elected city council continue to champion for a culture of lawfulness. A prominent Pereira NGO—Alma Mater—has also agreed to take on this task. Alma Mater is dedicated to improving the quality of public education and to enhancing social and economic development in the coffee region. Its leaders feel strongly that culture of lawfulness complements and enhances that mission. They have taken significant steps to create the necessary internal capacity for this endeavor. Alma Mater has also hired NSIC’s experienced local program coordinator, Sandra Garcia, to lead its CoL effort. Their Communications Director will head a CoL social media strategy (website, Facebook page, CoL friends email network) and collaborate with media professionals. The five other full-time Alma Mater staff are learning about the CoL approach and how it can enhance their mission.



One of the large billboards around the city as part of the campaign to encourage citizen participation in fostering a culture of lawfulness.

4. Accomplishments

Building Leadership Capacity

Fostering a culture of lawfulness requires leaders who are willing to lend their authority in support of this effort. Pereira now boasts multiple nongovernmental and governmental leaders in

key sectors who are publicly articulating a CoL vision and motivating others to work with them to bring it about. They have institutionalized educational programs in their organizations to improve citizen and government knowledge, attitudes, and skills supportive of the rule of law.



One of the large billboards around the city as part of the campaign to encourage citizen participation in fostering a culture of lawfulness.

More than 35 organization leaders have contributed more than US\$450,000 in financial, human, and in-kind resources to the citywide CoL project. Their roles in multiple sectors of society will help sustain rule of law programs. Among these leaders are:

- *Mayor Israel Londoño and his cabinet.* They incorporated the municipal CoL commitment into the city's four-year development plan (2008 –2011), under the direction of his Secretary of Planning Jairo Ordilio Torres.⁷ This mandated that government agencies educate their constituencies about the benefits of supporting the rule of law. The city also spent US\$300,000 (\$100,000 per year) to support CoL implementation, plus untold in-kind contributions.
- *The director of UNE television, Andres Garcia.* TV executive Garcia created a CoL television and radio jingle, broadcast on two television and six radio stations.⁸ He also incorporated a CoL segment into UNE's popular news talk program *VoxPopuli*. The last five minutes of every program are devoted to discussing with nationally renowned artists and politicians—including the Colombian president—the significance of a culture of lawfulness.
- *Chamber of Commerce Director Erik Duport.* In an opinion piece in the major Pereiran daily *El Diario del Otun*, Duport called upon the private sector to view culture lawfulness not as philanthropy, but as a moral obligation. Among the CoL programs he initiated was a media contest (Culture of Lawfulness Is My Business), sponsored by the Chamber, Megabus, and a

major local business (ATESA). Fourteen media professionals from radio, television, newspapers, and online media submitted original works with themes supportive of the rule of law.

- *A major NGO leader, German Toro, director of Alma Mater.* As noted above, Toro has committed his organization to strengthening and building leadership capacity, sustaining synergistic programs, and mobilizing societal support for rule of law principles.
- *Pereira Secretary of Education Campo Elias.* A former teacher and passionate advocate of CoL, he has made it a priority to institutionalize quality CoL school-based education throughout the city. He has hired a full-time coordinator to oversee the expansion, continuity, and quality of the school-based program. He is also working with the City Council to provide incentives for future secretaries of education to continue CoL programming. In addition, Elias is working with the city's Catholic Diocese and the principals of its 18 parochial schools to bring CoL education to their classrooms beginning in early 2011.

Institutionalized Educational Programming

The level of commitment by leaders is weighed not only by their willingness to speak forcefully about the rule of law but also by their ability to embed in their institutions CoL education that reaches and affects mass audiences. Since 2008, the following are among the CoL education programs that have already been institutionalized.

School-based education

At the start of the 2011 school year (February) all Pereira middle schools are to teach their 9th grade students a 60-hour CoL course. (During the 2010 school year, 85 percent of ninth graders received this education.) There are currently 127 trained teachers, and over 93,000 students have received CoL education.



The Secretariat of Education has developed the necessary in-house capability to manage this CoL program. NSIC educational experts conducted a four-day train-the-trainers seminar to prepare and accredit 15 CoL teacher trainers. These trainers are now conducting seminars for new CoL teachers. They are also mentoring middle school principals and current CoL teachers to improve their

understanding of the substance and pedagogy of the CoL course. This includes showing teachers how to bring classroom lessons to the attention of parents and the community. For example, several schools in at-risk neighborhoods have organized student-led family back-to-school nights. Through interactive discussions, exploring moral dilemmas, and conducting cultural activities, students dramatically present what they have learned and highlight the importance of promoting a culture of lawfulness.

Law Enforcement

At the national level, since 2006 NSIC has been working with the Colombian National Police (CNP) to make CoL one of the force's six strategic priorities. The CNP initiative combines formal academy instruction (72 hours) for all new officers with a practical requirement that rule of law behavior becomes part of daily police activities. Pereira has served as a pilot for this effort. The CNP inspector general is now disseminating lessons learned in the city throughout the force.

Over the past year, sub lieutenants who command community police stations (CAIs) have diagnosed rule of law challenges in their patrol zones, including school robberies, illicit drug consumption, and street muggings, and worked with the community to implement programs to address these issues. For many in the community, it was the first time police officers had sought their input into neighborhood public security concerns and involvement in possible solutions. In addition to addressing specific public security concerns, these projects have helped to “demystify” the police and build greater trust and cooperation with the community.

The Pereira CNP command has acted to capitalize on the success of this initiative. In May 2010 all senior officers received orders making them officially responsible for ensuring that members of their force are informed, skilled, and competent promoters of the rule of law.⁹

Local government

Efforts to build a culture of lawfulness can be greatly enhanced by local elected leaders and public administrators. Six of Pereira's secretariats (Planning, Health, Government, Social Development, Transportation, and Culture) now routinely conduct rule of law education. For example,

- The Secretary of Planning implemented a program to foster personal responsibility and government transparency. Community members were asked to diagnose local rule of law challenges and propose specific projects to address them (e.g., a career center, a community microenterprise business, and a recycling center). Residents then voted for their favorite project and the municipality agreed to finance its construction. This program has already been conducted in 7 of the city's 19 districts and 7 more are scheduled for 2011.
- The Institute of Transportation created a government-private sector task force to reduce motorcycle and pedestrian accidents on two main thoroughfares. This multi- and cross-sector project is combining enhanced enforcement with infrastructure improvements and citizen education. Over 50,000 motorcyclists attended workshops on helmet safety and the need to respect traffic laws. Thousands of commuters watched weekly skits performed at four dangerous crosswalks aimed at discouraging speeding and jaywalking. And local businesses joined in the effort, clearing congested sidewalks so that pedestrians had a safe place to walk, and fostering community and individual responsibility.

In June 2010, the elected Pereira City Council incorporated into law the municipal government's commitment to fostering a culture of lawfulness. Fifteen of seventeen council members approved a resolution to “transform the Culture of Lawfulness subprogram into public policy.”¹⁰ The resolution requires CoL education to be incorporated into future city development plans, with a dedicated budget, annual objectives, and measurable goals. Future mayors are to “put into effect

a policy for the development, strengthening, and sustainability of the Culture of Lawfulness Project.” The city council will be responsible for monitoring progress on an annual basis.

Moral authorities

Centers of moral authority are faith-based and secular nongovernmental organizations that carry significant influence in the community as a result of the respect citizens have for them. Five highly regarded local NGOs have incorporated CoL themes into their regular programming. Audiences include a) small-business owners; b) high risk youth; c) citizens concerned about crime; d) owners of medium and large companies and their employees, and e) local health care workers and their patients.¹¹

Pereira’s faith-based centers of moral authority have similarly embraced culture of lawfulness as an integral element of their daily activities.¹² The Catholic Diocese is educating all of Pereira’s 85 priests about techniques for promoting among parishioners the values enshrined in the rule of law—including transparency, integrity, and respect for one’s brethren. Priests receive quarterly newsletters suggesting rule of law themes for sermons and ideas for parish-community projects (e.g., candlelit marches to break the silence on child abuse, installing neighborhood watch programs with local police support). Monthly articles in the diocesan newspaper *El Pregõn* discuss how to report crime, resist the illusion of easy money, and so forth.



*Congregants in the Cathedral of Pereira
at a special mass celebrating the
culture of lawfulness*

The Pereira Association of Christian Churches and the National Evangelical Commission for Restoration and Peace have also incorporated CoL into their mission. They published a 106-page manual for pastors and lay leaders on effective approaches for advancing peace and social harmony through the rule of law. The manual suggests rule of law themes that can guide the pastor’s work with the church community. It also contains a section for Sunday school teachers with 11 interactive lessons.

Media

Print and electronic media professionals (reporters, producers, writers, program hosts, and columnists) are now regularly integrating CoL themes into their news and entertainment work.¹³ Examples include:

- Bands who perform live on the weekly entertainment music program *Vitrola* (CNC television) discuss the importance of following rule of law principles.
- A local radio station broadcasts a weekly question and answer radio program, *Legalismo*, in which audience members learn how to protect their rights. Shows have dealt with such topics as property acquisition, pensions, and renters' rights.
- The Pereira Police Radio Station, with support from the Secretariat of Education, is broadcasting a weekly radio talk show (*Parche Legal*) featuring middle school students and police officers. Students play popular music and engage in discussions about how to fight corruption in their own lives, such as in school elections.

In addition to the mainstream media, local artists are engaged in the citywide project. One cross-sector initiative—a CoL rock and reggae contest—involves an NGO specializing in high-risk youth, the Municipal Institute of Culture, and the Office of the Comptroller. Children wrote and performed original lyrics about their experience with neighborhood crime and their personal commitments to seek change. The groups are regularly invited to sing in outdoor festivals and continue to write songs in the name of the “L” Culture.

The management of the city’s professional soccer team, Deportivo Pereira, is employing social messaging techniques to encourage the 50,000-plus fans who attend its home games to support the rule of law. The team prominently displays a CoL banner in the stadium. During half time, audio skits remind fans to play by the rules in the stadium (keeping bleachers clean, purchasing tickets from licensed vendors, and showing respect for opponents).



Doctors and other health care workers joined with patients to paint a mural espousing the benefits of the rule of law

Measurable change in popular knowledge and attitudes supportive of the rule of law

Through institutionalization of educational programming by identified leaders, measurable change is anticipated among the general population in the following key cognitive and attitudinal indicators:

- Familiarity with and a positive perception of rule of law principles and the culture of lawfulness;
- Perceptions of both the mayor's and multiparty city council members' interest in promoting CoL; and
- Respondent's personal responsibility to promote lawfulness and to help improve security.

To create a starting point for measuring this change, a Colombian market research/polling company conducted a baseline assessment in May and June of 2008, prior to the initiation of project activities. The assessment consisted of a quantitative survey of 1,200 citizens. The survey instrument consists of 42 multiple choice questions. The polling company employed a multi-stage sampling process to select an appropriate random sample of respondents representing the 19 urban districts (comunas) and 6 socioeconomic strata in the city.¹⁴ The 2008 survey revealed that prior to project implementation, 86 percent of residents were unfamiliar with the concepts of the rule of law and culture of lawfulness. Only 39 percent believed that their elected public officials had tried to promote the rule of law.

This method is now being replicated (September/October 2010) to help identify measurable change. In addition to a repeat of the 2008 citizen survey, focus groups are being conducted with a cross section of Pereira government and civil society. The purpose is to validate citizen survey findings, provide more in-depth understanding of citizens' knowledge and attitudes toward CoL, and gauge future commitments to continue sustainable cross-sector education. Results will be available in late 2010.

5. Lessons Learned

In the course of the Pereira culture of lawfulness project several lessons in multi- and cross-sector programming were learned and reinforced:

- ***Local partners need concrete programmatic examples that they can adapt to their local environment.*** At first, local leaders felt overwhelmed as they tried to apply the CoL approach and develop concrete plans on their own. However, once they were provided with specific programmatic options, partners were able to quickly tailor them to their local institutional reality. This enabled them to build the confidence and capacity to work independently. For example, the NGO Youth Preventive Network (RPJ) was initially unsure of how to present rule of law principles to marginalized youth. The organization is now creating and implementing programs on its own. This includes adopting one of the city's most prominent abandoned public spaces—Libertad Park. RPJ is combining recreational activities with counseling sessions for the street children and underage prostitutes who frequent the park.

- ***It is important to demonstrate clearly to local organizations, which often lack human and/or financial resources, that rule of law themes can be integrated inexpensively into existing programs.*** Much of the nonprofit sector in Pereira believed it was beyond their financial capacity to participate in the project. Instead of trying to develop new initiatives with additional costs, NSIC worked with these organizations to embed rule of law themes into current programming. For example, each month Vida y Futuro, a micro-lending organization, trains potential small business owners.¹⁵ With guidance from NSIC, it incorporated a CoL component into its seminars, teaching potential owners about the material benefits of operating within the rule of law.
- ***Individual programmatic efforts can be strengthened by tying them together under a unifying culture of lawfulness theme.*** In January 2010, the Secretariats of Government and Social Development and the local branch of the CNP synchronized under the CoL rubric their individual efforts to curb underage prostitution. Through law enforcement and social programs, they are working together to target this illegal lifestyle, and educate high-risk families.
- ***Role models need to be developed that demonstrate that change is possible and encourage others to follow suit.*** Many in Pereira were initially reluctant to invest their time and energy in the CoL project. They believed it was the latest “fad” and would soon be replaced with another initiative. In overcoming these fatalistic attitudes, it was particularly helpful to showcase the work of average citizens whose actions embodied rule of law principles and who were working to make a difference in their local community. This included the efforts of a school teacher in a marginalized neighborhood, a local police officer, and a social worker. The local media helped bring attention to their efforts, which in turn is encouraging other citizens to take part in the CoL project.
- ***Citizens need to become actively involved in order to secure their support for the rule of law.*** In 2008, local partners focused on public awareness campaigns involving slogans, jingles, and logos. While necessary, this was not sufficient. Citizens needed to witness examples of how CoL tangibly improves their lives and how they can take an active role in the process. Recognizing this challenge, partners expanded their efforts, creating programs with concrete actions. The traffic task force described above is one example. Another is the public space task force that involved the communities surrounding Libertad Park. In a cross-sector effort, local businesses, the Pereira CNP branch, the municipal government, and an NGO are working to keep the park clean and safe.
- ***A balanced approach involving both government and civil society is needed to maintain legitimacy.*** Because Pereira's mayor embraced CoL education from the outset in 2008, the media and some civil society organizations initially viewed the citywide project as a personal cause of the Mayor. They were unsure that it would continue following a change of government. However, once the broad scope of the project became known, this perception changed. This was reinforced by opinion pieces authored by prominent business leaders, radio interviews with Catholic and Christian Church leaders, and speeches by city council members from various parties.

6. Replicating the Pereira Experience

The approach employed in Pereira can serve as a guide for strengthening local democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law elsewhere. While recognizing the need for flexible adaptation of the Pereira experience, several conditions and guidelines appear to facilitate a successful project. They include:

- ***Choice of location***
The active support of civil society and local governmental officials was extremely important to the success of the Pereira effort. These leaders were willing to go beyond discourse and actually devote specific staff and their time to advocating a CoL vision. While having moderate government capacity and resources is an advantage, it is not the main ingredient. The commitment of local leaders is crucial.
- ***Assess opportunities and challenges***
To guide program development, at the outset of the project, it was helpful to conduct a baseline assessment of opportunities for and challenges to CoL education. The assessment was based on interviews with city leaders, surveys of citizen perceptions, academic research by scholars, the relevancy of existing curricula and program models, and lessons learned from prior CoL initiatives. Findings were discussed with a broad cross-section of activists to reach a consensus on the principal findings and recommendations. This encouraged local “ownership” of the project early on.
- ***Secure commitments and contributions from local partners***
Memoranda of understanding or more informal letters of agreement are useful vehicles for codifying the specific commitments made by local partners. These agreements should be tailored to the particular requirements and realities of the partnering organization, detailing responsibilities and resource allocations. Initial seed grants can help local leaders and senior managers to independently develop the skills to implement long-term initiatives. NSIC provided grants of up to US\$500 for local NGO projects that demonstrated a clear plan on how to become self-sufficient after the initial startup. Many of these projects, such as the micro-enterprise educational initiative described above, continue today without additional NSIC financial or technical support.
- ***Develop local partner capacity to manage and implement programs***
Through a focus on leadership development and building the CoL capacity of local partner organizations, a foundation was put in place for long-term continuity. A combination of group seminars and individual mentoring was used to explain the CoL vision, ensuring that partners fully understood rule of law principles and their vested interest in promoting them. In Pereira, NSIC used effective approaches developed in other settings (Palermo, Hong Kong) to assist local leaders in conceptualizing their own CoL initiatives.
- ***Create, pilot, and refine synergistic educational programs tailored to local needs***
Formal and informal education programs are at the core of the CoL mission. NSIC worked closely with its partners so that the programs they developed transmitted knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to apply rule of law principles and practices. Moreover, programs were found to be particularly effective that concretely demonstrated the positive contribution the rule of law can play in daily lives and involved a cross section of citizens in hands-on activities.

- *Evaluate programs to ensure quality*

Ongoing programmatic evaluations were helpful to ensure that CoL education was having the desired impact and that local partners were developing the capacity to maintain these initiatives. It was useful to employ a combination of written participant surveys and oral focus group discussions to gauge the impact of activities. Process evaluations, involving the close monitoring of particular programs, were employed to determine if they were being implemented as designed. These helped to identify, early on, obstacles that needed to be addressed or new opportunities that could be explored.

The municipality of Pereira, with the assistance of external NGO specialists, has shown that it is possible to create a foundation for broad societal change supportive of the rule of law in three years. The city administration and civil society demonstrated resilience and commitment. A cross section of leaders in key sectors of society that interact with large segments of the population, are now advocating a CoL vision. They have also embedded in their organizations educational programs whose collective narrative, over time, can lead to cultural transformation.

The Pereira experience has also tested and refined a set of techniques that can help other communities seeking to strengthen democratic governance, to replicate this experience in an effective, inexpensive, and sustainable manner.

ENDNOTES

1. While there are many definitions of the rule of law, in a rule of law society (i) laws apply equally to everyone, including the ruler and the ruling class, regardless of economic, political, or social status; (ii) there is a formal means for people to participate in changing and overseeing the implementation of the laws; (iii) the laws protect the rights of each individual, as well as the interests of society as a whole; and (iv) the law provides a formal means of enforcing the law and of sanctioning violators with established punishments. “Strengthening the Rule of Law and Promoting a Culture of Lawfulness,” (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 2005), ii.
2. For more information on these successful efforts see Leoluca Orlando, *Fighting the Mafia and Renewing Sicilian Culture*, San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001; T. Wing Lo, “Pioneer of Moral Education: Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), 1998. Trends in Organized Crime, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 19-20; and Alan Lai, “A Quiet Revolution: The Hong Kong Experience,” in “Edited Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Role of Civil Society in Countering Organized Crime: Global Implications of the Palermo, Sicily Renaissance,” City of Palermo/Sicilian Renaissance Institute, Palermo, Sicily, December 2000.
3. Municipal elections in Colombia occurred on October 28, 2007. New administrations took office on January 1, 2008. To allow NSIC time to assess the impact of the elections for the project and for new municipal administrations to assume office, the project start date was postponed until February 1, 2008. This decision was taken in consultation with USAID staff in Washington and Bogotá, including the Cognizant Technical Officer. As a result, the period of performance for the USAID grant was subsequently modified and extended to January 31, 2011.
4. Colombia has a decentralized education system. The national ministry of education provides guidelines for course subjects. However, Colombia’s municipal secretaries of education are responsible for determining the actual curriculum for their students and for teacher training, and are dependent on budgets approved by their own city councils.
5. See “Fostering a City-Wide Culture of Lawfulness in Pereira, the Capital of Colombia’s Coffee Region: 2008-2010: Opportunities, Challenges, and Priorities.” National Strategy Information Center, October 2008.
6. Citizens honored: School teacher Sammy Arias, Catholic Priest David Moscoso, CNP Sub-lieutenant Diego Salamanca, Christian coordinator Lucia Teresa Cardenas, and SANAR Executive Director Christian Hernandez. (Pereira City Council Extraordinary Session on July 27, 2010).
7. Alcaldia de Pereira, “Plan de Desarrollo Municipal: Pereira Región de Oportunidades: 2008-2011.” (Pereira, 2008) pp. 60. www.pereira.gov.co/docs/2009/Plan_Desarrollo/documentos/libro.pdg. Accessed on September 22, 2010.
8. Radio spots aired on: Pereira police radio station, Culture radio Antonio Canarte, Pereira al Aire, Caracol, RCN, and Oympico Esterero. Television spots aired on UNE and Tele café from November 2008 to the present.
9. “A Shared Responsibility in Improving Community Relationships through the Rule of Law.” Ministerio de Defensa Nacional - Departamento Policía Risaralda, Instructivo No. 003/COSEC-COMAN (Pereira, February 25, 2010)
10. Proyecto de Acuerdo No. 23 de 2010: Por medio de la cual “Se establecen los lineamientos generales para la política publica de cultura de la legalidad para el municipio de Pereira.” (Pereira, June 11, 2010)
11. The five organizations are: Vida y Futuro Organization, Network of Youth Crime Prevention, Coffee Civic Security Network, Chamber of Commerce, and SANAR.
12. USAID Funding was not used to support NSIC’s work with faith-based organizations. A description of this accomplishment is included in the report, however, as it formed part of the overall CoL municipal project.
13. Pereira has three local television channels, three major newspapers, and nine local radio stations. Local media outlets and national affiliates reporting on CoL activities include: La Tarde, El Diario del Otún, El Tiempo, El Espectador, La Republica (Newspapers); RCN, Caracol, ECOS 1360, Pereira al Aire, Colmundo, Tropicana, Radio Uno (Radio), and UNE, Telecafé, RCN, Caracol, Senal Colombia (Television).
14. For survey purposes, citizens in Pereira, like in most Colombian municipalities are divided into 6 socioeconomic groups, 1 being the poorest and 6 being the most wealthy.
15. The majority of the businesses that apply for micro credit through Vida y Futuro are family run and have no more than 15 employees.