



**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT EDG-A-00-02-00030-00**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE  
INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**

**STATUS REPORT  
JANUARY-JUNE 2003**

**I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK**

The first three months of 2003 were dedicated to the process of design and re-elaboration of the annual work plan, and the re-elaboration of the report corresponding to the previous year, in accordance to the requirements and stipulations of USAID.

At the same time, the Institute began the execution of the project, mainly with regards to the activities related to the psychological support for victims of torture or their families, in the cases litigated by the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL for its English acronym) in the first period of ordinary sessions of the Inter-American Court in 2003, as well as the final constitution of the team-network of professionals specialized on the treatment of torture.

During the following months (April, May, June 2003) we made progress on the preparatory activities for the team-network meeting of specialized professionals, and we design a database in a specialized program, in order to include information about organizations that work with the situation of torture in the Americas.

Despite the above, the delay in the approval of the final work plan affected the compliance with the timetable. It prevented us from carrying out some of the activities on time, which forced us to re-program some of the tasks, and consequently their results. (A timetable with the re-programming of activities is attached).

Nevertheless, we understand that the above has not affected the nature or the efficiency of the actions that were effectively carried out, and we consider that we will be able to recover the time lost as we execute the project.

The re-programmed activities are:

- Team-network meeting of specialized professionals (moved from May to August 2003)
- Systematization of the methodology for psychological attention (this activity must take place after the team-network meeting of specialized professionals, therefore it was moved from June-July to September-October 2003)

- Contact with professionals who will be in charge of the training to CEJIL (originally programmed for the first eight months of the year, and then condensed in the second semester of 2003).
- Facilitating the access by psychologists to carry out consultations with the lawyers (this was to take place throughout the year, but was re-programmed to take place from August to December 2003).

The launching of the self-training course on psychological support for victims of torture within the framework of the Inter-American System was originally programmed in the work plan for the month of December. Nevertheless, due to the delay in the execution of the project's main activities, the launching was re-scheduled for the beginning of next year, and the preparation of the course was programmed for the months of September, October, November, and December of this year.

Due to an omission in the preparation of the timetable attached to the work plan, we did not include the Training to CEJIL staff. Nevertheless, we did include contacting the specialized professionals to carry out the training. Thus, we have now included a new line in the timetable, and programmed this activity for the months of October and November 2003.

## II. ANNUAL GOALS

The project's annual goals are:

- Constitution of a team-network of specialized professionals on the integral psychological support for victims of torture with cases before the protection organs of the inter-American system.
- Design of a methodology for the integral psychological support for victims of torture with cases before the protection organs of the inter-American system.
- Have a bearing in the development of jurisprudence passed by the Inter-American Commission and Court, regarding psychosocial reparations.

## III. PROJECT'S EXECUTION

### 3.1 CONSTITUTION OF A TEAM-NETWORK OF SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONALS

**3.1.1. Description:** Based on the selection criteria presented in the work plan, the totality of the team-network of specialized professionals was constituted. They are: Cristina Botinelli (Mexico); Jorge Enrique Buitrago (Colombia); Ana Deutsch (USA); Alicia Neuburger (Costa Rica); Nieves Gómez (Guatemala); Graciela Guilis (Argentina); Deborah Munczek (USA); María Isabel Castillo (Chile); Pilar Raffo (Peru) and Carlos Portillo (Paraguay).

To date, all of these specialized professionals have confirmed their participation in the team-network meeting, to take place on August 2-4 2003. They have also expressed their strong interest in being part of the project.

**3.1.2. Method:** The IIHR has been in communication with the specialized professionals through electronic means, in order to coordinate their participation in the team-network meeting, as well as to respond to their questions regarding the project, and to send them the information record of their respective organizations.

**3.1.3. Background / Justification:** The work carried out during the first three months of the project's execution (October-December 2002) provided the technical conditions to begin with the integral psychological support for victims of torture with cases before the protection organs of the inter-American system. For that purpose, it is essential to consolidate a team-network of specialized professionals with a sound education, and a strong clinical, institutional, and psychosocial experience. The team-network would be responsible for giving attention and making proposals for the methodological design through a joint work, and by including diverse perspectives and experiences. An articulated intervention strategy would facilitate the way for the members to use the same methodology, and to share the results that the work generates.

**3.1.4. Individuals responsible and coordinators:** The final constitution of the team-network of specialized professionals was in charge of the IIHR technical team. CEJIL helped in collecting names of candidates, and in defining the selection criteria.

**3.1.5. Intermediate steps:**

- Selection of members needed to complete 10 individuals in the team-network.
- Beginning of communications with the team-network.

**3.1.6. Results or Outputs:**

- A consolidated team-network of specialized professionals.

The exchange of experiences, the communication network, the construction of the methodology for the attention to victims and its implementation, as well as the documentation of the experiences and the survey guide are all results that depend on carrying out the team-network meeting to be held on August 2-4 2003.

**3.1.7. Impact indicators**

*Improvement of the specialized professional's capacity for the integral psychological support for victims of torture in the inter-American system.*

*Increase in the accumulation of methodological experience by the team-network of specialized professionals.*

*Consolidation of the regional network of specialized professionals, and of organizations with the capacity to provide support for victims of torture.*

We have consolidated the regional network of specialized professionals, and of organizations with the capacity to provide support to victims of torture with cases in the Inter-American System. The latter may be verified through the list of individuals that constitute the team-network of specialized professionals.

The improvement of the specialized professional capacity to assist this type of cases, and the increase in the accumulation of methodological experience are indicators that may be attained after the team-network meeting, to be held in the month of August 2003.

**3.2. Integral Psychological Attention to Torture Victims or their Families**

**3.2.1. Description:** The integral psychological attention according to the new model proposed by the IIHR, has not been done due to the fact that we do not yet have the validation and

enrichment of the methodology. We plan to have that after the team-network meeting of specialized professionals.

Nevertheless, we provided emotional continence, as well as a psychological expert's report in two cases presented before the Court during its first period of sessions of 2003: the case of Juan H. Sánchez vs. Honduras, and the case of Walter Bulacio vs. Argentina. The psychological attention to the victims in these cases were given on the following dates:

- **Bulacio case:** Between March 4-7. Twelve hours of attention. Previously in Argentina (months ago) the same expert assisted the Bulacio family outside the project's framework.
- **J.H. Sánchez case:** Between March 2-5. Ten hours of attention. Years ago, when the situation happened in Honduras, the same expert assisted the Sánchez family outside the project's framework.

These two cases are the first ones to be included in the project because, although we did not have the methodological design yet, we considered it important to begin execution of this main activity of the project. The latter was done in order to achieve the proposed final target – to provide attention to 17 cases – as well as taking into consideration the fact that the Court informed that it would not take any new cases in the remaining periods this year.

The specialized professionals that provided psychological attention to the above-mentioned cases, as well as the criteria that the IIHR and CEJIL considered for choosing the cases are the following:

- **Bulacio case:** Graciela Guilis. This case was chosen because of the place of residence (Argentina), and specifically because Mrs. Guilis had contact with the case since the past year, and had assisted the Bulacio family.
- **J.H. Sánchez case:** Debora Munczek. Although Mrs. Munczek lives in the United States, she has carried out psychosocial work in Honduras for years, and she has a wide knowledge of the social-political situation that this country has experienced, as well as the psychological consequences it has brought. Furthermore, she had contact with the Sánchez family when J. Humberto Sánchez disappeared.

Likewise, another specialized professional in the project's team-network, Alicia Neuburger, was chosen by CEJIL to provide an expert's report and emotional continence in the Mirna Mack vs. Guatemala case. Although this case is not part of the project, it is also considered as a precedent to enrich the methodology to be proposed by the specialized professionals in the project.

**3.2.2. Method:** The emotional continence procedure took place with the victims' families within the framework of the hearings, and it consisted of hours of psychological support to prepare these people to give testimony, and face the painful feelings caused by the memories of the incidents.

Due to the fact that we have not yet carried out the team-network meeting of specialized professionals, the attention provided did not have the methodological design produced and agreed to by consensus by the team-network. Nevertheless, it constitutes a first approach, as well as the possibility that these experiences may enrich the methodological proposals that the team will prepare in the future.

The two specialized professionals that participated in the Bulacio and Sánchez cases will give a report to the IIHR on the work carried out. The report will be useful as an input to the team-network meeting scheduled for the month of August.

**3.2.3. Background / Justification:** In the project's preliminary phase it was evident that the participation of psychologists in the Inter-American System has, to date, consisted in the preparation of psychological reports to be presented as evidence, either expert's evidence (in this case it would be called "expert's report") or documentary, in the phase of reparation sentences of the Court. Psychological support for victims of torture has not been a formal component of the cases' litigation process.

We hope that this new methodology promoted by the IIHR may bear an influence on the formulation of future expert's reports. According to the methodology designed by the team-network of specialized professionals, it includes emotional continence and the preparation of testimonies.

**3.2.4. Individuals responsible and coordination:** The technical teams from the IIHR and CEJIL selected the specialized professionals who provided emotional continence to the victims.

**3.2.5. Intermediate steps:**

- Designation of 2 specialized professionals to 2 cases of torture with hearings before the Inter-American Court.
- Initial experience in providing psychological attention to the families of victims of torture.
- Preparation and presentation of verbal expert's reports.

**3.2.6. Results or Outputs:**

- Five family members of victims of torture assisted within the project. Bulacio case: three relatives – grandmother, mother, and sister. Sánchez case: two relatives – mother and sister.
- Two verbal expert's reports presented by specialized professionals at the Court's hearings.
- Sessions of the Court attending to cases linked to the project.

**3.2.7. Impact indicators:**

*Improvement of the quality of the psychological support provided to victims of torture with hearings before the organs of the Inter-American System.*

*Greater awareness among the victims on the importance of presenting their cases before the Inter-American System.*

*Increase and improvement of the quality of the documents on attention practices for victims of torture.*

*Greater development in the sentences for psychosocial reparations.*

The impact indicators for this activity have not been fully complied because the cases attended to were presented before we developed the design process of the integral methodology. Nevertheless, the attention to these cases represents an accumulation of experience that will serve as an input for the preparation of that methodology, and its subsequent application. This

may be verified through the expert's reports, and other documents related to the two cases attended to.

### **3.3. Training and support to CEJIL's staff**

**3.3.1. Description:** The execution of this activity, linked to the contact with specialized professionals for training CEJIL's staff was delayed due to the lack of certainty regarding the approval of the team-network meeting of specialized professionals. The training will be in charge of some members of the team.

Little certainty on the approval of the work plan prevented the presentation of a concrete proposal. Therefore, this activity will be taken up again during the months of September, October, and November of 2003.

**3.3.2. Method:** During the months of January and February 2003, the *resumes* received for the constitution of the team-network of specialized professionals were re-evaluated, in order to detect potential professionals capable of taking on the task of training CEJIL's staff.

**3.3.3. Background / Justification:** With this activity, we hope that CEJIL's team may be better prepared to manage emotional situations with victims and their families, as well as to introduce the subject of psychological impact on victims of torture at the institutional level. This training to CEJIL, the litigant institution in 90% of the cases before the System, will later become of greater benefit to victims of torture.

**3.3.4. Individuals responsible and coordination:** CEJIL's technical team is responsible for selecting, contacting, and making job offers to the specialized professionals that will train the Staff of lawyers. CEJIL will receive recommendations from the IHR for that purpose.

#### **3.3.5 Intermediate steps**

- Evaluation of the *resumes*.

#### **3.3.6. Results of outputs:**

- There are no concrete results to date.

3.3.7. Impact indicators:

*Increase in the capacity of CEJIL's Team to manage the psychological aspects in torture cases.*

*Greater presence of the issue in the Inter-American System's organs.*

The impact indicator has not been achieved yet because the training has not been carried out due to the above-mentioned reasons.

### **3.4. Litigation of torture cases before the Inter-American System**

**3.4.1. Description:** During the first semester of 2003 the general criteria for the inclusion of cases in the Project (recorded in the work plan) were applied to the docket of torture cases that CEJIL litigates before the Inter-American System.

As a result of this exercise, during the month of January 2003 we identified the following cases:

- Juan Humberto Sánchez vs. Honduras
- Bulacio vs. Argentina  
(both procedures before the Inter-American Court)
- Febem SP vs. Brazil, and
- Leonor La Rosa vs. Peru  
(both procedures before the Inter-American Commission).

Given this identification, and considering the specificity of each case, we designed different courses of action in order to exhaust all possibilities to have the referred cases get hearings assigned during the periods of sessions in the first semester of 2003.

**3.4.2. Method:** In January CEJIL received a notification stating that the Court had set the hearings for the Juan H. Sánchez vs. Honduras case for March 3-5, 2003.

On January 13-14, CEJIL carried out a mission in Honduras in order to make progress in the preparation of the hearing. Meetings were carried out with the parties involved, and with the government, which had made informal offers to bring the case to a conclusion.

During the second half of January and February 2003 CEJIL had several telephone conversations, and exchanged several e-mails with the specialized professional, lawyer Debora Munczek, chosen (in coordination with the IIHR) to follow up the case.

On March 3-5, 2003 hearings took place with the participation of witnesses who had been timely proposed, with victims' representatives, and with the experts.

The final submissions to be presented later to the Court were prepared during April 2003, and the requests by the Court for probatory measures to better solve the case were prepared.

The same procedure was followed for the Bulacio vs. Argentina case. For it, the Court set the hearings for March 6-7, 2003. The victims' families and their representatives attended the hearings, as well as lawyer Graciela Marisa Guilis, the specialized professional assigned to the case.

The results of these litigation processes are still not known because the Court has not made the respective sentences public.

With regards to the cases under procedure before the Inter-American Court, we requested hearings for both cases during the first week of January 2003. After the request, CEJIL implemented a follow-up procedure for them in order to raise awareness in the Commission on the importance that getting these hearings would have, not only for the case, but also for the progress in the implementation of the project.

During the last week of January 2003, the Commission sent notifications informing that the hearing for the FEBEM case had not been granted, and setting the hearing for the Leonor La Rosa case for February 28, 2003.

Again, due to the uncertainty about the plan's approval, and in view of the financial and logistic difficulties linked to the hearing for the Leonor La Rosa hearing (the victim is paralyzed, must always travel accompanied by someone, and she lives in Sweden) CEJIL thought it appropriate to request the Inter-American Commission to suspend it.

In June 2003 we began to evaluate the cases in CEJIL's docket, in order to identify potential cases for which to request hearings for the next period of sessions of the Inter-American Commission, with the idea of reaching the target of three cases planned for the project's first year of implementation.

We complied with the administrative tasks linked to logistical support to guarantee the presence of witnesses and experts in the hearings set (flight reservations and purchase of tickets, payment of expenses, and attention to questions regarding these issues).

**3.4.3. Background / Justification:** The exposure of the impact of torture episodes on victims within the framework of the Inter-American System, will allow for an increase in the visibility of the complexity of the problem, as well as to influence the System's organs so that they develop adequate responses to torture episodes. As a result of an adequate litigation of the cases by CEJIL, and with the support of the new approach on an integral attention promoted by the IIHR, we hope that progress is made in the Commission's recommendations, and in the Court's jurisprudence on torture.

**3.4.4. Individual responsible and coordination:**

CEJIL's technical team, in coordination with the IIHR.

**3.4.5. Intermediate steps:**

- Analysis of potential cases to be litigated.
- Selection of three cases (one of them was removed by the Commission).
- Confirmation of the election of the first two cases.
- Two trips by CEJIL's staff to document the Bulacio and Sánchez cases.
- Request of hearings at the Commission.
- Preparation of hearings before the Court.
- Preparation of final arguments to be presented before the Court.
- Designation and coordination of the specialized psychologists chosen.
- Participation of CEJIL's specialized psychologists and lawyers in the hearings.

**3.4.6. Results or Outputs:**

- Two reports on trips to document two cases (available in case USAID requests them).
- Hearings for two cases of torture before the Inter-American Court (Bulacio vs. Argentina and J. H. Sánchez vs. Honduras).

**3.4.7. Impact indicators:**

*Increase in the number of cases of torture processed before the inter-American system's institutions.*

We have achieved the assignation of hearings before the organs for the protection of human rights for three cases of torture, two at the Inter-American Court, and one in the Inter-American Commission. The latter had to be cancelled at the request of CEJIL, due to the fact that we did not have the approval for the work plan.

This represents an increase in the number of torture cases processed before the protection organs, if we consider that in the twenty-three years of existence of the Inter-American Court, it has processed 44 cases of torture, averaging less than two cases per year.

The above-mentioned information may be verified through: Reports of trips to document the two cases under process; documents related to the preparation and presentation of the two cases presented before the Inter-American Court; members of the team-network of specialized professionals.

### **3.5. Working meeting of Specialized Professionals.**

#### **3.5.1 Description**

During the first months of 2003 we tried to establish a date for the team-network meeting of specialized professionals, but it was cancelled because the work plan had not been approved by USAID. Together with the team of specialized professionals, and with Maria Barron, USAID staff member at the Department of Democracy and Human Rights, the date was finally set for August 2 – 4 2003.

It is important to state here that this meeting has been conceived as a space for the organization of the team-network, responsible for defining a novel and integral attention strategy, and for implementing psychological attention to the victims. Therefore, the development of other activities depends on this meeting.

#### **3.5.2 Method**

For the above-mentioned reasons, the IIHR distributed the invitation to the meeting through fax, and prepared a guide with academic and logistic information about the event. The guide was distributed among the members of the team-network, the individuals responsible of the project at CEJIL, and Maria Barron of USAID.

#### **3.5.3 Background / Justification**

An integral psychological attention requires a well maintained and planned methodology that may adjust itself to the System's specific conditions. Such a methodology does not exist yet, thus representing a challenge to build it and putting it into practice, as well as to enhance it in the process.

In that sense, it is very important for the team-network of specialized professionals to know about CEJIL's experience and contributions, given the fact that it is the organization with more litigation experience and with victims before the Inter-American System. CEJIL is also able to pass on its knowledge about the real problems faced by victims of torture and by the petitioners who work before the organs of the Inter-American System.

Likewise, the specialized professionals in the team-network will be able to discuss the contributions resulting from analysis carried out by the IIHR, regarding the role of psychological expert's reports in the inter-American system, the development of jurisprudence on reparations, and the future challenges to the preparation of expert's reports.

The work carried out in this working meeting will constitute a contribution to the professional training of the specialized professionals, centered on the attention to victims of torture in the inter-American system. The latter means a better-quality attention to the victims.

#### **3.5.4 Individuals responsible and coordination**

The IIHR's technical team is in charge of the development of this activity. CEJIL and Maria Barron, of USAID will participate in the meeting.

### **3.5.5 Intermediate steps**

- Coordination talks between IIHR and CEJIL
- Preparation of the program and informative sheet
- Invitation to participants
- Delivery of basic documents to participants
- Preparation of two analysis documents to be presented in the meeting: 1. “Analysis of psychological experts reports presented to the Inter-American Court”, and 2. “Analysis of jurisprudence on psychosocial reparations, and legal value of the psychological experts report”.
- Definition of logistical organization.

### **3.5.6 Results or Outputs**

- There are no concrete results because the meeting has not taken place.

### **3.5.7 Impact indicators**

*Progress in the design of a methodology for the integral psychological attention to victims of torture or their families.*

*Increase in the amount of documents on specialized topics dealing with attention to victims of torture in the inter-American system.*

The impact indicators have not been achieved because the meeting has not taken place yet. Nevertheless, the progress made in the organization of the meeting can be verified through the invitation, the information guide, the program, and the analysis of documents.

## **3.6. Raising awareness in the inter-American system**

### **3.6.1 Description**

During the first semester of 2003, the only planned action to comply with this goal was the coordination and execution of informal meetings with representatives of the Inter-American Commission and Court.

The IIHR, through Gilda Pacheco, coordinator of the project, has held two informal meetings with the following members of the Inter-American Commission: Marta Altolaguirre, Juan Méndez, and Susana Villarán within the framework of the Interdisciplinary Course, held in San José, Costa Rica, from June 23 to July 4.

These meetings took place with the purpose of informing about the project, and showing the importance of carrying out a presentation in full before the Commission, during the hearings in October. Furthermore, the commissioners were informed of the need to design a strategy for the project's presentation at the beginning of next year, when four new members of the Commission from El Salvador, Brazil, Venezuela and Paraguay assume their post.

With regards to the Court, Gilda Pacheco, the project's coordinator at the IIHR carried out two informative meetings during February and March with Pablo Saavedra, Deputy Secretary of this institution, at their headquarters.

On the other hand, during the period of sessions of the Inter-American Court, CEJIL carried out innumerable informal contacts with the commissioners and lawyers, in order to keep them informed on the project. This was particularly done during working meetings carried out regarding the cases with hearings assigned before the Court.

### **3.6.2 Method**

The meetings with representatives of the institutions for the protection of human rights were carried out after making an appointment by phone, and presenting the reasons that motivated those meetings.

### **3.6.3 Background / Justification**

The process of raising awareness in the inter-American system began during the first semester of the project's execution. It was done by the IIHR and CEJIL, and through meetings with members of the institutions in charge of the protection of human rights. Participants were informed of the project's objectives. The process has continued during this year, and its objective is to raise awareness in the Judges and Commissioners about the need to assign hearings to the cases handled by the project; about the particular psychological and social problems that torture victims face; as well as about the need to pronounce integral psychological and social reparations.

Besides providing an integral attention to the victims – the project's key objective – we hope to be able to provide conceptual contributions that will be available for the consideration of international protection institutions. Thus, we hope to achieve two parallel and additional results: to accompany the victims through psychological attention, and the development of jurisprudence in the protection institutions linked to psychosocial reparations.

### **3.6.4 Individuals responsible and coordination**

The IIHR and CEJIL technical teams.

### **3.6.5 Intermediate steps**

- Coordination and execution of informal meetings with representatives of the Inter-American Commission and Court.

### **3.6.6 Results or Outputs**

- Four systematic meetings with Court representatives.
- Regular systematic meetings with Commission representatives.

### **3.6.7 Impact indicators**

*Progress made in the jurisprudence on torture at the Inter-American Commission and Court.*

*Progress made on raising awareness in those institutions about the issue of psychological impact caused by torture.*

*Incorporation of psychosocial reparations for the victims or their families in the recommendations and sentences issued by the Inter-American System's institutions.*

Progress has been made on raising awareness at those institutions, regarding the project's objectives and on the importance of assigning hearings to the torture cases. This may be verified through reports on the results of the meetings with representatives of the Commission and the Court.

With regards to the progress on jurisprudence on torture in the Inter-American Commission and Court, and on the incorporation of psychosocial reparation for the victims or their families in the recommendations and sentences issued by institutions in the inter-American system, steps have been taken towards achieving those indicators in the Court's hearings carried out in March. Nevertheless, the Court has not issued the sentences in those cases yet, so we can't verify it at this moment.

### **3.7 Dissemination of information on the Project.**

#### **3.7.1 Description**

With the purpose of producing dissemination material, and material to raise awareness to be used both for the online self-training course, and to distribute printed articles to members of the inter-American system and to the interested public, the IIHR began a compilation process of bibliographical material. We now have several books and publications on the topic.

During the Twenty-first Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights, the project's technical team of the IIHR promoted an exchange of experiences and discussion with the students who were interested in the subject of torture. They were informed about the project and its objectives.

#### **3.7.2 Method**

Information about torture prevention, local initiatives, and other information of interest regarding the issue are continuously being gathered through electronic mailing lists. This information is filed in a specialized folder.

A thorough research in the database of the IIHR's Documentation was carried out, in order to find three specific publication lists: impunity, psychosocial reparations, and torture and its psychosocial consequences.

Furthermore, we asked the members of the team-network to contribute with publications from their respective countries.

#### **3.7.3 Background / Justification**

We intend to offer updated information on the juridical progress achieved in the fight against torture, both in the inter-American system, as well as in other international institutions. Also, to disseminate information about the problems caused by torture, its psychosocial implications, and possible ways towards reparation. We expect that the project's initiative may become better known, in order to enable other system's users to repeat the experience, as well as that the project's products may be known by an increasing number of victims, their lawyers, and organizations that provide psycho-social attention to them.

#### **3.7.4 Individuals responsible and coordination**

During this semester, the actions carried out were under the responsibility of the IIHR's technical team. CEJIL is in charge of other activities that will be held during the second semester of 2003.

### **3.7.5 Intermediate steps**

- Acquisition of specialized bibliography to produce materials for dissemination and to raise awareness.
- Coordination and preparation of an informative forum on the project, during the Twenty-first Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights.

### **3.7.6 Results or Outputs**

- Dissemination meeting with students in the Twenty-first Human Rights Interdisciplinary Course
- Twenty students from the Twenty-first Interdisciplinary Course with knowledge on the project and its objectives.

### **3.7.7 Impact indicators**

*Increase in the number of persons who are informed about the psychosocial impact caused by torture, and about the attention methodology.*

There has been an increase in the number of persons who are informed about the project and its objectives. The progress regarding this indicator may be verified through the report of the dissemination meeting with students of the Twenty-first Interdisciplinary Course.

The information about the psychological impact of torture, and of new attention methodologies will be presented during the second semester of the year. For it, we have begun with the above-mentioned procedures.

## **3.8 Updating the Directory of Organizations**

### **3.8.1 Description**

During the first few months of 2003 a specialized database was established by using the File Maker Pro software program, including in it the data acquired last year and this one.

We started feeding the database with the organizations where the specialized professionals who are members of the team-network come from. We have also made contact with organizations from different countries: Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric of Guatemala (Guatemala), the National Human Rights Movement (Brazil), CINTRAS, FASIC and CODEPU (Chile), Human Rights' Secretariat of the Buenos Aires Province (Argentina), ACAT (Mexico). These contacts were made with the purpose of distributing the information guide, and once they reply, to include the information in the database.

### **3.8.2 Method**

Besides the above-mentioned contacts with NGO's, another strategy used to enhance the database has been to request from the specialized professionals in the team-network a research of 10 of their countries' organizations that deal with psychosocial support for victims of torture, and to fill in the information guide used to collect data. Once this data is approved, it is included in the specialized database.

### **3.8.3 Background / Justification**

Last year we circulated an e-mail providing information on the project, and on the initiative to build a database of organizations that deal with psychosocial support for victims of torture. As a result of this action, we started contact with organizations and persons interested in the issue. The elaboration of the directory will allow us to demonstrate to the judges in charge of issuing reparation sentences, the existence of local resources that could be used in the victim's emotional recovery, and that of their families.

### **3.8.4 Individuals responsible and coordination**

The IIHR's technical team is responsible for this activity.

With regards to the coordination with the USAID, last March Gilda Pacheco asked Maria Barron for a list of NGO's specialized in the treatment for victims of torture, and which are USAID counterparts, in order to include them in the directory. The information was sent, and some of the organizations are already included. We will contact the rest of the organizations in the months of August and September, to ask them for their complete information, and include them in the database.

### **3.8.5 Intermediate steps**

- Establishment of a specialized database.
- Electronic and personal contacts with organizations.
- Feeding the specialized database with the information available.

### **3.8.6 Results or Outputs**

- Specialized directory with 10 entries for the attention for victims of torture.

### **3.8.7 Impact indicators**

*Greater access for users of updated information on organizations that work on the problems caused by torture.*

The progress made towards achieving this indicator may be verified through the database, and through the electronic contact made with the organizations.

## **4. Lessons Learned**

Due to the fact that this year's most important activities in the execution of the project were not carried out yet (such as the meeting of specialized professionals, the hearing before the Inter-American Commission, the launching of dissemination material) there are still no lessons to inform about.

Nevertheless, after making a general balance of the project's operation, it is important to rescue what was said in the previous report: the fact that the project will be executed jointly with another organization - with different mandates and area of expertise - imposes specific difficulties. An example is the fact that the IIHR depends on the information reported by CEJIL to elaborate the reports and plans, as well as the fact that the communication is not always fluent due to the

distance separating both institutions (San José- Washington). This makes it difficult to carry out periodical meetings, for example.

Given that situation, we anticipate taking actions to have a better coordination, such as a personal meeting with the staff members in charge of the project in CEJIL, tentatively planned during the team-network meeting of specialized professionals in Costa Rica. In this meeting we will discuss the mechanisms and strategies for inter-institutional communication and coordination. To that respect, the IIHR will share with CEJIL the experience gathered during the year with regards to the mechanisms and requirements for the preparation of reports and plans, in accordance with USAID stipulations.

Finally, besides a close team coordination, and an effort toward inter-institutional communication, the project's characteristics demand a lot of versatility from the technical team because the inclusion of cases in the project, strongly linked to its key objective, which is to offer psychological attention to victims, does not depend on the institutions in charge of the project, but rather on the specificities of the cases, and on the operational mechanisms of the inter-American system. The latter demands a strong coordination with those organs.





INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT USAID EDG-A-00-02-00030-00  
PROJECT PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEET 2002-2003**

**Strategic objective:** Provide psychological assistance for victims of torture with cases before the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights.

**General Performance Indicator:** Improve the quantity and quality of the integral psychological support for victims of torture or of their families, with cases in the inter-American system.

**Intermediate results:** Consolidation of a team-network of specialized professionals in the integral support for victims of torture with cases before the protection organs in the inter-American system. Methodology for the integral support for victims of torture. Process to raise awareness by the organs of the inter-American system regarding the psychological impact of torture on the project's objectives.

**Annual strategic objective (2003):** Creation of a team-network of specialized professionals, and the design of a methodology for the integral psychological attention to torture victims with cases before the organs of the inter-American system.

**Annual performance indicator (2003):** Improvement of the professional, organizational, and institutional capacity for the integral psychological support for victims of torture in the inter-American system.

**DESCRIPTION**

**Precise definition:** A new, more embracing approach will contribute to the fact that the support for victims of torture or their families, with cases in the inter-American system, may become more comprehensive. Furthermore, it will facilitate the attention of a greater number of torture cases processed before the institutions of the inter-American system.

**Unit of measure:** Persons who have been victims of torture or their families, with cases before the inter-American system.

**Disaggregated by:** Country / Victim / Relative / Institution / Year

**Mechanism:** Calculation of the amount and percentages of attended cases. Evaluation, by the victims, their families, specialized professionals and the IIHR technical team, of the quality of the attention.

**PLAN FOR DATA ACQUISITION BY THE IIHR**

**Acquisition method:** Record of cases attended by CEJIL. Content analysis of reports by specialized professionals.

**Acquisition method used by IIHR:** The record of cases attended is shared by CEJIL and the IIHR. The specialized professionals hand in a copy of their reports to IIHR.

**Source:** Victims of torture or their families; Team of Specialized Professionals; Institutions in the Inter-American System; CEJIL; IIHR.

**Frequency / timing of data acquisition:** Annual.

**Estimated cost for data acquisition:** \$900.

**Responsible individuals:** Technical team of the PROJECT PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, IIHR.

**DATA QUALITY ISSUES**

**Date of initial data quality assessment:** October 2003.

**Known data limitations and significance:** The main limitation is the weakness in the analysis of cases for the construction of quantitative indicators, but the nature of the situation to impact transforms this weakness into strength. Another limitation is the difficulty to have access to the victims and their families, given the fact that both cases under the project were presented in February and March, when we had not yet planned the proposed system for data acquisition. It is now very difficult to find them, particularly the family of the Sánchez case, given the lack of communication with the rural area of Honduras, where they live. The other case foreseen for this year is out of the acquisition period and data analysis, because it has hearings planned until October.

**Actions taken or planned to address data limitations:** Construction of qualitative indicators through the analysis of reports from the specialized professionals, and an attempt to reach some quantification through surveys to family members of the Bulacio case in Argentina.

**Procedures for future data quality assessment:** Systematization of the quality of the support after every 5 cases, through the analysis of reports, in order to validate the procedure and progress of the methodology.

**PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS, REVIEW AND REPORTING**

**Data analysis:** August 15th.

**Data presentation:** August 30th.

**Review of data:** September 12th.

**Data report:** October 30th.

**OTHER ANNOTATIONS**

**Notes on base lines:** There is, to date, no methodology for the integral psychological support for victims of torture specifically adjusted to the conditions of the inter-American system. It is therefore a challenge for the project to construct one and put it into practice, as well as to enhance it throughout its execution. Up to the present, the psychological support for victims of torture has not been a formal component in the litigation process of the cases.