

## Facing challenges in Chile

Santiago, CHILE – It's springtime here, and fundraising is budding.

I spent the week in Chile's capital of 7 million. I was there for Hartsook Companies' First Annual Latin American Fundraising Roundtable.

Representatives of a dozen leading Chilean nonprofits met Wednesday in the Santiago Marriott to learn about major gift fundraising. Jaime Zablah, who leads Hartsook Companies Latin American practice from his native El Salvador, facilitated the discussion and confirmed its value to participants.

"It's like teaching them to fish instead of giving them a meal," Zablah said. "For so long, these organizations have lived on government contracts or the resources of their founding families. Raising money the way U.S. organizations do will create a brighter future for them."

A future for which they're working hard.

Hogar de Cristo, an umbrella social service agency that serves 50,000 each day through 3,000 national service delivery points atop a USD\$66 million annual budget, is the Chilean nonprofit organization others envy. With hospice, a drug prevention center and a homeless shelter for mothers and their children, Hogar de Cristo seems to meet every social need.

You understand how after driving across town to tour its fundraising call center. There, in a 115-year-old hospital-turned-administrative complex, 60 full-time Hogar de Cristo employees work the phones and record pledges in complex gift-tracking software.

"Our challenge isn't small gifts," said Javier Garrao Fortes, the organization's chief operating officer. "It's large ones."

Nearby, Projectos helps students successfully complete college and land jobs. The fledgling nonprofit does more than provide USD\$70 monthly stipends so participants can focus on academics instead of work; it teaches social and financial skills, offering them everything they'll need to graduate and enter the workforce. Projectos works on a grass roots level, having served 35 students in its first two years, but is tackling a growing national problem. Although Chile's last president created new public subsidies for college students, most lack the social support to complete degrees and gain jobs. Instead, they drop out after a year or two carrying considerable debt.

With a USD\$150,000 annual budget, Executive Director Isabel del Campo Mullins says there's no question Projectos meets a growing need. The challenge is philanthropy.

"We need to transition from the founding donor's gift, which has sustained our first two years, to broader support," del Campo Mullins said. "That's my goal."

Coanil is the largest Chilean agency supporting people with special needs. Serving 4,000 individuals of all ages each day through 50 national locations, Coanil's USD\$10 million annual budget funds 30 schools, supports 1,000 full-time residents and last year bootstrapped a sheltered workshop, which should begin breaking even in 2010.

“We’re fortunate and unfortunate,” said Executive Director M. Angelica Soto G. “The government funds 80 percent of our budget. It’s the other 20 percent that’s the problem.”

Soto G. said none of Coanil’s board members give money to the organization, and the largest monthly gift is less than USD\$20.

“We need to teach our board members to set an example through their giving and open the door to other contacts,” Soto G. said.

I’m impressed by the way these and other nonprofit organizations here are confronting their financial challenges. They’re clear about their needs and are working to meet them through expanded philanthropy. Here’s to a prosperous season of fundraising growth for them and the hundreds of thousands of people they serve.