

*Access to
Justice
Program*

Final Report

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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Acronyms	1
List of Annexes	3
Executive Summary	4
1. AJP CSDI Regional Office Activities	11
2. Grants	15
3. Component Activities	19
Component 1: Justice Sector Reform	20
Component 2: Court Administration and Management	27
Component 3: Justice Houses	34
Component 4: Alternative Dispute Resolution	45
Component 5: Public Defense	50
4. Communication Strategies	57

Disclaimer

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

List of Acronyms

ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution (*Medios alternativos de solución de conflictos - MASC*)

AJP (or “the Program”) – Access to Justice Program

AS – Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (*Agencia para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional*)

Asolpinar – Association of Afrocolombian Women of the Pacific

CAIVAS – Center for Integrated Attention to Victims of Sexual Violence (*Centro de Atención Integral a Víctimas de Violencia Sexual*)

CAVIF- Center for Attention to Intra-familial Violence (*Centro de Atención de Violencia Intrafamiliar*)

CAV – Victims Attention Center (*Centro de Atención a Víctimas*)

CEJ – Corporation for Excellence in Justice (*Corporación Excelencia en la Justicia*)

CENDOJ – Judicial Documentation Center (*Centro de Documentación Judicial*)

CISPA – Inter-institutional Commission for the Criminal Accusatory System (*Comisión Interinstitucional de Seguimiento al Sistema Penal Acusatorio*)

CONPES – National Council for Economic and Social Policies (*Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social*)

CSDI – Colombia Strategic Development Initiative

CSJ – Superior Council of the Judiciary (*Consejo Superior de la Judicatura*)

CSO – Civil Society Organization

DEAJ – Executive Directorate of Judicial Administration (*Dirección Ejecutiva de Administración Judicial*)

DHEMOS – Institute of Studies for the Promotion of Democracy, Human Rights and Social Development (*Instituto de Estudios para la Promoción de la Democracia, los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social*)

DMASC – Alternative Dispute Resolution Directorate of the Ministry of Justice and Law (*Dirección de Mecanismos Alternativos de Solución de Conflictos*)

DNDP – National Directorate of Public Defense (*Dirección Nacional de Defensoría Pública*)

DNP – National Planning Department (*Departamento Nacional de Planeación*)

DOJ – U.S. Department of Justice

ESAP – Public Administration Training School (*Escuela Superior de Administración Pública*)

EC – Equity Conciliators

FGN – Colombian Attorney General’s Office (*Fiscalía General de la Nación*)

GOC – Government of Colombia

JAC – Community Action Board (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*)

JH – Justice House

JP – Justice of the Peace

JUSCOM - Corporation for the Strengthening of Justice and Comprehensive Community Development (*Corporación para el Fortalecimiento de la Justicia y el Desarrollo Integral Comunitario*)

LGBTI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex

MICE –Framework for Implementing Equity Conciliation (*Marco para la Implementación de la Conciliación en Equidad en Colombia*)

MJD – Ministry of Justice and Law (*Ministerio of Justicia y del Derecho*)

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MSD – Management Sciences for Development

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

NJHP - National Justice House Program (*Programa Nacional de Casas de Justicia*)

OEA – Public Defense Special Support Office (*Oficina Especial de Apoyo*)

OIG – Office of the Inspector General

PACE – Equity Conciliation Services Office (*Punto de Atención de Conciliación en Equidad*)

PET – Technology Strategic Plan

PMP – Performance Monitoring Plan

REVADESPA - Criminal Accusatory System Virtual Learning Network (*Red Virtual de Aprendizaje del Sistema Penal Acusatorio*)

SNDP –National Public Defense System (*Sistema Nacional de Defensoría Pública*)

SPA – Criminal Accusatory System (*Sistema Penal Acusatorio*)

TOR – Terms of Reference

UDAE – Statistical Analysis Unit (*Unidad de Desarrollo y Análisis Estadístico*)

UOIC - Criminal Investigation Operational Unit (*Unidad Operativa de Investigación Criminal*)

List of Annexes

Annex 1. Expected Results Report

Annex 2. Financial Report

Annex 3. Training Workshops Report

Annex 4. Procurement Table (Equipment, Furniture and Refurbishing)

Annex 5. National Justice House Program Census Report

Annex 6. Weekly Regional E-Newsletter

Annex 7. Recommendations on Judicial Governance Made by International Experts

Annex 8. Description and Allocation of ADR Actors in CSDI Zones

Executive Summary

Program Overview

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) Access to Justice Program (AJP) (2010 – 2012) undertook activities at the both national and regional levels. At the regional level, the AJP focused its efforts on 21 municipalities¹ in four regions that were prioritized in the National Consolidation Plan and the US Government’s Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI): Montes de María, Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Nariño and La Macarena in Meta. To cover the 21 municipalities of interest, the Program established five offices in Villavicencio, San Jacinto, Caucasia, Pasto and Tumaco.

AJP’s objective was to strengthen justice services in Colombia by ensuring access to legal services, improving access to justice, and reducing impunity, especially for people living in the rural and marginalized regions of Colombia that are most affected by the violence.

This initiative was conceived by USAID as a two-year “bridge program,” designed to continue activities to support the justice sector, while at the same time generating new knowledge through studies and evaluations that would enable USAID to design new forms of technical and financial support to improve the levels of access to justice by vulnerable populations.

Program Accomplishments

AJP achieved its objective through many accomplishments described in this report. These accomplishments include:

- A total of 130 universities in Colombia participated in national and regional university mock trials. This was considerably higher than anticipated.
- Legal aid clinics provided by universities were successful because they were able to reach people living in rural areas and provide them with information about Colombia’s justice services.
- Public defenders, conciliators, and government officials received training, and reported that the trainings were very helpful and relevant in performing their job requirements. As an example, with regard to training for public defenders, the program developed four new training modules, trained a cadre of instructors, and developed plans to replicate thirteen courses at the National Public Defense School (*Escuela Nacional de Defensoría Pública*).
- Eight public defender offices have received video-conferencing and other equipment, as planned.
- One forensic laboratory in Barranquilla received extensive refurbishment and equipment, while investigators in 18 departments received basic forensics kits.

Additional details about the key accomplishments and results under each program component are provided in a separate section below.

¹ Cáceres, Caucasia, El Bagre, Nechi, Zaragoza, Tarazá, El Carmen de Bolívar, San Jacinto, Ovejas, San Onofre, La Macarena, Mesetas, Villavicencio, San Juan de Arama, Uribe, Vista Hermosa, Pasto, Policarpa, Rosario, Leiva, Tumaco

Key Program Outputs

During the 24-month period, the AJP executed a budget of almost \$14 million, at an average rate of approximately \$600,000 per month. The AJP carried out 191 technical contracts, most of which were awarded in competitive processes under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

TYPE OF CONTRACT	NUMBER OF CONTRACTS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Consulting	73	38%
Grants/Donations	48	25%
Purchase of Equipment	32	17%
Civil Works ²	26	14%
Purchase of Personal Property	12	6%
TOTAL	191	100%

100% of the expected results were obtained in 42 of 49 of the contracts, and 77% of the Performance Management Plan indicators reached between 70% and 100% compliance.

Grants

AJP awarded 48 grants to 32 civil society organizations. The investment in these grants amounted to \$1.6 million, and the average grant amounted to \$33,000.

Purchase and installation of equipment

AJP purchased and installed 1,500 pieces of equipment (computers, satellites, video equipment and communications equipment, among others), at a cost of \$1.8 million dollars.³ The beneficiaries of this equipment were the Superior Council of the Judiciary (CSJ), the Public Defense System (DP), Justice Houses (JHs), the Ministry of Justice and Law (MJD), regional Victims' Attention Centers (CAVs), Equity Conciliation Points of Attention (PACES), municipal solicitors' offices, and some regional universities.

Civil works and provision of furniture

AJP contracted for 39 refurbishment and furnishing projects at an approximate cost of \$2.2 million. The remodeled area covered 9,000 square meters. The beneficiaries of these projects and furnished items were the CSJ, the DP, JHs, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directorate of the MJD (DMASC), PACES and regional CAVs.

Training

AJP designed and implemented 95 training activities across its five program areas. More than 5,300 people attended these courses, including lawyers, law students, local and national government officials, judges, magistrates, judicial employees and public defenders, as well as a significant number of community and civil society leaders. The Program completed about 300 eight-hour training sessions - almost 2,400 instructor/trainer hours - which is the equivalent of

² In 16 municipalities

³ This amount also includes the acquisition of 668 software licenses.

having had a training room in constant operation throughout the nearly 15 full months of the Program.

Mobile legal services

With the collaboration of nine regional universities, AJP carried out 91 legal assistance campaigns in the rural areas of consolidation zones. The investment in this effort totaled \$380,000. A total of 3,400 people were assisted, at an average cost of \$110 per person.

Key Program Outcomes by Component

AJP Regional Activities

Through AJP, USAID became one of the main partners of the GOC that addressed regional justice issues. Through direct support to the Coordination Directorate of the Territorial Consolidation Unit, the regional and local action plans of the 21 AJP municipalities now include justice components and specifically-defined justice projects. At the same time, local authorities have been trained in project management to formulate justice improvement initiatives. The advocacy strategy and methodology designed and implemented by AJP, along with the corresponding technical instruments, are currently being applied by the Territorial Coordination Unit in the seven existing consolidation zones.

Through grants and direct program support, AJP provided legal aid services to approximately 2,684 people in the regions. The benefits were two-fold: for the first time, the rural population of CSDI zones had access to legal services in their own territories; and regional universities were able to expand their community outreach efforts and expose their students and professors to complex legal contexts. The universities are studying the possibility of including a differentiated approach in their law faculty study plans, and the Universidad de Nariño has already done so.

With AJP's support to NGOs, the GOC (through Red Unidos) possesses an instrument to measure and monitor the situation of the poorest Colombian families in the area of access to justice. The instrument has the potential to reach and monitor 1.5 million Colombian families. Through AJP, Red Unidos is coordinating with the USAID Colombia Monitoring and Evaluation Program, implemented by DevTech, to incorporate Red Unidos' nationwide reach in its monitoring activities; this would allow USAID/Colombia to better verify the impact of its programs.

AJP supported the National Commission for Gender Issues of the Judicial Branch in the implementation of five regional roundtables on gender equity, facilitated by high court magistrates. A total of 514 government officials, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, students and civil society leaders participated in the roundtables, held in Tumaco, Pasto, San Jacinto, Cauca and Villavicencio. The roundtables generated a space for conversation where CSO representatives and state officials received training from high-level speakers, and the high court magistrates received important feedback from CSO and state officials on the review of decisions and jurisprudence.

Component 1: Justice Sector Reform

Most of the impacts under Component 1 are in the area of knowledge management/transfer and (training, study tours and assessments/studies) and procurement for CAVs.

USAID/AJP actively participated with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of two national and eight regional university competitions on oral trial techniques. AJP also planned, organized, and implemented five courses on the Criminal Accusatory System (Sistema Penal Acusatorio – SPA) in Bogota, Bucaramanga, Cali, Medellin, and Villavicencio with the participation of professors from law faculties that have some type of connection to the CSDI zones. These activities produced the following results:

- 121 Colombian law faculties are equipped with the following tools to implement reforms and effectively adapt their curricula to the training requirements of the SPA:
 - Roadmap for processing curricular reforms in the Ministry of National Education.
 - Foundation for making curricular reforms to include two new courses: Oral Proceedings and Oral Litigation Techniques.
 - Methodological parameters for teaching oral litigation techniques.
- 91 faculties of medicine, psychology, and dentistry and 20 schools or institutes dedicated to the teaching of criminal investigation and forensic sciences possess a methodological guide for proposing curricular adaptations in accordance with the training requirements of the SPA.
- 74 professors from 32 universities received training on methodologies, evaluation criteria, and special educational resources for teaching the SPA in universities.
- Through participation in university competitions on oral trial techniques, 1,612 students from 130 universities are aware of the importance of contributing to the future development of the SPA.

AJP planned, organized, and implemented two study and observation tours to Puerto Rico and Chile. As a result, judicial actors and government authorities are considering the applicability of some of the innovations they encountered.

AJP conducted several high level studies to provide objective information for reforms based on accurate and relevant information. The main studies include:

- An evaluation by NGO De Justicia, of the university curriculum and modifications needed in relation to the new SPA;
- An evaluation on the need to adapt the curricula of medical, psychology and dental schools, as well as schools or institutes dedicated to the teaching of criminal investigation and forensic sciences, to the requirements of the SPA.
- An evaluation of the level of compliance with standards regarding arrest of Colombian citizens in the CSDI zones of Bajo Cauca, Meta, Montes de María, and Nariño.
- A technical-legal study on the content and scope of “concentrated” preliminary hearings (this refers to three consecutive hearings for judicial control of arrest, formulation of charges, and request for detention orders) and judicial practice under the SPA; and

- A study by DeJusticia on the impact on judicial congestion of the prosecution of the crime of failure to pay child support.

These and other studies and assessments help AJP to make recommendations to Government of Colombia officials and judicial actors on improving the Colombian SPA.

Component 1 also supported the construction or refurbishment and equipment of six CAVs.

Component 2: Court Administration and Management

This component focused its efforts on supporting the Judicial Branch through the CSJ.

Under Component 2, AJP supported the Judicial Branch in the implementation of a Technology and Innovation Management System. As a result, the CSJ now possesses:

- A mechanism to make political decisions addressing technology issues at regular intervals to manage and lead the Judicature;
- An updated technological strategic plan;
- Increased awareness of the Administrative Chamber on the need to incorporate technology as a way to decongest the Judiciary and improve the level of efficiency and user satisfaction in the court system; and
- Institutional technology transfer agreements with foreign judiciaries that have developed knowledge needed for the Colombian judicial sector.

AJP also supported technology transfer (via electronic files) from foreign judiciaries in the United States, Spain, Chile, Brazil and Costa Rica, and promoted knowledge transfer from other judiciaries in the area of judicial governance.

AJP supported the CSJ in the procurement of equipment and furniture for virtual hearing rooms in courts located in CSDI zones and equipment for the judicial service centers of Buga, Bucaramanga and Paloquemao. AJP also supported the implementation of total quality management programs in Buga and Bucaramanga, aimed at improving trial efficiency and quality of judicial decisions. As a result, both Buga and Bucaramanga obtained ISO 9001 certification. AJP also provided important support to improving case management software, testing and modifying several modules of the Colombian judiciary's existing case tracking software, Justicia XXI. Improved modules for the layout of on-screen information, customer service and hearing room administration are now available to the CJS's Information Technology Unit and may be integrated into the new case assignment software being developed by the CSJ.

NGO Dhemos completed an interdisciplinary study entitled "Exploratory Study on Transparency of Colombian Justice." The final report was delivered to the President of the Administrative Chamber of the Judicial Branch and served as supporting documentation for the approval of the new judicial ethics code.

Components 3 and 4: Justice Houses and Alternative Dispute Resolution

AJP efforts under Components Three and Four focused on supporting the MDJ DMASC; the National Justice Houses Program (NJHP); and equity conciliation, Justices of the Peace, and arbitration under the alternative dispute resolution system. Activities were focused on training, assessments/studies, JH service improvement projects, and implementation of equity conciliation in the CSDI zones.

AJP conducted training for Justice House personnel on a basic induction module, alternative dispute resolution module, procedures for engaging communities, and human rights. As a result, the newly-established JH staff now has solid skills that are relevant to the context of the cases that most commonly affect the neighboring communities.

Additionally, AJP awarded seven grants to CSOs in Villavicencio, Uribia, Riosuco, Santander de Quilichao, Turbo, Apartado Riohacha, San Onofre and several municipalities in Bajo Cauca for projects to improve the quality of services delivery at JHs in CSDI zones. Some of them incorporated a differential approach in justice matters and protections of rights of vulnerable groups.

AJP expanded the NJHP in consolidation regions to broaden the coverage of access to justice services. AJP's support for the refurbishment and/or equipment and furnishing of 10 JHs in CSDI zones helped MJD reach regions where a JH can clearly make a difference in the community perception of access to justice.

AJP conducted and published the Assessment and Impact Evaluation of Colombia's Justice House Program, providing the GOC with an important document that describes the impact of the NJHP and makes important recommendations to improve the performance of the justice houses and the role of the DMASC. It also describes the state of the art of alternative dispute resolution activity in CSDI zones.

The AJP provided training and strengthened the capacities of Volunteer Equity Conciliators (ECs) in 14 CSDI municipalities, developed accreditation procedures for the MJD to establish (in the long-term) ADR training centers, and improved citizen perception of equity conciliation in line with the Framework for Implementing Equity Conciliation (Marco para la Implementación de la Conciliación en Equidad en Colombia - MICE), with the following results:

- 207 new Volunteer ECs received training through six new MICE processes (four in the Montes de Maria region - Carmen de Bolivar, San Jacinto, San Onofre and Ovejas; and two in Meta - Villavicencio and San Juan de Arama). These ECs should hold an average of 80 conciliation⁴ hearings per month in each of the six municipalities, for a total of approximately 480 hearings per month.
- A 75.5% increase in the number of Volunteer ECs and JPs in the JH and Centers for Peaceful Coexistence (from 42 to 110) during the Program period.
- The MJD adopted and is already implementing some of the recommendations made by the AJP for modification of the MICE.⁵
- Citizen perception and level of acceptance of equity conciliation in the targeted CSDI zones is high, according to the results⁶ of the survey applied in the 14 CSDI zones targeted by the Program.

⁴ Refers to conciliation meetings between the conciliator and the conciliation users

⁵ From the AJP's *Diagnostic on Community-based Alternative Dispute Resolution*, led by the subcontractor Partners for Democratic Change.

⁶ "Informe regional final," produced for each zone where the AJP implemented ADR activities.

Component 5: Public Defense

The AJP report “Diagnostic of the Operation, Needs and Real Capacity of the Public Defender’s Office” covering 12 departments of Colombia, including the CSDI zones, the made recommendations to the National Ombudsman Office. AJP provided technical and financial support to the entity for the implementation of these recommendations. This support resulted in the improvement, expansion, and strengthening of public defense services to disadvantaged people, through:

- An 11% increase in the number of public defenders assigned to CSDI zones (10 defenders hired).
- Adoption by the National Ombudsman’s Office of the 2011-2012 Plan to improve and steadily increase the number of public defenders in the country, reaching a total of 3,685, equivalent to an increase of 35%.
- Greater full-time presence of public defenders assigned to the JH (5 new defenders hired).
- An increase in the number of cooperation agreements between the National Directorate of Public Defense and the university law faculties to implement legal clinics (18 new agreements).
- Inclusion in the National Training Plan of specialized training for public defenders working in CSDI zones.

Through an AJP report to identify the principal barriers to the efficient use of evidence laboratories,⁷ AJP helped ensure that the public defense system has the necessary tools to investigate and refute, if needed, the factual, legal, and evidentiary bases of cases presented by the Colombian Attorney General’s Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación) (FGN), protecting the defendants’ right to due process and a fair trial.

From August 22 to September 2, 2011, AJP financed the 92nd ordinary session of the Interamerican Court of Human Rights, which took place in Bogotá. AJP also financed the Second Iberoamerican Encounter of Constitutional Magistrates on gender equity and non-discrimination. This event helped integrate a gender perspective and the application of the principle of equality and non-discrimination in the administration of justice.

⁷ “Evaluation of the Functioning, Results Obtained and Requirements of the Criminal Investigation Operational Unit (UOIC) and of Five Technical Evidence Laboratories for the Defense Assigned to the SNDP”

1. AJP CSDI Regional Office Activities

As specified by the scope of work, the Access to Justice Program (AJP) focused its activities on 21 municipalities in four targeted consolidation zones as defined by the Government of Colombia (GOC) National Consolidation Plan (*Plan Nacional de Consolidación*) and the U. S. Government counterpart, the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). The zones, selected in September 2010 by USAID, are Montes de María, Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Nariño and La Macarena in the Department of Meta. Five teams were organized for the AJP to work in these 21 municipalities.⁸ The teams continued to work in these municipalities even after the government's Territorial Consolidation Unit decided to withdraw from three municipalities in the mountainous regions of the Department of Nariño⁹ because of public security problems.

The Program signed inter-institutional cooperation agreements with the local municipal administrations, Justice Houses, and social organizations present in the four regions. The agreements included provision of physical space to set up the Program's regional offices. Five¹⁰ local work teams were organized and, in the case of Pasto and Cauca, agreements were signed with universities to have law and business students work as interns in AJP offices.

The regional teams worked on strengthening local institutions and social organizations and collaborated on ongoing activities related to peaceful coexistence and a culture of lawfulness, incorporating the concept of access to justice in the different areas of intervention. The AJP technical team in Bogota was in charge of coordinating the work of the regional offices and of executing resources and projects under the five components of the Program. The teams worked in permanent coordination with other USAID operators and international cooperation agencies, including Associates in Rural Development, Chemonics, Global Humanitaria, *Fundación Plan*, Norwegian Refugee Council, International Republican Institute, Pan American Development Foundation, International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations Development Program. At the regional level the AJP also worked in close coordination with the Public Defense Office and the Superior Council of the Judiciary (CSJ) in the areas of training, studies, refurbishment of local infrastructure, and equipment supply.

The first task of the regional offices was to perform a study to establish a baseline on barriers and availability of access to justice services in the 21 municipalities.¹¹ This was undertaken with the participation of departmental and municipal officials, community leaders, social organizations, private entities, indigenous authorities, and Justice House (JH) operators. The study determined that the primary barriers to access the justice system in these municipalities were: historical, economic, geographic, cultural, and linguistic. The paucity of institutional services and presence has led to lack of documentation and information, adverse security conditions, or insufficient or inadequate justice services and the perception of the justice system as being untrustworthy, illegitimate and, in some cases, even illegal and inoperative. Long-term control of the regions by illegal actors had generated a culture of illegality.

⁸ San Onofre, San Jacinto, Ovejas, Carmen de Bolívar, Tarazá, El Bagre, Cauca, Nechí, Zaragoza, Cáceres, La Macarena, Uribe, Vista Hermosa, San Juan de Arama, Mesetas, Villavicencio, Leiva, El Rosario, Policarpa, Tumaco, and Pasto.

⁹ El Rosario, Policarpa and Leyva.

¹⁰ Two offices were implemented in Nariño: Pasto and Tumaco.

¹¹ "Justicia en Zonas CSDI," *Situación a Febrero de 2012*.

These findings guided the main AJP activities in the targeted regions, which are described below:

a. Coordination with national and local governments

The AJP provided technical assistance to the national government¹² to define the content of the justice component of the regional consolidation action plans in permanent coordination with the Territorial Consolidation Unit teams and representatives of the departmental and municipal governments. The Coordination Directorate of the Territorial Consolidation Unit validated the findings of the diagnostic study¹³ and the need for a justice component in local development plans. A justice component is now included as a strategic development line in regional and local action plans.

AJP also provided assistance for the formulation of the CONPES¹⁴ policy document on consolidation and of a local justice model for consolidation zones. Once it is approved by the DNP, this document will constitute a methodological and budgetary guide for the territorial consolidation policy in Colombia in the coming years.

b. Local public policy advocacy

In the run-up to the 2011 local elections, AJP designed and implemented an advocacy strategy to educate candidates on the need to include justice and human rights programs in government development plans. The strategy was implemented at each stage of the electoral process by entering into partnerships with international cooperation agencies, private companies, and national public institutions. AJP, together with the USAID Human Rights Program, the USAID Political Parties and Elections Program and the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local media, provided training and technical assistance to candidates through public forums and the creation of Municipal Justice Roundtables to ensure that the issues of justice and human rights were included in their proposed government plans. After the elections, the local AJP teams provided technical assistance to the municipal planning teams, which resulted in the inclusion of the justice component in the local development plans of the 21 target municipalities and the prioritization and formulation of specific justice projects, including budgetary allocations. The advocacy strategy and methodology designed and implemented by AJP, along with the corresponding technical instruments, are currently being applied by the Territorial Coordination Unit in the seven existing consolidation zones.

c. Integrated legal services

AJP awarded four grants to the *Universidad Libre de Cali*, *Universidad de Medellín*, *Universidad Tecnológico Comfenalco*, and *Universidad del Meta*, and signed four inter-institutional cooperation agreements with the universities of Nariño - Cesmag, Mariana, and the *Universidad Cooperativa de Pasto* - to provide integrated legal services (legal consultations, radio programs, mobile legal services) in AJP municipalities, especially for the rural population.

¹² Specifically, AJP gave assistance to the Territorial Consolidation Unit, which is part of the Office of the Presidency of Colombia.

¹³ “*Justicia en Zonas CSDI*”, *Situación encontrada a Febrero de 2012*.

¹⁴ National Council on Economic and Social Policy. It is the highest body of coordination of economic policy in Colombia

These programs provided legal aid services for approximately 2,684 people. The benefits were two-fold: for the first time the rural population had access to legal services in their own territories, and the universities were able to expand their community outreach efforts and expose their students and professors to complex legal contexts. The universities are studying the possibility of including a differentiated approach in their law faculty study plans, and the *Universidad de Nariño* has already done so.

d. Training of local justice operators and community leaders on a differentiated approach and justice issues.

Under an agreement with the Public Administration Training School (ESAP), AJP designed two specialized courses (*diplomados*) for local justice operators and community leaders; one on access to justice with a differentiated approach and the other on mediation and a culture of lawfulness. The first was a 40-hour virtual course recorded in Bogotá and replicated to 360 persons from the regional offices of Meta and Montes de María. This course was given by experts on the issue of persons entitled to special protection.

The second 120-hour virtual course was conducted in the four regional offices and was attended by 160 Afro-Colombian organization leaders and members of the Community Action Board (JAC) in the municipalities of La Macarena in Meta. As a prerequisite to receiving their diplomas, the participants were required to apply what they had learned within their communities.

e. Building capacity of population groups entitled to special constitutional protection on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and approaches for access to justice.

The AJP regional teams identified the social and organizational strengths in each region and, on this basis, identified the following culturally-relevant projects to improve access to justice:

- Tumaco: AJP trained 40 Afro-Colombian women as mediators and created the radio program “The Voices of the Pacific,” broadcast weekly since November 2011, which presented information on access to justice and the problems faced by women. The Association of Afrocolombian Women of the Pacific (Asolipnar) will continue to transmit the program.
- Nariño – mountain region: Public security problems in El Rosario, Policarpa and Leyva led to the withdrawal of the Consolidation Territorial Unit from these municipalities, which limited implementation of programmed activities. The Program focused primarily on providing support to the University of Nariño’s legal clinics.
- Montes de María: 90 school mediators from rural schools in the municipality of San Onofre received training and support in community mediation and alternative dispute resolution methods. The school mediators refer cases to the Justice Houses.
- Meta: AJP strengthened the capacity of the JAC in community mediation and culture of legality to mediate in community and domestic conflicts.

- Bajo Cauca: AJP provided training on mediation and culture of legality for communities that used the JH services. This training was targeted at Afro-Colombians.

f. Inclusion of justice indicators in the instruments to measure and monitor the situation of the poorest families.

The AJP awarded a grant to the *Fundación Oleoductos de Colombia* to implement a project to include justice indicators in the instruments used to measure both the degree of vulnerability of the families participating in the *Red Unidos* program and the degree to which these families overcame poverty. This project engaged the JHs and local administrations in activities to provide assistance, advice and training to families on access to justice and on the use of legal mechanism and approaches to attention.

g. Communication and dissemination of activities.

AJP activities in the regions were disseminated each week through an E-Bulletin that was distributed to national and regional entities, organizations, universities, and other interested parties. The Program thus maintained regular contact with strategic partners and beneficiaries on the AJP activities and opportunities for community participation (See Annex 6 for an example).

Lessons learned

- **Coordination and consensus-building:** The work of the regional offices is optimized when the activities and action plan are linked to ongoing processes and to key actors in the regions (national government, departmental and local governments, operators, and CSOs). The cooperation agreements that result from these partnerships helped to focus efforts and resources, strengthen the regional presence of the AJP, and create a stronger bond with the beneficiaries. In the four municipalities in Montes de Maria, close coordination between the Consolidation Administrative Unit, local municipal administrations and other USAID program operators strengthened the formulation of development plans and promoted the inclusion of justice programs in municipal budgets.
- In the context of the new regional approach for providing access to justice services, the relationship with social organizations such as Asolpinar and the implementation of pilot projects for persons entitled to special constitutional protection have become increasingly important, particularly given the impact of improved access to justice services on the lives of people and communities.
- Coordination and collaboration between formal and non-formal justice operators is infrequent and should be strengthened. This can be accomplished through the regional offices, specifically through support for the formulation of local development plans that reflect the constitutional, justice-related obligations of municipal and departmental governments.

Recommendations

- Maintain the relationship with the Territorial Consolidation Unit; this will enable USAID to continue to contribute to the justice component of the consolidation phases and to the subsequent impact evaluation of this GOC strategy.
- Provide support, through AJP activities, to facilitate communication and coordination between the formal and informal justice systems in the regional context.

2. Grants

The AJP awarded 48 grants, totaling \$1.6 million, to civil society organizations for the promotion of access to justice for persons entitled to special constitutional protection, including women, children, indigenous and Afro-descendent populations, the disabled and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community.

The main results of these efforts are the following:

- The rural and urban citizens in 18 out of 21 municipalities of the CSDI zones visited the legal clinics, mobile legal aid units and participated in the radio programs. These projects covered a total of 8 *corregimientos* and 25 *veredas* and assisted more than 1,884 people from the regions of Bajo Cauca, Meta, Montes de María, and Nariño.
- The legal clinics of the *Universidad de Medellín*, the *Fundación Universitaria Tecnológico Comfenalco*, the *Corporación Universitaria del Meta*, and the *Universidad Libre* expanded the services offered by the legal clinics, radio programs, and mobile clinics in the CSDI zones. This, in turn, increased the number of students working in the legal clinics that provided legal aid and assistance to rural and urban communities in the targeted regions.
- The AJP awarded a grant to NGO DeJusticia to conduct a study on decongestion of the judicial system for the Justice Reform Committee. The study was presented to the National Director of Attorney General's Offices. The report was recommended by the Director as a technical document for use by the Investigations Section for support to National Investigations Units.
- The AJP awarded a grant to NGO Dhemos to conduct a study that included recommendations to promote greater transparency in the judicial system. The study, which was delivered to the CSJ, is considered a technical document that will support the design and implementation of a Code of Ethics for the Judicial Branch.
- Through a grant, NGO *Colombia Diversa* created a citizen advocacy committee of LGBTI activists to politically support the draft bills that are presented to Congress and promote community mobilization through social networks (Facebook, Twitter).
- The Justice House Program was strengthened through work with communities and public officials through training of operators in ADR, design of JH Action Plans, inclusion of JH justice activities in municipal development plans, assessment of information and data storage

systems, and establishment of ten new JHs in Apartado, Bajo Cauca Riohacha, Riosucio, Santander de Quilichao, Turbo, Uribia, and Villavicencio.

- The AJP awarded a grant to *Corporación para el Fortalecimiento de la Justicia y el Desarrollo Integral Comunitario* (JUSCOM) to organize a meeting on inter-culturalism and judicial pluralism to further coordination and cooperation between ordinary and indigenous jurisdictions. The Program prepared an inter-institutional coordination agreement on the respect for judicial pluralism and inter-culturalism in Colombia, which was presented to the GOC.
- The *Universidad de Los Andes* received a grant to develop a model for state response to cases of sexual violence committed against disabled people. Upon completion, the model was provided to agencies within the National Prosecutor's Office. In addition, printed and audio-visual material was developed to educate deaf and blind persons on their rights in these types of cases.

AJP grants were awarded to CSOs for work in the following areas:

a. Justice Reform through provision of integrated legal services

Funds through three grants were awarded to universities to offer integrated legal services to the urban and rural population through legal clinics, mobile legal clinics, and local or community radio programs in the targeted municipalities in the regions of Bajo Cauca, Montes de Maria, Meta, Tumaco and Nariño. The legal clinics set up by the universities in these CSDI zones increased the legal aid services available in these areas and brought law students into direct contact with vulnerable and poor communities.

b. LGBTI Community

AJP awarded grants to Santamaria Fundacion to support a legal program for trans¹⁵ women in Cali and provide training on legal terms related to LGBTI communities, and to *Colombia Diversa* to advocate for the rights of same sex couples. The Program provided assistance to the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana* for the development of a specialized course on sexual diversity and gender for activists, public officials, and advocates of LGBTI rights.

c. Indigenous communities

AJP strengthened the access to justice of indigenous populations through grants to JUSCOM for the promotion of rights and provision of legal and judicial assistance to indigenous communities, as well as through support to the National Public Defense System (SNDP) of the National Ombudsman's Office and the organization of the first National Meeting on Interculturalism and Legal Pluralism. JUSCOM established approaches to improve access to justice by indigenous communities. A grant was awarded to the Akwaipa-Waimakat Organization to strengthen the services provided at the regional Justice House in Uribia¹⁶ and to the *Fundación Cerrejón* to increase access to justice and promote a culture of lawfulness in a context of ethnic diversity

¹⁵ "trans" signifies transgender and transsexual.

¹⁶ These services, developed and implemented by the grantee in the Justice House, included addressing alternative dispute resolution for cases involving land disputes, debt collection and juvenile delinquency.

within the areas of influence of the Riohacha and Barrancas Justice Houses in the department of La Guajira.

d. Building capacity on women and gender issues to influence the formulation of municipal development plans

The AJP awarded grants to three CSOs to promote the incorporation of a gender and women's rights focus in municipal development plans. AJP provided support to *Sisma Mujer* for activities to influence the formulation of the development plans of Carmen de Bolivar, Caucasia and Bogota. As a result, these plans now include a component on gender activities with actions to ensure compliance with Law 1257 of 2008 on non-violence against women.

A grant to Asomupcar in Florencia, Department of Caquetá, helped support the organization's activities to develop an access to justice public policy based on gender in this municipality, with an emphasis on justice and human rights.

Through a grant to *Corporación Internacional Derecho y Sociedad*, the Program supported the development of a model for prevention, detention, attention, and monitoring of cases of domestic violence in the area of influence of the Justices Houses of Villavicencio (Meta), and Apartado and Turbo (Antioquia).

e. Capacity building on youth issues

A grant was awarded to the grassroots organization *Fundación Ser Caucanos* to prevent the risks associated with crime and consumption of psychoactive substances in the communities near the Justice House of Santander de Quilichao.

f. Disabled population

Through a grant to the *Universidad de Los Andes* and with the assistance of the *Fundación Saldarriaga Concha* AJP supported the development of a state model to address cases of sexual violence against disabled persons. This work was carried out in coordination with the Colombian Attorney General's Office (*Fiscalía General de la Nación – FGN*), the National Ombudsman's Office, and the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, among other state institutions.

g. Strengthening of new CSOs: Greater transparency in the justice sector

The AJP awarded a grant to Dhemos to produce a document¹⁷ with recommendations to be used by the CSJ as input for the chapter on transparency and on measures to prevent and eradicate possible corruption in the judicial branch. The organization conducted a series of focus groups with judges and magistrates to obtain input for this document.

h. Strengthening of CSOs: Legislative Agenda and Observatory

With AJP support, the *Corporación Excelencia en la Justicia* (CEJ) monitored the legislative agenda on issues related to the Criminal Accusatory System (*Sistema Penal Acusatorio – SPA*)

¹⁷*Estudio exploratorio sobre la transparencia en la justicia Colombiana. Informe final y recomendaciones.*

and strengthened the SPA Observatory and the Inter-institutional Commission for the Criminal Accusatory System (CISPA).¹⁸

i. Strengthening of CSOs: Decriminalization of crimes and adjustments to SPA regulations

The Program provided financial assistance to DeJusticia, an independent think tank, to conduct an investigation on the imposition of criminal sanctions for failure to pay child support, and its effect on judicial dockets. The report addressed the sustainability of decriminalizing failure to pay child support as a mechanism to relieve judicial congestion. The results were presented to the Prosecutor's Office National Director who decided to forward the recommendations to the criminal analysis practice group.

j. Strengthening of Network of Law Faculties

AJP grants enabled the *Universidad Simón Bolívar* to develop a virtual learning network of over 15 universities around the country on relevant aspects of the SPA.

k. Strengthening Law Faculties to improve teaching of SPA

Through a grant to DeJusticia, AJP supported an assessment of the changes made by universities with law faculties in compliance with Law 906 of 2004, to collect information on best practices and begin the process of adjusting the curricula.

Lessons learned

- The involvement of local actors in the development processes facilitates the sustainability of the proposed changes. It is necessary to have a map of actors and a strategy to coordinate their activities.
- Future programs should first identify universities that are willing to provide integrated legal services in the areas of intervention.

Recommendations

- Given their limited autonomy, provide continuous support to CSOs present in the CSDI zones to enable them to coordinate their work with the relevant institutions and have an impact on the communities. Donor programs have developed a network for Human Rights activists and organizations that have been instrumental in promoting change. This is not the case for access to justice; similar networks of organizations that advocate for justice and justice reform are very limited. Future assistance should focus on a deliberate process to create a national network of organizations in support of justice issues.
- Culture and communications are key elements for creating demand for justice services in the CSDI zones (and non-CSDI zones) and promoting ADR mechanisms. We recommend a requirement for more culture-based activities in the USAID interventions.¹⁹ In addition, we

¹⁸ Through the grant, AJP strengthened the capacity of CEJ to serve as technical secretariat of the SPA.

¹⁹ The regional diagnostic shows that the communities do not know their rights. Therefore, legal education should be included in USAID's next interventions and take into account the cultural aspects of each region.

recommend entering into cooperation agreements with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information Technologies and Ministry of Communications to create and implement regional- and national-level education programs focused on justice issues.

- More assistance for access to justice activities for Afro-Colombian communities to support such as titling of collective lands is crucial. This support, however, should be accompanied by assistance to the Afro-Colombian communities for the establishment of internal mechanisms to resolve the conflicts that may arise in the collective land titling process.
- Carry out an in-depth study on transparency in the justice sector that takes into account the regional differences and the presence and influence of illegal armed actors. USAID should support the Judicial Branch in the implementation of the Ethics Code.
- Continue to provide embedded consultant assistance to the Ministry of Justice and Law (*Ministerio of Justicia y del Derecho – MJD*) as it implements new planning and oversight processes for the NJHP.
- Continue to provide support for coordination between indigenous jurisdictions and the judicial system if future USAID rule of law programming is to truly incorporate a differentiated ethnic approach.
- Art is an important tool that can be used to promote learning and institutional actions in the area of access to justice. Artistic activities such as dramatic plays, comedies, and children’s activities can be used to promote justice education. The AJP funded the theater production “*Pataplín rataplán, niños por la justicia.*” USAID should build upon its knowledge of the links between art and access to justice produced by the USAID justice programs²⁰ and, at the same time, take advantage of GOC capacity through *Red Unidos* to use art to conduct outreach to CSDI and non-CSDI zones.

3. Component Activities

This section of the final report sets forth the main activities and results, lessons learned and recommendations of the Program’s five components:

- Justice Sector Reform (Component 1)
- Court Administration and Management (Component 2)
- Justice Houses (Component 3)
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (Component 4)
- Public Defense (Component 5)

²⁰ e.g., those implemented by Checchi, Florida International University and MSD.

Component 1: Justice Sector Reform

1.1 Implementation of judicial reform through the strengthening of educational processes in Colombian universities.

The AJP carried out the following activities in this area of work:

- Actively participated with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of two national and eight regional university competitions on oral trial techniques. Provided technical assistance for the regional competitions through focus groups, trained law students, and supported judges and evaluators during mock trials.
- Planned, organized, and implemented five courses on the SPA in Bogota, Bucaramanga, Cali, Medellin, and Villavicencio with the participation of professors from law faculties that have some type of connection to the CSDI zones.
- Through a grant to DeJusticia, evaluated the university curriculum and modifications needed in relation to the new SPA.
- Supported an evaluation on the need to adapt the curricula of medical, psychology and dental schools, as well as schools or institutes dedicated to the teaching of criminal investigation and forensic sciences, to the requirements of the SPA. The consultant contracted for this research made a list of the modifications needed to update the curricula in relation to the new SPA and made recommendations.
- Through a grant to the *Universidad Simon Bolivar* of Barranquilla, created the *Red Virtual de Aprendizaje del Sistema Penal Acusatorio* (REVADESPA) web portal. The purpose of the portal is to promote activities and virtual learning services on topics related to ownership and dissemination of the SPA in Colombia.
- Conducted an international seminar on “Educational strategies and actions by universities to develop the Criminal Accusatory System.” During this seminar, law faculty deans received training on how to teach oral litigation techniques as well as the results and outcomes of the work of Colombian universities in this area.

These activities achieved the following results:

- 121 Colombian law faculties are equipped with the following tools to implement reforms and effectively adapt their curricula to the training requirements of the SPA:
 - Roadmap for processing curricular reforms in the Ministry of National Education.
 - Foundation for making curricular reforms to include two new courses: Oral Proceedings and Oral Litigation Techniques.
 - Methodological parameters for teaching oral litigation techniques.

- 91 faculties of medicine, psychology, and dentistry and 20 schools or institutes dedicated to the teaching of criminal investigation and forensic sciences possess a methodological guide for proposing curricular adaptations in accordance with the training requirements of the SPA.
- 74 professors from 32 universities received training on methodologies, evaluation criteria, and special educational resources for teaching the SPA in universities.
- Through participation in university competitions on oral trial techniques, 2,119 students from 130 universities are aware of the importance of contributing to the future development of the SPA.
- The REVADESPA portal will provide a space where academics and citizens can learn about, receive training, and participate in discussions about the advances and developments in the implementation of the SPA.

1.2 Increase efficiency and effectiveness of investigation and prosecution of crimes.

The AJP carried out the following activities in this area of work:

- Planned, organized and implemented four training courses on oral litigation under the SPA in the cities of Pasto, Sincelejo, Tumaco, and Villavicencio for private trial lawyers, many of whom work in CSDI zones.
- Planned, organized, and implemented two study and observation tours to Puerto Rico and Chile. The Colombian justice operators that traveled to Puerto Rico and the high-level State officials that went to Chile gained knowledge about the latest advances in the criminal accusatory procedural system and the process of implementation of the SPA. The justice operators later presented essays on the procedural institutions of Puerto Rico and their influence on Colombian institutions.
- Held an international seminar on “Contemporary Problems in the Criminal Accusatory System in Colombia” to discuss the first six years of implementation of the SPA and the international experiences that could be used to strengthen the judicial reform process.
- Designed, validated, and applied a tool to measure the impact of the training activities carried out by AJP. The tool was also used to plan, implement and evaluate additional events.
- Completed an evaluation of the level of compliance with standards regarding arrest of Colombian citizens in the CSDI zones of Bajo Cauca, Meta, Montes de María, and Nariño. The study was based on a specific protocol for obtaining information on preliminary hearings to guarantee lawful arrest, the roles of the individuals and parties, and judicial decisions.
- Produced and published a diagnostic report on the first six years of implementation of the SPA. This study was conducted by the CEJ through a grant to provide technical assistance to the CISPA. Based on the findings of this investigation, CEJ assisted in drafting a proposal for Congress to enact legislation that would allow the privatization of the criminal prosecution of minor cases.

- Produced a technical-legal study on the content and scope of “concentrated” preliminary hearings (this refers to three consecutive hearings for judicial control of arrest, formulation of charges, and request for detention orders) and judicial practice under the SPA. This investigation was conducted as part of the official activities of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)’s SPA Observatory, which seeks to identify the causes of judicial backlog and delays in the preliminary stages of the criminal proceedings.
- Completed a study on the impact of prosecutions of the crime of failure to pay child support on judicial congestion, carried out under a grant to DeJusticia. This study made recommendations for judicial and administrative institutions based on a contextual analysis of this legal phenomenon and a review of empirical data from the information on the SPA provided by selected institutions.
- Produced online educational material related to five virtual training modules for future judicial operators and users of the Decentralized Justice Centers in Ciudad Bolívar (Bogotá, D.C.).
- Completed an interdisciplinary study entitled “Exploratory Study on Transparency of Colombian Justice,” through a grant to Dhemos. The study makes recommendations on how to reduce the risk of judicial corruption and proposes measures to strengthen the transparency of the justice system in Colombia.

These activities achieved the following results:

- 178 private lawyers in CSDI zones have acquired knowledge about the accusatory procedural system and developed oral litigation skills for adversarial proceedings. The results of the training were an 80% increase in knowledge, measured by pre and post KAP surveys.
- 100 members of the academic community in Bogota participated in the seminar on “Current problems in the implementing the SPA.” The seminar discussed the controversial aspects of the current tension between effective prosecution and constitutional guarantees, the role of management models in court and tribunal administration, and the effects of the communications media on the implementation and consolidation of SPA.
- Eight judicial system operators, who are also trainers, are transferring knowledge about the procedural, normative and evidentiary contributions of the Puerto Rican SPA to the system in Colombia.
- Six public officials now possess technical knowledge about the most important aspects of the SPA in Chile, and are committed to applying them in their legislative, administrative, and judicial activities to implement the Colombian SPA.
- The judicial staff of the Decentralized Justice Centers have access to an educational tool to improve their virtual training processes.
- With information from the AJP-supported evaluation by CEJ of the first six years of implementation of the SPA, the institutions in charge of SPA implementation represented in CISPA now have a reference baseline and reliable technical information to accomplish the objectives of the SPA.

- As a result of multiple studies analyzing the performance of the SPA in terms of support of constitutional rights, judicial congestion and judicial transparency, SPA-implementing institutions have updated information to guide their decisions on reforms and improvements to the SPA. This information will help them to:
 - Restructure their training processes for judicial operators in the area of compliance with or application of national and international standards on lawful arrest, especially in CSDI zones, as well as on the need to reduce procedural times and guarantee efficiency and effectiveness during preliminary hearings in criminal cases.
 - Lobby Congress for new laws to reduce the judicial backlog and congestion caused by the way in which the crime of failure to pay child support is legally regulated and judicially prosecuted.
 - Minimize the risk of corruption in the judicial system.
 - Modify processes or the criminal code without having to undertake a complete legal reform.

1.3 Strengthening formal and informal judicial services in order to increase access to justice for vulnerable groups in the CSDI zones.

The AJP carried out the following activities in this area of work:

- The *Universidad San Buenaventura* reviewed, adjusted, and technically validated the Information System for the Administration and Management of Virtual Legal Clinics (CJV), which is applicable to the management of social services provided by the legal clinics.
- Through a grant to the *Universidad Libre de Cali*, developed software for the CVJ System for nine new computers donated by the AJP and installed in the Department of Nariño (mayor's offices, *personerías*, JHs, and universities in CSDI zones). The Universities of Medellín and Meta also carried out CVJs.
- Conducted mobile legal services campaigns in the municipalities of Ovejas and San Onofre (Sucre), Policarpa and Tumaco (Nariño) and in six JHs in Bajo Cauca. The services were provided by the *Fundación Universitaria Tecnológico Comfenalco de Cartagena*; the *Universidad de Medellín*; and the legal clinics of universities with a main campus in Pasto (Nariño) - Cooperativa, CESMAG and Mariana.
- Broadcast a weekly one-hour Virtual Legal Clinic radio program in the Department of Meta on the “*Ondas de Don Bosco*” station by the *Corporación Universitaria del Meta*. The *Universidad Libre de Cali* produced a CD containing its legal clinic radio programs.
- Through a grant to the Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, provided technical assistance to the Community Councils of Santo Madero and Eladio Ariza, in the municipality of San Jacinto, Department of Bolívar. The University presented a situational analysis of the community councils in the Montes de María region in terms of land tenure, environmental

characterization, and acknowledgement of the communities' ethnic authorities and their own forms of justice.

- Approved assistance on access to justice concepts and types of projects to be included in the development plans of 21 municipalities located in the CSDI zones, as well as technical assistance for the formulation of justice projects and corresponding budgets.
- Produced and published the manual “JUSTICE: A Comprehensive Approach for Justice Operators for Groups Entitled to Special Attention,” through a grant to Fundación JUSCOM. The manual suggests specific standards that should be applied by justice operators when processing cases that involve individuals entitled to special constitutional protection, with a differentiated focus.
- Conducted a study documenting a case of femicide in the Department of Valle through a grant to NGO *Sisma Mujer*. The study was conducted with the purpose of raising awareness about judicial protection for women. *Sisma Mujer* also promoted the effective enforcement of Law 1257 of 2008 (non-violence against women) as part of its activities under this grant.
- Produced and published a report by the *Fundación Colombia Diversa* describing the current situation of bias-motivated homicides in Colombia and cases of police abuse against the LGBTI community. This organization also lobbied Congress regarding the regulation of same-sex marriage.
- Refurbished and equipped three FGN Victims' Assistance Centers in the cities of Cali, Barranquilla and Medellín, where interdisciplinary services are provided to victims of homicide and forced disappearance.
- Completed a study called “Florescencia: active and determined,” through a grant to Asomupcar, which included a diagnosis of the levels of access and determination of women to effectively realize their rights in the context of the armed conflict.

These activities achieved the following results:

- The legal clinics of the 121 law faculties in the country have two technological tools for providing legal services: a free platform that allows online, real-time connections between users and students, and a tool to manage and administer cases that are processed in the legal clinic offices.
- Through 100 legal clinic, students provided legal assistance to the inhabitants of CSDI zones, as follows:
 - 483 cases attended during mobile campaigns;
 - 187 cases attended directly at on-site legal clinics;
 - 52 cases attended at virtual legal clinics;
 - 50 broadcasts of the virtual legal clinic radio program.

- Communities in three cities have an institutional space that offers comprehensive assistance (information, legal aid, and protection) to victims of homicides and forced disappearance.
- Justice operators around the country have relevant and reliable information on the standards for protection and guarantees with a differentiated focus that are applicable in judicial proceedings involving persons entitled to special constitutional protection.
- As a result of training received on management and negotiation tools on land titling, the Afro-Colombian community councils in Montes de Maria can effectively manage the collective titling processes of traditional Afro-Colombian lands and the restitution of lands that were stolen by armed actors.
- The capacity of three (3) associations representing communities entitled to special constitutional protection was strengthened. They are now able to carry out social advocacy work and share useful information with their peers on how to defend their constitutional rights in the following areas:
 - The current status of enforcement of Law 1257 of 2008 on non-violence against women;
 - The problem of the abuse of authority committed against the LBGT community;
 - Normative and jurisprudential bases used to fight for constitutional recognition of same-sex marriages;
 - Analysis of the impact of the conflict and ways to mitigate its effects on the levels of access and determination of women.

Lessons learned

- Although the objectives and scope of the program were met, the need to meet contract deliverable dates for an ambitious program of activities at times did not allow for longer sustainment of the activities. Future two-year programs should have a narrower scope and fewer components.
- Not having depth in time to implement (two years instead of three to five) meant that there were some difficulties with regard to joint activities with counterpart institutions, where the delay in making a decision at times hindered the implementation of the projects. In response to AJP's demands for speed, efficiency and effective implementation of grants, some organizations believed that AJP should not interfere with their autonomy or the way in which they implemented the grant contract. In these cases, specifically with some universities, the administrative procedures required for contracts delayed progress, created frustrations and reduced efficiency in the academic area. Some organizations that received AJP grants to carry out the activities established in the Task Order demonstrated a lack of interest that resulted in unsatisfactory performance, insubstantial studies, and products lacking in rigor in terms of their presentation and use of language. In the future, it would be preferable not to designate organizations in the Program. Grants to universities need to be accompanied by assistance on USAID requirements for contract administration, administrative management, and planning. This was not possible within the short period of time and the large scope of activities required by the contract.

- The selection of appropriate grant beneficiaries is crucial, because social intervention projects have a greater impact if the implementers are fully committed to their social role and use assistance resources wisely and rationally. The grantees were mindful of the importance of gender issues and of the persons entitled to special constitutional protection in the implementation of their activities.
- In Colombia, it is culturally common for groups (committees, councils, boards, etc.) that are created as a result of judicial reform to have difficulty working together in a coordinated, articulated, and effective manner. Although the Technical Committee of the CISPA, comprising mid-level officials, functioned well and made concrete progress, the higher ranking inter-institutional body that was responsible for making high-level decisions rarely met. As a result, decisions made by the Technical Committees were not always or necessarily ratified or applied at the higher levels.
- Before awarding a grant, the NGO's commitment to the USAID Program's objectives needs to be determined. An organization that does not share these objectives can, once the technical work has been completed, jeopardize the work that USAID has performed. For projects related to access to justice for populations of special constitutional protection, the proper selection of the grant beneficiary is crucial. The contractor must ensure that the grantee can demonstrate, in addition to the typical managerial and technical capacities, a strong commitment and sensitivity to the social issue before program resources are invested. This needs to be considered for projects related to gender and people of special constitutional protection, which produce high-impact results.
- While the support given to the CISPA will continue to be important, providing this support through an NGO should be reconsidered. Through the study tour to learn about the criminal accusatory system in Chile, we learned that the agency or organization charged with evaluating and monitoring the progress of such an enormous criminal justice reform should have greater resources and technical capacity provided by the state. This task should not depend on the capacity of an NGO.
- There is a favorable environment for the expansion of Victims' Attention Centers, but the level of impact that they are having on reducing levels of impunity needs to be verified.

Recommendations

- Create more rigorous guidelines for the execution of grant funds by the CSOs that work with the program and include them in the initial TOR. These organizations do not always perform their tasks with the appropriate efficiency or quality.
- The products of any grant should be tangible and demonstrate the grantee's potential for producing an impact in the short, medium and long term. The program should not approve or accept products that consist of activities or results that are solely related to the mission or nature of the grantee's philosophy and do not contribute to program objectives.
- The SPA should continue to be the main focus of reform. Implementation of this reform is still in the early stages and the relevant institutions have not yet learned to work as a team.

The indicators of effectiveness and efficiency are still weak, and basic and specialized training for judicial operators is still needed.

- With respect to inter-institutional planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation of the SPA, USAID should become a strategic partner of the GOC and provide a more sustainable view of this activity. We recommend that USAID support the design, creation and implementation of a permanent SPA Technical Monitoring Unit that is eventually financed by the Colombian State. USAID's role should be focused on supporting the proper functioning of this unit as a manager of objective and reliable knowledge for all actors in the Colombian criminal justice system.
- Given USAID's experience with the implementation of oral litigation in the SPA and the lack of justice sector resources for investing in the development of innovations in judicial proceedings, the Agency should begin to think about supporting the development or extension of the oral litigation methodology to labor, civil and family jurisdictions. Although the GOC has an ambitious timeline to implement orality in all codes, historical progress to date shows that it there will be significant delay.
- With respect to the university oral trial contest, along with the concept of sustainability of the financed initiatives and the implementation of new versions of the contest, it would be a good idea for USAID to consider which institution should be responsible for this activity, and to negotiate with the government for the financing of this contest for a period of at least 3 years.
- The impact of the Victims' Attention Centers should be evaluated (we propose that this be done after three years of operation).

Component 2: Court Administration and Management

2.1 Build, refurbish and/or equip eight physical courtrooms

The AJP, in coordination with the Statistical Analysis Unit (*Unidad de Desarrollo y Análisis Estadístico* - UDAE) and the *Centro de Documentación Judicial* (CENDOJ), selected eight CSDI municipalities to carry out remodeling and equipping of physical courtrooms with furniture and audio recording equipment. The hearing rooms that received this support were in the municipalities of Cartagena del Chairá, Florida, Istmina, Montelíbano, Pradera, Policarpa, San Onofre, and San Vicente del Caguán.

The Program inspected the facilities in each municipality in coordination with the Physical Resources and Furnishings Unit of the CSJ. The civil, electrical, data network, and furnishing needs as well as the recording equipment requirements were determined in conjunction with the IT Unit of the Executive Directorate of Judicial Administration (*Dirección Ejecutiva de Administración Judicial* - DEAJ), applying the CSJ standards for the equipping of physical hearing rooms.

Main results:

- Eight hearing rooms completely equipped with furniture and recording equipment for users of the justice system in eight CSDI municipalities. Justice operators in each municipality trained on the operation of the donated equipment.

2.2 Special training program for judges

AJP used existing training materials from the CENDOJ to instruct judges on how to improve the performance of first instance small courts in CSDI zones. The Program modified and updated the training material and developed flash-based²¹ tools for interactive learning on the use of the applications. The training material included user manuals on transcription, document searches, and management of court notifications, email, and video conference applications.

Main results:

- 100 USB pendrives provided containing references for consultation, interactive learning about the CENDOJ manuals, and a plan for dissemination of the tools among judges and magistrates at the national level, as part of a training program to improve the performance of the CSJ legal offices.
- A pilot training program²² was carried out in four criminal jurisdiction courtrooms.

2.3 Implementation of eight virtual courtrooms

In coordination with the UDAE and the CENDOJ, AJP selected eight (8) CSDI municipalities (Acandí, Barbacoas, Caucasia, El Carmen de Bolívar, Riosucio, San Jacinto, Tumaco, and Unguía,) that are difficult to access due to geographical conditions or public order problems. The Program installed satellite communications and audio and video equipment and provided training on the use of the equipment to the courtroom staff in each municipality.

Main results:

- Eight virtual courtrooms with satellite connections established. With the implementation of these new courtrooms, USAID has funded a total of 28 virtual courtrooms in Colombia.

2.4 Training of judges on the use of the virtual courtroom protocol

AJP identified that the video conferencing equipment was being underutilized in many of the sites where it had been installed. This was due to lack of knowledge by the courtroom staff on its use and application of the protocol processes to request access to the communication channels.

In coordination with the CENDOJ, AJP developed web-based materials to train judges and courtroom staff on the configuration and use of video conferencing equipment, including protocols to request satellite communication channels and consultations of the web sites of other locations accessible by video conference.

Main results:

- Trained 52 judges and their courtroom staff in the eight municipalities on virtual courtroom equipment and application of new protocols.

²¹ Type of software for training purposes. The software permits training based on simulation techniques.

²² Basic management tools for small first instance courts.

- Created a webpage for consultation of the protocols on the use of virtual courtroom equipment that will expand the use of these hearing rooms.

2.5 Management of judicial information system

To improve the *Justicia XXI*²³ information system, AJP made adjustments to system modules for registration, layout of on-screen information, customer service, and administration of hearing rooms. Based on problems observed during the pilot test, AJP assisted with software modifications for the modules. The modules will be available once the CSJ Information Technology Directorate has developed, with its own resources, a new case assignment module that can integrate the models developed with the support of the Program. AJP provided financial resources for the implementation of the successful hearing room administration module in the Legal Services Center of Bucaramanga.

Main results:

- The updated version of the Justicia XXI information system is now available to the Information Technology Unit of the CSJ. This version contains the improvements made to the registration module, which is being implemented in Paloquemao, and is available for distribution to other legal services centers in the country. This updated version significantly optimized use of the hearing rooms and the distribution of notifications.
- The improved modules for the layout of on-screen information, customer service and hearing room administration are now available to the Information Technology Unit and may be integrated into the new case assignment software being developed by the CSJ. AJP provided the draft technical specifications required for the development of this software.
- The hearing room administration module was installed in the judicial services center of Bucaramanga. The software installed in Bucaramanga will support the implementation of the total quality management program and the sustainability of the ISO 9001 certification.

2.6 Implementation of ISO 9001 quality management system

AJP provided technical support for the implementation of a quality management system in the criminal courts of Bucaramanga and the criminal courts and tribunal of Buga. Implementation of each of these projects followed the standard stages required for ISO 9001 certification: diagnosis, design, training, implementation and external audit.

Main results:

- Implemented the ISO 9001 Quality Management System in the criminal courts of Bucaramanga and the criminal courts and tribunal of Buga.
- An external audit for certification of the ISO 9001 Quality Management System in June 2012 in the criminal courts of Bucaramanga and the criminal courts and superior tribunal of Buga,

²³ Justicia XXI is the official case tracking/case management software for case and court administration of the Colombian Judiciary.

resulted in ISO 9001 certification for Buga and Bucaramanga courts. The project developed in Buga included the certification of the Superior Court as well as the certification of 55 first instance courts, one second instance court (superior tribunal) and two judicial service centers.

2.7 ISO 9001 Assessment

As part of the effort to improve the quality of judicial processes, the CSJ initiated the implementation of ISO 9001 certification. To assess the progress of this effort, AJP hired an international consultant (Cristian Hernández, former Management and Technology director of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas, Chile). The consultant evaluated the development and results of the Quality Management and ISO 9001 Programs in the courts of Itagui and Envigado and the Administrative Chamber of the CSJ. The study responded to the following questions in the contract terms of reference:

1) Have ISO 9001-certified units improved their performance after obtaining the certificate?; 2) How expensive is it for the CSJ to maintain the ISO certification process once the CSJ decides to fund a future ISO process?; 3) What other conditions are necessary in order to more effectively implement ISO 9001?; 4) What specific role will the internal ISO 9001 unit play in order to make the ISO 9001 process more efficient and inexpensive? and; 5) Is it necessary to obtain the ISO 9001 certificate to ensure the improvement of key management indicators?

Main results:

- Presented a report to the Administrative Chamber of the CSJ containing an analysis and description of the key factors for the successful implementation of ISO 9001 programs.
- Based on the findings of the report, AJP was able to recommend whether USAID and the CSJ should provide funding for future ISO 9001 implementations.
- This report will serve as a guide for making adjustments to the existing methodology for applying quality management and ISO 9001 programs.

2.8 Evaluation of judicial management innovation experiences

AJP provided support to the Administrative Chamber of the CSJ for the identification of international experiences in legal management, governance, and technological innovations from the courts and judicial branches of Spain, Costa Rica, Chile, and the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Brasilia in Brazil. Meetings, some via videoconference, were held with high-level representatives of these entities (for example, with the President of the Supreme Court of Costa Rica) to review advances in technology and management.

Main results:

- All of the information collected through the 10 video conferences was systematized and was used to prepare a document summarizing the projects and experiences in innovation for the Judicial Branch in Colombia.
- This document was used as the basis for formulation of projects under the Technological Strategic Plan of the Judicial Branch.

2.9 Exchange of experiences between the CSJ and the judicial organizations of other countries

The Program sponsored an international seminar on judicial governance, held in Bogotá in January 2011. The CSJ hosted this event, with the participation of more than 550 judges and magistrates and featuring four international experts on judicial governance - Jorge Carrera of the Judicial Branch Counsel of Spain, David Varela of the World Bank (LAC-PREM), Fernando Carrillo of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB-Brazil), and Peter McCabe of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. The purpose of the seminar was to promote concrete counterproposals to the executive branch's draft legislation for administrative reform of the judiciary.

Main results:

- Seminar lectures were recorded and the Judicial School published the seminar memoirs.
- The international experts made 24 recommendations to improve certain aspects of judicial governance. The magistrates of the CSJ Administrative Chamber agreed to incorporate over half of these recommendations into their planned activities to improve the governance of the Colombian Judicial Branch. (See Attachment 7).

2.10 Information Technology Systems Strategic Planning

The Colombian Judiciary is proactively modernizing its processes through different projects and programs. However, these projects have not been appropriately integrated. To address this need, AJP provided technical assistance to the Judicial Branch in the development of a Technology Strategic Plan (*Plan Estratégico Tecnológico* - PET). As part of the PET, CSJ magistrates participated in intensive working sessions to incorporate their vision. AJP technicians engaged the CSJ at the highest level; the President of the Administrative Chamber opened all the working sessions and stayed until its end.

AJP carried out the following activities: a) identification of new judicial system technologies abroad; b) technology transfer through workshops and video conferences with judicial branches; c) creation of a permanent task force, consisting of engineers, lawyers, judges and magistrates, dedicated to technological development; d) approval of Phase I of an Information Technology Strategy Plan; e) coordination with the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications; and f) technical assistance from magistrates and technicians from the Chilean judicial branch (this includes an institutional agreement for permanent knowledge sharing and management and technology aspects).

Main results:

- The Judicial Branch considers the PET to be a highly relevant tool for improving the justice system in Colombia.
- A permanent working group, which includes the participation of the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, is now functioning.

- A long-term cooperation agreement exists between the Judicial Branch of Chile and the Judicial Branch of Colombia.
- Restructuring of the information technology directorate of the Judicial Branch has commenced.
- A portfolio of technological innovation projects to resolve the principal problems of the justice system in Colombia was created.

2.11 Design and implement a pilot project based on a new court management model and new technologies

The AJP designed a pilot project for an electronic notification system in the criminal courts of the Regional Council of the Judicature of Villavicencio. This system applies the digitalization model being implemented by the CSJ in Paloquemao as well as the court management, registration, and personal presentation modules.

Main results:

- The IT Unit of the CSJ now has a road map for the design of a new court management model, which may be replicated in the remaining Regional Councils of the Judiciary.

2.12 Facilitate access to information by users of the justice system

In coordination with the CENDOJ, AJP provided funding to develop the necessary applications for integration of Colombia's different jurisprudential information systems with the Iberius information system of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit (located in Spain).

Main results:

- Through CENDOJ, the users of the justice system in Colombia have access to information on the jurisprudence and international doctrine of the Iberius Network member countries, and these countries likewise have access to information on Colombian jurisprudence and doctrine.

2.13 Greater transparency and dissemination of information.

The AJP awarded a grant to the NGO Dhemos to carry out an empirical study on corruption and transparency in the Judicial Branch.

Main results:

- The final report was delivered to the President of the Administrative Chamber of the Judicial Branch and served as supporting documentation for the approval of the new judicial ethics code.

Lessons learned

- Lack of a strategic technological vision continues to be an unresolved problem for the Judicial Branch. Under the present organizational structure of the Judicial Branch and the role played by the Administrative Chamber, the best way to speed up innovation on mission, support and administrative processes is to anchor the concepts in magistrates of the Administrative Chamber. For example, as part of AJP support, the PET has become one of the top priorities of the Administrative Chamber and the High Courts, as has as the incorporation of a gender focus, through the Gender Commission.
- The Judicial Branch has not been open enough to seek out and incorporate information technologies available around the world. As part of AJP support and the research and knowledge transferred from other judicial organizations in Latin America (Costa Rica, Chile and Brazil), as well as from the United States and Spain we can state that the organization possesses a strategic technological plan. Several technologies needed by the Colombian judiciary have been developed and tested.
- In the case of the PET, the most difficult challenge for AJP was to convince the new Administrative Chamber to authorize an institutional agreement to formalize the existence of a permanent working group on the technological strategic plan. This group has, so far, led the construction of the technological strategic plan.
- Transparency/corruption in the Judicial Branch needs to be addressed from a different perspective. AJP attempted to address it through a well-known NGO, but this did not make much progress. Similar to the the PET approach, the methodology to address this issue must consider previous work with High Court magistrates. For example, magistrates must be convinced that transparency and corruption issues are within the capacity of the Judicial Branch and that there is a need to address them in the long term.
- ISO 9001 and quality management programs have become an effective way to improve the performance of the courts system. The assessment prepared by the consultant Cristian Hernández shows that these types of projects have a positive impact on organizational processes and user satisfaction levels. Additionally, the study concludes that ISO 9001 certification is a good tool to verify improvements, standardize processes, and recognize and reward the efforts of the personnel involved in the quality management program.
- While there are already five groups of courts certified with ISO 9001, the initiative still seems to be a “pilot project.” This is clearly reflected in the present budget allocated for this purpose and the projected budget for ISO 9001 for 2013. In most cases, once quality management programs have succeeded and ISO 9001 certifications have been awarded, the need for technological improvements becomes necessary for the continuity of the initiative.

Recommendations

- The Administrative Chamber of the Superior Judicial Council needs to remain engaged in the process of implementing a technological management system. This system requires the following:
 - a. Political decisions addressing technology issues at regular intervals to manage and lead the Judicature;

- b. An updated technological strategic plan;
 - c. Increased awareness of the Administrative Chamber on the need to incorporate technology as a way to decongest the Judiciary and improve the level of efficiency and user satisfaction in the court system;
 - d. Institutional technology transfer agreements with foreign judiciaries that have developed knowledge needed for the Colombian judicial sector;
 - e. A restructured Information Technology Directorate, adapted to the new challenges of the Judicial Branch regarding technology development.
 - f. A cultural change program to support the incorporation of technology.
- The PET team needs to integrate virtual hearing rooms into its project portfolio, to expand these hearing rooms to other regions, particularly CSDI zones. Additionally, share this knowledge with GOC Consolidation teams to gain their support for implementing virtual hearing technology (not only in the courts) as a way to increase access to justice in the CSDI communities.
 - Include ISO 9001 projects in PET initiatives so that ISO 9001 technology needs are included in and prioritized through the PET, and the acquisition of this technology is ensured.
 - Using PET methodologies for the prioritization of projects, define new sites for the implementation of ISO 9001 and quality management programs, in compliance with the recommendations made by AJP evaluations of the projects in Itagui and Envigado.
 - USAID should not continue to provide funding for physical hearing room infrastructure. At this point, hearing room equipment and infrastructure do not present a high level of complexity from the technological point of view. AJP believes that, after four years of funding successful equipment and infrastructure initiatives, these types of activities should instead be funded through the budget of the judicial branch. As noted above, virtual hearing rooms should be part of the project portfolio of the PET.
 - USAID should provide support for the judicial branch to consolidate its technological development policy and corresponding plan and implement a culture of innovation within the institution. We recommend strengthening the knowledge transfer agreement with the judicial branch of Chile.

Component 3: Justice Houses

3.1 Assessment and Impact Evaluation of the Justice Houses

The National Justice House Program (NJHP) assessment contains information on the operation, performance, and impact of the National Justice House Program. The document, completed in December 2011, was translated into Spanish, delivered to the MJD and published on the internet.

The assessment's recommendations and conclusions are a significant contribution to the MJD and, in particular, to the Directorate for Alternative Dispute Resolution (*Dirección de Mecanismos Alternativos de Solución de Conflictos - DMASC*), which is responsible for the technical direction of the NJHP. The assessment will provide inputs for making modifications to

the NJHP to optimize its physical and human resources and strengthen the program. The short-term recommendations and conclusions from the NJHP assessment are provided in the following excerpt:

NJHP Assessment Recommendations

Regardless of how or whether the conflicting views on the program's purposes are resolved, there are a few recommendations that require immediate attention, and that may in the end help reach the bigger answers. As regards USAID, these should be a first priority for funding and the GOC might want to consider them as such before rolling out the program any further.

Improving information on Justice House Operations

Much of the study would not have been necessary or could have been accomplished more rapidly if there were *integrated* databases on two items: Justice House activities (services provided, to whom, by whom, and with what results) and budgets (who is contributing what and how contributions in-kind can be converted to monetary values). By integrated we do not necessarily mean centralized. Centralization is desirable as well, but arguably less important to ensuring each Justice House has the information it needs to monitor its own performance.⁴⁸ [Footnote 48: If each Justice House had its own integrated database on activities, information could be easily provided to any central entity overseeing the entire program. Still, the distinction is important, since, depending on future decisions on program organization, centralization might be more or less necessary. Also, it may be easier to convince individual Justice Houses to use the system for their own management rather than presenting this as a way to improve the Ministry's information.] Both projects confront similar obstacles, especially as regards willingness of non-local entities to contribute information. However, information on Justice House activities (including staffing) may be easier to advance than the consolidation of budgetary data.

If each Justice House had its own integrated database on activities, information could be easily provided to any central entity overseeing the entire program. Still, the distinction is important, since, depending on future decisions on program organization, centralization might be more or less necessary. Also, it may be easier to convince individual Justice Houses to use the system for their own management rather than presenting this as a way to improve the Ministry's information.

There are at the moment at least three different automated case registration and tracking systems in operation: one developed by USAID contractors and installed in five Justice Houses; one being used in the district of Bogotá, and one installed in some Justice Houses in Medellín. It would be advisable to assess the three to see whether any of them, in its current or an improved format, would be worth adopting system-wide. This is something USAID or another donor could easily finance, along with the necessary improvements to whichever system is selected. (However, the designers of the "designated" system should be prepared to consider means for inputting data from whichever other systems remain in operation inasmuch as those using them may resist having to change.) Moneys for inter and intranet connections, for additional equipment, and training will also be needed, but as the MSD COP notes, the plans should be coordinated, and may in fact be supported, by the GOC Ministry for Information and Communication Technology. Another possibility is for the funding donor to support the Program in developing proposals to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry, as it may be able to fund the required connectivity. As the Ministry of Justice has its own IT Division.

The system could be managed from there, but the project will also require funds for training Justice House and Access Division staff in its use and monitoring.

The assessment team's financial analysis pointed out that there is no recommended budget for Justice House functioning, but that is not the worst of the problems. There also is no integrated accounting system, given that all financing comes from the budgets of other entities. Creating integrated (and possibly centralized) accounting is the first priority – to be able to track levels of financing. Only after that should anyone worry about standardized budgetary inputs. Until you know what you have, there is no way of telling how much more you need. Although the financial analysis for this report attempted to collect this information from the various sources, we have to regard the results as approximations (some more approximate than others), given the difficulties in compiling them. Access to budgetary information is likely to be a more difficult challenge than compiling that on activities. It was said that even some mayors are typically not very forthcoming about what they are putting into the Justice Houses, and national entities have still fewer reasons to cooperate.

USAID could usefully contribute to both activities and should put this high on its list of priorities in a next project, if not sooner. However the program is eventually organized, so long as it remains a program, and not just a collection of individual efforts, both types of information are vital to analyzing and improving performance. And even if further decentralized in the future, individual Justice Houses cannot operate optimally without having their own systematically compiled information on activities, staffing and funding.

Defining the role of the Ministry of Justice and improving its ability to carry it out

There is a short- and a long-run aspect to this recommendation, and in this section we only focus on the short-run. One sub-recommendation is that the Ministry, at least over the short-run, place less emphasis on enforcing a standardized model and instead devote its efforts to inventorying and evaluating what the Justice Houses are in fact doing. The Ministry might rely on this information as a resource for forwarding its own plans (but at the same time use it to improve its strategies and objectives). Until and unless an overall government policy is set at the highest levels, and not through a series of agreements with no teeth, the Ministry might best see itself as a defender and facilitator of the Justice Houses, and as a participant in and beneficiary of the various experimental work modalities they are carrying out. It should push for financing, but it will be better positioned to do this if the Justice Houses see it as a friend and not as the enforcer. It is also more likely to get information from the various stakeholders if it takes a supportive role. USAID's contribution could be in providing assistance to the MASC Division and the Ministry as a whole in developing means for monitoring activities (the information systems), analyzing their contents, and using this to identify good practices, areas needing further assistance, and possibly as the basis for a system of rewards for innovations.

Reaching an interim agreement on “unexpected services” and loosening the restrictions on use of the Justice Houses for other activities

This is another part of the recommended short-term emphasis for the Ministry. The Ministry's strongest allies are the Justice Houses themselves and the local governments that support them. If it continues to argue with them over non-compliance with a standard model, it is undercutting its natural constituency. In the end, what should be in the Justice Houses will only be defined when the long-range questions are answered to everyone's satisfaction. Thus, over the short-run, it makes sense to accept the local variations. Conceivably, it may develop that more entities and services could and should be included in individual Houses, but whatever the answer to that question, there is no point in and

much to lose from anticipating it. Arguably, the Ministry's primary interest should be in improving the performance of core activities, but not to the exclusion of others. Its work with conciliation training (currently being evaluated as well) is a key input here, as should be its tracking of trainees.

Exploring in more detail the issue of “unattended services”

Since we do not know the extent of this problem or have many details on the weight of suggested causes, it would be well to examine it more closely. At least some part of it seems most common to more isolated Justice Houses and to service needs with which existing staff (even those from national agencies) cannot legally deal. This may simply indicate a need either to make other officials more readily available, if not in the Justice House then close by, or to “flexibilize” the authorized powers of those who are there. It may also indicate possible complications arising in the intervention of some national officials, who add issues that cannot be resolved by them or any other local staff. Or it may indicate the demand for non-justice services and thus for the arrival of other government agencies. The most we can say is that the issues and their causes likely respond to a mix of these considerations, and it would be well to develop more information on the dimensions of both. Our survey was not designed to tap these problems because until we analyzed its results we did not know they existed. However, other surveys of users could easily be designed to explore them.

Inventorying all services, and especially those apart from dispute resolution, conducted by individual Justice Houses

Although Justice Houses excel in dispute resolution, this is hardly all they do. Once we move beyond that area, the variety of offerings and their specific contents and providers vary greatly. The present study revealed the extent of that variation, but could not pursue many important details systematically. This is another type of information needed urgently to determine 1) which programs are being carried out; 2) what their objectives are; 3) who is financing them; and 4) what type of results they seem to be producing. Some of these activities are clearly demanded by Justice House users and, if a response to this demand should and can be improved, this can only be determined on the basis of an evaluation. It would also be especially useful to inventory and evaluate training activities, as they constitute a significant portion of services in CSDI Houses and also in places like Villavicencio. Training for staff, a second variation, likewise needs to be evaluated and training needs should be defined. Training is not only important for improving specific kinds of service delivery; if well done, it also can raise staff morale and contribute to better services in a less direct fashion. USAID could support these evaluations under the current program, or very soon under a future one.

-Assessment and Impact Evaluation of Colombia's Justice House Program, pp. 78-80.

NJHP Assessment Conclusions

The National Justice House Program may not be at the proverbial critical juncture, but it certainly is at a place where a reconsideration of its aims and means to achieve them would be useful. The issues of purpose, funding and organization, or as first introduced, desirability, feasibility, and coordination of efforts, could use some rethinking, and by a wider group than the Ministry's MASC Division. In fact, the Ministry would not be advised to make any of these decisions on its own, unless it has the resources to back up their enforcement, and even under those conditions, the prognosis for its own go-it-alone effort is not entirely positive.

The program has had significant success in bringing basic justice services to poor and often relatively isolated populations. Those who use it are overwhelming supportive of its continued existence. Moreover, there are departments and districts that have adopted it as their own, no longer needing or requesting support from the central government. The challenge ahead is to 1) expand these positive developments (so that, *inter alia*, a foreign donor will not have to be involved in the creation of each new Justice House); 2) improve already successful practices so that they reach more of the target populations and raise the latter's level of approval even further; and 3) identify and encourage the adoption of good practices, whether within the core group of functions, as part of the basic support to individual Justice Houses, or as additional activities other Justice Houses might want to consider.

As inevitably happens with this type of study, as many new issues seem to arise from the findings as answers to the questions initially posed. Some of these (e.g., the apparent discomfort of Afro-Colombians with non-recognition of their own customs; complaints about bureaucracy, sporadic attendance by national authorities, the "unattended cases") might be explored through further, more targeted studies. We have suggested these and others throughout the discussion as many are too detailed for even improved information systems to address.

It is always risky to tamper with success, and this universal lesson lies behind our reluctance to make unilateral and one-dimensional recommendations. The program could be improved, but the fear is that too radical an approach to that task could be a step backwards. Our short-term recommendations we endorse without qualification, but as to what happens beyond that, we have only suggested a variety of alternatives. The program arguably should not be whatever a Justice House director or mayor determines it is, but our findings suggest that any more directive definition start with core functions and leave considerable room for innovations. The freedom to be creative is important for different reasons depending on the local context. In municipalities and departments with funds to finance innovation, it is a means of keeping them interested. In less well-off *municipios* it is a means of adjusting form and to some extent function to local constraints. The successful core of the program – providing dispute resolution and legal information and orientation to Colombia's poorer citizens – needs to be retained, but rather than accepting this as the program's limits, its fans might acknowledge that the same organization can also address other needs, even skills training to help generate employment, if that is what local citizens want.

-Assessment and Impact Evaluation of Colombia's Justice House Program, p. 85.

3.2 Establishment of new Justice Houses

The AJP provided support for establishing ten Justice Houses in Apartadó, Barrancas, Bajo Cauca (Caceres, Caucasia, El Bagre, Nechi, Taraza, and Zaragoza), Riohacha, Riosucio, San Onofre, Santander de Quilichao, Turbo, Uribí, and Villavicencio. This involved the following activities: 1) construction and civil works (in Riohacha, Santander de Quilichao, and Villavicencio); 2) provision of furniture and equipment (in Apartadó, Barrancas, Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Riosucio, San Onofre, Turbo, Uribí); 3) training of JH staff on ADR, domestic violence and human rights; 4) support to activities to promote JH services; 5) funding of activities carried out by regional AJP advisors and MJD officials to oversee and monitor the JH; and 6) grants to civil society organizations for the implementation of projects to strengthen the JH.

The inauguration of the final three JHs in Barrancas, Riohacha and Santander de Quilichao will take place at a future date, although the works are already completed.²⁴ The operation of these JHs has had a positive impact on the municipalities where they were established.

Main Result:

- The coverage of access to justice services was broadened by expansion of the NJHP in consolidation regions. Additionally, AJP helped the MJD to reach regions where a JH can clearly make a difference in the community. For example, the JH in San Onofre, which was the first to be placed in operation in the CSDI zone of Montes de Maria, helped promote a culture of lawfulness: a training program on domestic violence, human rights, and ADR was conducted for the staff of the JH; school mediators received training on mediation; and a diploma in mediation and legal culture was offered. These services were not previously available.

3.3 Conduct training and implement a grants program for the new Justice Houses

As a first step to supporting the startup of each new JH, the AJP conducted a study of the problems affecting the region, which included the perspective of the MJD and the municipal administrations. When AJP published requests for bids for the different projects, state entities and local NGOs presented their proposals and the program selected those that best responded to the needs of the region. Grants were then awarded to carry out these projects.

All the new JHs received support from the Program through grants, civil works projects, or institutional strengthening activities. The neighboring communities were given the opportunity to participate in projects to improve their environment and learn about their rights, and began to view the JH as a source for services that addressed their needs.

The AJP awarded grants to the following organizations to implement the projects that were developed on the basis of the diagnostic of each municipality:

Organization	Objective of Project	Result
<i>Corporación Internacional Derecho y Sociedad</i> - Villavicencio JH	Build the capacity of JH staff and the community to prevent, attend to, and monitor cases of domestic violence through a participatory and inter-institutional approach for attention to these cases.	Transformation of the cultural environment through enhanced knowledge about the illegality of this type of conduct in the community. Community participation, manifested in the promoters of peaceful coexistence who were trained and certified by the project. These women provide support and primary attention to cases of domestic violence in their communities. The network to promote peaceful

²⁴ Due to scheduling problems within the MJD, these inaugurations have been scheduled and then postponed several times – once in Barrancas, twice in Santander de Quilichao, and once in Riohacha.

Organization	Objective of Project	Result
		coexistence is linked to the JH and its work is tied to the <i>Comisaría de Familia</i> and public defender specialized in family issues. Currently the network carries out domestic violence prevention programs.
<i>Fundación Oleoductos de Colombia</i> – Bajo Cauca JH	Offer justice services to low-income families in Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, together with the training of government co-managers of the <i>Red Unidos</i> .	Qualified referral agents who are close to the communities and to the families registered in the <i>Red Unidos</i> . These families are the most marginalized and face greater barriers to access to justice. The participation of the <i>Red Unidos</i> co-managers has made it possible to cover more territory, a larger population, and address more basic needs ²⁵ . The co-managers educate the communities on their rights and how to protect and enforce these rights.
<i>Akuaipa Waimakat</i> – Uribia JH	Foster spaces for intercultural dialogue between formal and informal justice and the Wayuu indigenous justice system to adequately attend the cases that arise within the communities in the area of intervention of the Uribia JH, while respecting and protecting this ethnic group’s traditional justice system.	Greater knowledge about the justice systems that govern the members of the Wayuu indigenous group in Uribia. Assistance focuses on the services offered by multi-agency centers, such as the JH, which also provides spaces for the Putschipu.
<i>Proyecten S.A.S.</i> – Riosucio JH	Implementation of the MICE ²⁶ to offer the population an alternative conflict resolution mechanism.	Strengthened JH conciliation services in the municipality by providing an office space in the JH to attend users. The conciliators will be true referral agents and enable the continuous referral of cases.
<i>Fundación Ser Caucanos</i> – Santander de Quilichao JH	Contribute to reducing psychoactive substance abuse. Focused on prevention activities and attention to minors through the dissemination of information to prevent use. Provide training to officials of the Justice house on delivering care and treatment for problems associated with the consumption of psychoactive substances.	Comprehensive protection of the rights of young people in the municipality of Santander de Quilichao.

²⁵ http://www.mercadosinclusivos.pnudcolombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85&Itemid=108

²⁶ Framework for Implementing Equity Conciliation (*Marco para la Implementación de la Conciliación en Equidad en Colombia*). The MICE describes the rules and strategies proposed by MJD for the implementation of the Equity Conciliation in the national territory. This includes the participation of civil society organizations and community and public agencies at municipal, departmental and national levels.

Organization	Objective of Project	Result
<i>Corporación Internacional Derecho y Sociedad</i> – Turbo and Apartado JHs	Provided training to the JH staff and communities within the area of influence of Turbo and Apartado JH's on prevention and monitoring of domestic violence cases. Activities focused on the application of the protocol used and validated in Villavicencio. The protocol consists of a participatory and inter-institutional approach for attention to these cases.	Transformation of the cultural environment through enhanced knowledge about the illegality of this type of conduct in the community. The most important outcome will be the involvement of the community in seeking solutions to the problems affecting the municipality.
<i>Fundación Cerrejón para el Fortalecimiento Institucional de La Guajira</i> – Riohacha and Barrancas JHs.	Strengthen the JH institutions and promote intercultural dialogue between the Wayuu indigenous jurisdiction and the formal and non-formal justice systems provided under Colombian law.	Enhancement of the Wayuu justice system and the application of the relevant formal and informal justice mechanisms. By the end of this project the communities will have in-depth knowledge on the access to justice approaches for conflict resolution.
MSD Colombia through the School Mediators Training Project – San Onofre JH ²⁷	Provided tools for understanding the generation of conflict in order to contribute to a significant reduction in physical and verbal violence among students. Through application of ADR in School Mediation increased, in the short and medium terms, the levels of healthy coexistence in the educational community.	54 school mediators trained and ready to serve their communities. The towns of Libertad, Rincon del Mar and Berrugas now have a group of students, teachers and parents who provide assistance as first responders and work as referral agents by referring more complex cases to the JH.

3.4 Conduct training for Justice House personnel on the following topics: basic induction module; alternative dispute resolution module; engaging communities; human rights

The AJP provided training for the staff of each of the newly-established JHs. The training modules were prepared in coordination with the MJD based on the required competencies for all JH staff, and included the following subjects: 1) techniques for the peaceful resolution of conflict and the use of ADR; 2) attention to and prevention of domestic violence; 3) human rights; and 4) Introduction to the NJHP.

The newly established JH staff now has solid skills that are relevant to the context of the cases that most commonly affect the neighboring communities.

3.5 Strengthening the MJD Access to Justice Directorate

The AJP provided continuous support to the DMASC through a 14-month consultancy that gathered information from approximately 60 JHs. AJP carried out the following activities to strengthen the Directorate and the NJHP:

- Evaluated the services provided by institutions with a presence in the JHs and the conditions for provision of services.

²⁷ This is not a grant but rather an activity funded and carried out directly by the Program.

- Signed 49 “improvement agreements” between the MJD and mayor’s offices that sought to improve monitoring of the commitments made by the municipal administrations to maintain the JHs. This activity strengthened the inter-institutional relationship between the national and local levels.
- Developed a description of the different JHs and updated the NJHP brochure with this information. The NJHP brochure provides in-depth information for local authorities and community members on the objectives of the NJHP and the requirements for start-up of a new JH.
- Prepared and completed a process and procedures manual for MJD monitoring of JH operations, as well as a roadmap for the construction and start-up of new JHs.

3.6 Design and implement an information system for the monitoring and control of Justice Houses

The USAID Justice Reform and Modernization Program (2006-2010), predecessor of the AJP, provided support for the design, development and pilot implementation of an Information System for Justice Houses by the MJD. AJP evaluated the use, status, and results of that system, which had been installed in Barranquilla, Chia, Ibague, Soacha, and Tunja, as well as the information systems of an additional 50 JHs.

The resulting diagnostic report²⁸ provided important information to the MJD on the lack of Wi-Fi connectivity, obsolete IT equipment, inadequate data collection processes and need for more effective data collection, storage and analysis at the DMASC. In response, AJP provided technical assistance to identify and install servers, increase storage capacity for an on-line client server system, and acquire a license to optimize software for the transfer of information from the different JHs to the DMASC. Each of the ten newly-established JHs received equipment with pre-installed operating system Microsoft software.

3.7 Development of an alternative model for access to justice in CSDI zones

The AJP carried out a study that analyzes the operations of the Special and Itinerant Courts of Brazil and the implementation of Equity Conciliation in the municipality of Santa Fe de Antioquia, considered a successful program by the MJD.

The findings of the study highlight the importance of developing alternative justice models to bring access to justice services closer to the population. The study also shows that the permanent presence of justice operators is not necessarily a determinant for improving access to justice. To be effective, operators need to be trained in differentiated approaches, cultural mores of ethnic populations and causes of domestic violence.

The most visible activity of the JHs in the regions is the implementation of Mobile Justice House Campaigns. The AJP provided support for nine mobile campaigns in the municipalities of

²⁸ Wilson Puentes, *Diagnostic of the Justice Houses’ Information System*. MJD-DMASC.

Cáceres, Pasto, Tarazá, Tumaco, and Villavicencio. The JHs have also served as the site for activities under other AJP components, such as the grants awarded for Comprehensive Legal Services in the municipalities of Bajo Cauca under Component 1. These grants allowed students from the University of Medellín to work from the JH, providing periodic legal assistance to the communities.

AJP support for the Mobile Justice House Campaigns has made it possible to bring access to justice services to rural population that have limited access to transportation. Mobile access to justice services provide effective expansion beyond JH conflict resolution services. The mobile campaigns attended a total of 1,064 cases. To sustain mobile JH activities, the program worked with JH Coordinators and municipal authorities to include funding for mobile JH services in municipal development plans.

3.8 Work with Afro-Colombians, indigenous people, and other minority groups

The AJP carried out the following activities with the Afro-Colombian population:

- Conducted a specialized course (*diplomado*) on Mediation and Culture of Legality, consisting of 120 hours of training to build the capacity of 187 Afro-Colombian leaders from Montes de María, Bajo Cauca and Tumaco to resolve conflicts.
- With the participation of 60 JHs selected by the MJD, conducted two training sessions on theoretical and practical skills for the formulation of JH Action Plans. The design of these actions plans is based on affirmative actions that should be taken when attending cases that require a differentiated approach.
- Conducted three workshops on the use and promotion of ADR. The first workshop was attended by 30 people, including officials and Afro-Colombian leaders from the six municipalities of *Bajo Cauca Antioqueño*. At the second workshop, 30 people attended, primarily Afro-Colombian leaders from *Urabá Antioqueño*. A third workshop was held in the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, with the participation of Afro-Colombian and indigenous leaders from the Department of Cauca.

Lessons learned

- See recommendations and conclusions in the excerpt from the Assessment and Impact Evaluation of Colombia's Justice House Program (above).
- To establish the best means of intervention, it is necessary to obtain more in-depth contextual knowledge about the municipalities in which each of the JHs is located. For example, it is important to measure the capacity of officials to apply a differential focus in providing assistance. Usually, this information is not readily available; there is not a centralized database of studies which can describe the behavior or evolution of certain key variables that would allow the AJP a more in-depth knowledge about the local reality in a shorter period.

- Furniture, equipment and infrastructure for JHs are still important means of support from international donors. However, JH operations require efforts beyond the simple provision of these items. It became evident over the course of AJP that institutional support should be provided for the sustainability of the JH initiative. Sustainability involves ensuring that municipal- and regional-level development plans contain enough budgetary support for both current expenses and investments.
- Funding for the technical needs of the MJD should seek to optimize the resources for ensuring the appropriate monitoring of JHs. This is necessary both to evaluate the performance of each JH as well as to allow the MJD to propose projects to improve JH performance.
- Grants to private-sector foundations such as Fundacion Oleoductos and Fundacion Cerrejon for projects to improve JH performance have been very successful. USAID should continue to coordinate with this type of NGO for JH improvement projects such as training, outreach, and refurbishing.

Recommendations

- See recommendations and conclusions in the excerpt from the *Assessment and Impact Evaluation of Colombia's Justice House Program* (above).
- Continue to emphasize the inclusion of Mobile Justice House activities in JH Action Plans and subsequent inclusion in municipal Development and Annual Plans for funding. This initiative can be financed and implemented in conjunction with universities and other entities at the national level, such as the Ministry of the Information Technologies (virtual legal aid/counseling) and the Territorial Consolidation Unit.
- Encourage the MJD and local administrations to commit to ensuring the sustainability of each JH through inclusion of JH programs in local Development Plans. From this point of view, USAID should support a close coordination between the MJD, the Territorial Consolidation Unit (at the regional level), the Ministry of Information Technologies and the local administration entities. Ensuring the appropriate budget allocation and budget implementation is a key factor to guaranteeing the sustainability of the NJHP.
- USAID should continue to support development/improvement work for JHs through local CSOs, which contributes to resolving the problems within the communities and strengthening local public institutions. This support must be focused on training, research studies, and activities related to service delivery and user satisfaction improvement, instead of solely on infrastructure and equipment.²⁹
- Increased and improved investments are needed to ensure that the NJHP and its associated human capital provide differentiated attention tailored to the specific needs of population groups entitled to special constitutional protection. Justice services offered in the JH and by

²⁹ If there is any request of equipment, furniture and infrastructure, these must be related to a specific improvement Projects

the JH operators should be strengthened to expand coverage to places where these population groups live.

- The new structure of the MJD should consider the creation of a special unit in charge of the knowledge management activities (studies, assessments, evaluation, monitoring, etc.). USAID should support technical assistance aimed to implement the policy, strategies, objectives, procedures, organizational structure and training of a knowledge management unit.
- Implement new training processes for new staff assigned by local administrations and assign data collection tasks so that the MJD assumes responsibility for performing the annual census of the JHs.
- Implement the recommendations made in the ADR assessment to optimize equity conciliation.

Component 4: Alternative Dispute Resolution

4.1 Diagnostic of community-based ADR mechanisms in Colombia

The AJP produced a “Diagnostic Report on Community-Based ADR Mechanisms from the Perspective of the User” which was based on a comparative analysis of preexisting documents; consultations with experts, Equity Conciliators (EC) and Justices of the Peace (JP); and a survey of 1,200 users from 19 municipalities. This document contains the following products:

- The most current analysis of the state ADR services practiced by Volunteer ECs and JPs.
- An evaluation of the impact of ADR practices by Volunteer ECs and JPs in the targeted communities and of the contribution of these mechanisms to peaceful coexistence.
- Inputs for formulating a more cohesive public policy in equity conciliation in order to improve training programs and develop monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Recommendations for coordinating the work of public and private organizations (such as the Chambers of Commerce) to strengthen volunteer equity conciliation, which were accepted and are in the process of being implemented by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directorate of the Ministry of Justice and Law (Dirección de Mecanismos Alternativos de Solución de Conflictos) (DMASC).

4.2 ADR policy reform

AJP served as facilitator and coordinator for a National Roundtable for ADR Reform chaired by MJD. The roundtable, with the participation of 36 representatives of the most important ADR sectors, formulated guidelines on volunteer equity conciliation and Justice of the Peace policy reform. ADR programs such as Volunteer ECs and JPs have neither received resources nor been a priority of the MJD or the CSJ (CSJ is the oversight institution for Justices of the Peace). The Roundtable, if continued in a follow-on program, will provide valuable input in strengthening and coordinating both MJD programs. Other ADR policy reform outputs included:

- 14 regional maps of actors involved in ADR in Equity, prepared by the AJP regional offices as input for the work of the National Roundtable. (See Attachment 8).
- A series of recommendations based on the diagnosis of community-based ADR and of strategies to improve and ensure their sustainability.
- Development and approval (by the MJD) of the first action plan to promote Justice in Equity to implement the thematic areas of work defined by the National Roundtable. The MJD will begin implementation of this action plan during the second half of 2012.

4.3 Strengthening the MJD/ DMASC

The AJP strengthened the capacity of the DMASC to implement the ADR policy and related decision-making through the following activities:

- Conducted two training programs for DMASC staff on collaborative advocacy methodologies and the Appreciative Leadership approach.
- Formulated recommendations for the transition of the DMASC from the Ministry of Interior and Justice (Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia – MIJ)³⁰ to the new MJD and support for the organizational restructuring of the DMASC within the MJD.
- Updated the Equity Conciliators database and improved communications between ECs and the MJD through training and the provision of templates and tools to standardize field work, support to the Equity Conciliation Services Office (Punto de Atención de Conciliación en Equidad - PACE), and strengthening of the leadership role of the MJD in the National Roundtable for ADR Reform.
- Formulation of a battery of indicators for the MJD to use in monitoring ADR.

4.4 Effective networks of ADR providers

The AJP strengthened networks of volunteer equity conciliators by providing support to: i) the Regional Meeting of Volunteer Equity Conciliators in Antioquia, with the participation of regional operators and operators from the Montes de Maria region who had received training from the Program; and ii) the National Assembly of Volunteer Equity Conciliators, by assisting in the development of the agenda and the preparation of the assembly minutes. The Program enabled the networks of Equity Conciliators to exchange experiences and knowledge and discuss strategies for coordinating their equity conciliation work.

³⁰ The old MIJ (*Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia*) was divided into two ministries: Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice and Law.

4.5 Cadre of ADR operators in 20 CSDI municipalities

The AJP provided training and strengthened the capacities of Volunteer Equity Conciliators in 14 CSDI municipalities, developed accreditation procedures for the MJD to establish (in the long-term) ADR training centers, and improved citizen perception of equity conciliation in line with the Framework for Implementing Equity Conciliation (*Marco para la Implementación de la Conciliación en Equidad en Colombia - MICE*), with the following results:

- 207 new Volunteer ECs received training through six new MICE processes (four in the Montes de Maria region - Carmen de Bolivar, San Jacinto, San Onofre and Ovejas; and two in Meta - Villavicencio and San Juan de Arama). These ECs should hold an average of 80 conciliation³¹ hearings per month in each of the six municipalities, for a total of approximately 480 hearings per month.
- The MJD approved³² the curriculum prepared by the AJP for specialized training on volunteer equity conciliation, which was used to train 146 practicing Volunteer ECs in Cauca, Tarazá, Nechí, El Bagre, Zaragoza and Cáceres (Bajo Cauca Antioqueño) and San Juan de Pasto and San Andrés de Tumaco (Nariño).
- A 75.5% increase in the number of Volunteer ECs and JPs in the JH and Centers for Peaceful Coexistence (from 42 to 110) during the Program period.
- The MJD approved AJP's recommendations³³ to implement an accreditation model for training Volunteer ECs.
- The MJD adopted and is already implementing some of the recommendations made by the AJP for modification of the MICE.³⁴
- Citizen perception and level of acceptance of equity conciliation in the targeted CSDI zones is high, according to the results³⁵ of the survey applied in the 14 CSDI zones targeted by the Program.

4.6 Support for arbitration

The AJP contributed to strengthening arbitration in Colombia by assisting the DMASC in designing a training program for litigation lawyers on the use of arbitration as a conflict resolution mechanism, through the following actions: i) a comparative analysis of the existing arbitration training programs in Colombia and 11 other countries, which was used as input for developing the curriculum; ii) a list of the universities, training centers, conciliation and arbitration centers where this curriculum could be implemented; and iii) the development of a curriculum on arbitration training for litigation lawyers that, for the first time in Colombia,

³¹ Refers to conciliation meetings between the conciliator and the conciliation users

³² This is a written decision made by the MICE Committee.

³³ "*Reflexiones generales y recomendaciones sobre el proceso de acreditación en la implementación de la Conciliación en Equidad*".

³⁴ From the AJP's *Diagnostic on Community-based Alternative Dispute Resolution*, led by the subcontractor Partners for Democratic Change.

³⁵ "*Informe regional final*," produced for each zone where the AJP implemented ADR activities.

emphasizes arbitration procedures from the perspective of the parties involved, in particular the litigating lawyers, and not of the arbitrator.

The MJD decided that this curriculum would be implemented through a virtual training platform as a strategy to extend the scope of the training to a greater number of litigating lawyers.

Lessons learned

- Due to the lack of existing information (databases, baseline data), the diagnostic³⁶ required the collaboration of both Justice in Equity operators and the institutions that support them. For this reason, prior to beginning any similar investigation, USAID should meet with the entities and individuals that will be providing information and explain the objectives of the study.
- The implementation and strengthening of Equity Conciliation in consolidation zones have been well received by local institutions and the communities, as they represent the presence of the state and an access to justice strategy that empowers the communities. These initiatives should be maintained and strengthened in order to ensure their sustainability and to provide greater credibility to the processes.
- The technical and administrative challenges faced by the DMASC Directorate are great. DMASC does not have the capacity to meet its responsibilities. While its personnel are qualified, it has an inadequate number of professionals, standards and budget. MJD and CSJ do not coordinate sufficiently, resulting in duplication of efforts in such areas as training and roles.
- The MICE is a very well designed tool to implement equity conciliation. For example, it was implemented easily in the regions of Montes de Maria and Meta, with outstanding results. Implementation costs need to be reexamined.
- Community candidates selected for equity conciliation training need psychological testing. The OIG's Institute of Studies should continue to be responsible for the psychological testing of candidates before beginning the training process,³⁷ given its extensive experience in this area.
- USAID's role in funding the development of the Justice Houses has been essential and has received high marks. Funding transitioned from design and construction to remodeling and financing of social infrastructure projects.

³⁶ This refers to the study prepared by Germán Vallejo (Diagnostic of community-based alternative dispute resolution).

³⁷ The AJP funded a technical assistance to carry out the psychological test to the community candidates selected for equity conciliation training.

Recommendations

- It is necessary to maintain a close relationship with and provide constant support to DMASC to strengthen its institutional capacity.
- The MJD and CSJ need to work together to correct the duplication of effort that sometimes occurs between Justice of the Peace and the Volunteer Equity Conciliation programs.
- Promote the redesign and strengthening of the ADR Directorate to enable it to fulfill its role. These activities should include redefining its mission, functions, structure and staff profiles and providing effective work tools.
- Support the strengthening of the Alternate Dispute Resolution Information System, especially with respect to Equity Conciliation, given that there are no databases for studies and/or diagnoses. This information system could produce inputs for the formulation of public policies by the Ministry of Justice and Law.
- USAID should assist DMASC in a future program on a strategy to ensure the sustainability of the work of Equity Conciliators and Justices of the Peace at the local level through improved coordination and participation by both municipal governments and national institutions.
- The costs of implementing MICE need to be revised to make this process more effective and efficient.
- USAID should continue its support for the National Roundtable on ADR policy reform at two levels: 1) coordinating the implementation of ADR mechanisms; and 2) supporting the implementation of the Action Plan for policy guidelines on Justice in Equity, including the legal framework of the draft bill.
- Generate a strategy for supporting and training Justices of the Peace, given the large gaps and irregularities in their performance and the lack of understanding of the scope of their functions and authority.
- Provide funding to increase the number of DMASC staff supporting, tracking and monitoring the justice in equity operators in the field and for their periodic field visits to the municipalities that offer equity conciliation services. A DMASC Directorate “business plan” should be prepared to advocate for a budget that increases the number of DMASC staff.
- Support the implementation of the proposals made by the National Roundtable for ADR Reform to i) generate spaces for knowledge exchange and dialogue, and ii) identify best practices that may be replicated in future interventions, including the lessons learned about the differences in working in rural/urban contexts.
- Support the accreditation of Volunteer Equity Conciliation training in order to reach a consensus on curriculum, pedagogical guidelines, and methodologies. Support activities to raise awareness among public officials at JH and Peaceful Coexistence Centers about the work and legitimacy of Equity Conciliators and Justices of the Peace, and support the implementation by the MJD of a protocol to coordinate equity conciliation and JHs.

- Support the reformulation and implementation of MICE, ensuring that the following adjustments are made to the framework: i) inclusion of awareness-raising and coordination as crosscutting activities in the four MICE components; ii) inclusion of a gender focus and differentiated approach that reflects the multicultural nature of the country and ensures compliance with Constitutional precepts; and, iii) modification the profile of the EC candidates and active Equity Conciliators.
- Support the MJD in the formulation of draft bill that will simplify the arbitration process, reduce the number of procedures, and promote the participation of litigating lawyers.
- Reach agreements with the Ministry of Education to: i) expand training programs in universities, educational centers and arbitration centers that include materials to promote ADR mechanisms as a strategy to improve access to justice; and ii) promote an educational reform to incorporate continuing education arbitration and conciliation at the undergraduate level.
- Carry out activities within the communities, the productive sector, universities, and training centers to raise awareness about the advantages of arbitration as a conflict resolution tool and an option to increase access to justice.

Component 5: Public Defense

5.1 Expand and Strengthen the Public Defender's Office

AJP produced the report “Diagnostic of the Operation, Needs and Real Capacity of the Public Defender’s Office” covering 12 departments of Colombia, including the CSDI zones. This report was presented to and validated by the National Directorate of Public Defense (DNDP).

The diagnosis identified the requirements for providing adequate and efficient public defense services and the main obstacles that exist. The report covered topics such as coverage, operational capacity, human resources, technological resources, security problems, displacement problems, caseload, and training. Based on the findings of the study, AJP made recommendations to the National Ombudsman Office and provided technical and financial support to the entity for the implementation of these recommendations.

The main result of this project was the improvement, expansion, and strengthening of the public defense services to economically and socially disadvantaged people, through:

- An 11% increase in the number of public defenders assigned to CSDI zones (10 defenders hired).
- Adoption by the National Ombudsman’s Office of the 2011-2012 Plan to improve and steadily increase the number of public defenders in the country, reaching a total of 3,685, equivalent to an increase of 35%.
- Greater full-time presence of public defenders assigned to the JH (5 new defenders hired).

- An increase in the number of cooperation agreements between the DNDP and the university law faculties to implement legal clinics (18 new agreements).
- Inclusion in the National Training Plan of specialized training for public defenders working in the CSDI zones.
- Renewal of the hosting and domain contract to ensure the proper operation of the virtual campus of the “Roberto Camacho Weverberg” Training School.
- Inclusion of a significant portion of the Public Defender’s Office diagnosis in the yearly report presented by the National Ombudsman to the Colombian Congress.

5.2 Improve the quality of Public Defense services

The AJP also provided technical and financial assistance to the DNDP to guarantee the timeliness, continuity, and quality of public defense services. For this reason, the Program developed new levels of training³⁸ for public defenders, ensuring broad coverage of the CSDI zones, strengthened the comprehensive management and criminal justice assistance models, and created new decentralized regional training centers and training opportunities for public defenders.

AJP contributed to the continuous training and professionalization of the public defenders, which in turn improved the quality of public defense services offered to people who cannot afford private attorneys. The Program improved the quality of public defense services by improving the capacity of the Public Defense Special Support Offices (*Oficina Especial de Apoyo*)³⁹ (OEAs) to provide assistance on technical matters and jurisprudence so that lawyers may more efficiently represent users.

Results:

- Design, development, virtualization, and application of the blended learning methodology (virtual/in-person) of four modules of the Emphasis Level of the Training Plan on “Contributions of Forensic Psychology in Dealing with Sex Crimes,” “Negotiation Techniques in the Colombian Criminal Process,” and “Adolescent Criminal Responsibility.” A total of 480 National Public Defense System (*Sistema Nacional de Defensoría Pública*) (SNDP) operators received training, strengthened their competencies, and acquired the skills necessary to perform their judicial activities.
- Design, editing, publication, and distribution of 4,000 copies of each module of the Emphasis Level of the Training Plan for public defenders.
- Implementation of a training plan for law students, through an agreement with the National Ombudsman’s Office, on competencies for the design and development of effective defense

³⁸ The national training plan for public defenders establishes the following levels: Induction, Basic, Specialized and Emphasis. AJP supported the training of public defenders in CSDI zones, designing, developing and providing the level of emphasis through the following courses: “Contributions of Forensic Psychology in Dealing with Sex Crimes,” “Negotiation Techniques in the Colombian Criminal Process,” “Legal and Forensic Management of Evidence in Oral Trials and “Adolescent Criminal Responsibility”.

³⁹ AJP supported the OEA’s with equipment, infrastructure, training and diagnoses.

strategies and oral trial techniques (220 students trained, in support of the Public Defense School).

- Support to the Public Defense School for a seminar on “Controversial Procedural Judicial Institutes” in the context of the SPA, with the participation of 350 public defenders and SNDP operators.
- A diagnosis on the current performance and needs of the OEAs. This work enabled the DNDP to identify the main administrative and managerial problems that exist and evaluate the comprehensive model for legal assistance in criminal cases.
- Preparation of a procedures manual that efficiently organizes the services offered by the existing OEAs (regional academic meetings of public defenders, a network of Public Defense School instructors, legal representation in high impact criminal cases, guidance and technical assistance for public defenders, and support to promote and file criminal appeals before the Supreme Court of Justice).
- Creation of two new OEAs, assisted by two new Regional Training Centers for public defenders. One covers the Caribbean region and is located in Barranquilla, and the other covers eastern Colombia and is located in Bucaramanga. These offices and regional centers provide direct support to 1,100 SNDP operators, including public defenders, university students, experts, investigators and public defense staff.

5.3 Strengthening the technical capacities of public defenders, investigators, expert witnesses

AJP produced the report, “Evaluation of the Functioning, Results Obtained and Requirements of the Criminal Investigation Operational Unit (UOIC) and of Five Technical Evidence Laboratories for the Defense Assigned to the SNDP” and presented the report to the National Ombudsman’s Office. This diagnosis identifies the principal barriers to the adequate and efficient use of the existing laboratories. It includes a series of recommendations that focus primarily on the functioning and administrative structure of the UOIC, the needs of the investigative and forensic units of the UOIC, and the training needs of the UOIC operators. The recommendations were accepted by the National Ombudsman’s Office, in particular the suggestion to remodel and equip existing and new regional offices with equipment and inputs for forensic investigation for the defense, rather than create new forensic evidence centers.

The Program helped ensure that the public defense system has the necessary tools to investigate and refute, if needed, the factual, legal, and evidentiary bases of cases presented by the Colombian Attorney General’s Office (*Fiscalía General de la Nación*) (FGN), protecting the defendants’ right to due process and a fair trial.

The following are the main results of this intervention:

- The diagnosis of the UOIC and the adoption by the National Ombudsman’s Office and the UOIC of the recommendations made by AJP.
- Furnishing and equipment of 18 regional National Ombudsman Offices with the following equipment: video recorders, cameras, ballistics, specialized software, computers and

communication equipment required for expert services and field investigation performed by the public defense office.

- A technology transfer exchange fair for UOIC staff in charge of handling the equipment, which included training on use of the equipment.
- Remodeling of the main office of the UOIC, complying with national and international quality standards for the operation of forensic laboratories.
- Design of a training plan for experts, investigators and administrative staff of the UOIC.

5.4 Support public defense services for indigenous groups and populations entitled to special constitutional protection

AJP was aware of the importance of a differentiated approach in the work of justice operators, in order to guarantee that communities or populations entitled to special constitutional protection have adequate, efficient and timely access to justice, without “negative” discrimination. For this reason, the Program promoted and provided support to initiatives to improve the legal representation of indigenous people, members of the LGBTI community, and disabled people.

AJP carried out the following activities to enhance the assistance provided and facilitate the implementation of legal procedures:

- Support to the DNDP to design and implement an action plan and strategies to improve the quality and coverage of public defense services for indigenous peoples, in the framework of the project “Promotion of Rights, Legal Assistance, and Representation for Indigenous Communities and their Members.” This assistance enabled the DNDP to: determine the needs of defenders specializing in this topic; identify the regions in Colombia with the largest ethnic populations; design a training program with emphasis on indigenous jurisdiction; and identify the cases of indigenous people under arrest under the ordinary justice system.
- Fund the preparation and dissemination of a “Manual for the Legal Defense and Representation of Indigenous Communities and their Members,” to enable public defenders, Justice House staff, judges, prosecutors and others to adequately deal with cases that involve indigenous people.
- Fund the “National Meeting on Interculturalism and Legal Pluralism in the Context of Full Coordination and Cooperation between State Legal Systems.” During this meeting the participants learned more about the legal underpinnings of the coordination between legal systems and the National Judicial System. In addition, the progress that had been made by the Public Defense Program on indigenous affairs was disseminated.
- Support to the project to provide guidance, assistance and legal representation to “trans” women in the city of Cali. This project strengthened and publicized the legal program for members of the LGBTI and presented a proposal for an inter-sectoral agenda for public entities and social organizations to implement local and regional public policies that will guarantee the effective realization of the rights of the members of this community.

- Through the *Universidad de Los Andes*, implementation of a project to strengthen the state's response to cases of sexual violence against disabled people. A diagnostic report was prepared, including recommendations for recording and systematizing cases of sexual violence against disabled people, in order to improve the existing institutional design and enable a more efficient and timely response to the complaints of sexual abuse made to public institutions. This study also contains the national and international normative framework, different models for state response, routes for receiving attention and support from the public entities in cases of sexual abuse, and a communications strategy.

These inputs will undoubtedly help to improve the way that justice operators deal with this type of cases, thus ensuring that disabled victims of sex crimes receive adequate support.

5.5 Improvement of infrastructure and technological capacity of the National Public Defense System

AJP provided support to the National Ombudsman's Office for improving the infrastructure and modernizing the Public Defense offices. The Program provided the SNDP operators with the proper equipment and high technology necessary to ensure effective and continuous connectivity with the central offices, ongoing communication with the virtual campus of the Public Defense School, access to blended learning processes throughout the country, academic meetings of public defenders via video conference, online consultations of databases containing high court jurisprudence, and case consultations.

The main results were:

- Civil works, structured cabling and equipping of two regional public defense offices and two Regional Training centers (Departments of Atlantico and Santander).
- Equipping and training of officials in eight public defense offices (Arauca, Barrancabermeja, Guainía, Guaviare, Sucre, Valledupar, Vaupés, and Vichada)
- Equipping of the main facilities of the "Roberto Camacho Weverberg" Public Defense Training School.
- Refurbishing and equipping of the six public defense offices in Bogota where the Immediate Reaction Units are operating.

5.6 Adequate regulation of the new Public Defense services.

AJP provided technical support to the DNDP to guarantee that no conflict of interest exists between the provision of judicial representation to alleged perpetrators and to victims. This was necessary since under the provisions of the Victims' Law, the SNDP must provide legal assistance to victims. The regulation of this new legal representation service will ensure that the representatives of victims are differentiated from those who represent perpetrators and thus avoid ethical or even legal considerations.

The main results achieved through this activity were:

- The issuance of a National Ombudsman resolution creating the National Operating Unit to provide legal representation to victims.
- Designation of the coordinator of the Victims' Unit.
- Initiate the hiring of 350 public defenders for the new Victims' Unit.
- Holding of a seminar with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to discuss topics related to the legal representation of victims.

5.7 Public Defender Performance Evaluation System.

In conjunction with the DNDP and its SNDP Performance Control Operating Unit, AJP worked to develop a system to evaluate not only the formal fulfillment of the contract that is signed by public defenders but also the performance and the impact of their work on the quality of the technical service that is provided to the users.

The evaluation system will contribute to improving the quality of public defense services because it will qualitatively and quantitatively measure the performance of public defenders and make necessary changes to their training plans. The results of this initiative are particularly significant because the General Comptroller's Office has consistently recommended the implementation of a performance evaluation system for public defenders in Colombia.

The main results of AJP efforts in this area are:

- The identification of the current performance control "model" and documenting of experiences and performance control models in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador.
- Design of a system to evaluate the performance of public defenders and the corresponding battery of indicators.
- Workshops to validate the system and the indicators.
- Training of operators of the proposed evaluation system during the National Meeting of Administrative Professionals.

Lessons learned

- The SNDP staff at the central level should stay informed of the difficulties and barriers that are faced by public defenders in the CSDI zones.
- The regional approach of justice developed by the AJP enabled the DNDP not only to learn, but also to understand and accept, that there is another reality in CSDI zones, and that they require support to overcome problems related to security, distance and communications that significantly limit the provision of defense services. Agencies and institutions outside the DNDP should be engaged in this effort, such as the Directorate of Protection of the Ministry of Justice, professional risk insurers, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, and the National Police, among others.

- Technology plays a transcendent role, not only for institutional modernization, but also for the different public defense processes and services. However, a culture committed to the use of technology still does not exist, and this has a negative impact on the development of activities that involve the continuous improvement of the public defense service.
- In order to guarantee the implementation of the performance evaluation system, it is necessary to involve all the components of the system, including the public defenders, from the very beginning and even during the design stage, so as to overcome their resistance to oversight and evaluation.
- The blended learning method used by the Program is the only viable training method for public defenders, not only for budgetary reasons but also in terms of coverage.
- The OEAs are a successful public defense comprehensive performance model. There is no need to create other models. However, support is still needed for the implementation of the procedures manual and to provide professional training to its members.
- The SNDP has not addressed appropriately the differential approach of public defense service. There are some important efforts in incorporating this matter, but this has not been enough.

Recommendations

- The DNDP should coordinate with the Territorial Consolidation Unit to support the efforts developed in the regions to improve access to justice. The DNDP should adapt public defense services to Territorial Consolidation Unit requirements.
- The highest levels of DNDP should be provided with the technology needed to improve the quality of public defense services and internal processes. The DNDP could model its approach on the CSJ's efforts to prepare the strategic technological plan.
- USAID should continue to support the SNDP to guarantee the provision of quality services, given the new responsibilities and functions it has been assigned under the new laws, especially with regard to the legal representation of victims. USAID should support the replication of successful performance models of the criminal accusatory system.
- The SNDP needs additional support to regulate and implement public defense services with a differentiated focus that benefits the populations entitled to special constitutional protection.
- USAID should continue to support the performance evaluation system that was designed, validated, and delivered by AJP.
- USAID should provide technical and financial assistance to the Public Defense School to develop the specialization level of the training plan.
- USAID should support implementation of the procedures manual and professional training of OEA staff.

4. Communication Strategies

To achieve effective communication with and information dissemination among AJP's multiple audiences and beneficiaries, and to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of USAID's contribution to the implementation of the Program and its objectives, multiple communication activities were implemented during the past two years.

Main communication activities and achievements

Internal communications

AJP revised and redesigned internal communication instruments jointly with Monitoring and Evaluation Officials. Formats and agendas included spaces for information that related specifically to communication outputs.

Each AJP coordinator received an "Image use authorization" form as well as basic guidelines for photographs in CSDI zones and events where the communication official was not present to guarantee adequate USAID graphic standards in AJP outputs.

Additionally, as part of the efforts to provide the AJP team with constant and up-to-date information on the Colombian justice sector, AJP staff distributed a daily review of the leading newspapers in the country and occasional input from local media from CSDI zones. Newspaper articles were compiled and distributed via email to USAID and AJP team members and program subcontractors.

Public information communication and counterpart outreach

The public information communication strategy focused on achieving adequate visibility by adopting an appropriate visual identity with special emphasis on the diverse needs of the target audiences.

AJP identified two main target audiences:

- JH beneficiaries and civil society in CSDI zones: Colombians with limited schooling and/or access to new technologies. Includes more specific audiences, marginalized and vulnerable populations, women, youth, disabled people, LGBTI groups and ethnic minorities.
- Judicial employees and law students: Government employees, students and professionals with extensive knowledge of the judicial system and access to new technologies.

Graphic identity actions

AJP defined a graphic identity concept based on the CSDI regional focus in consultation with USAID's Information and Communications Office. Although section J.2 Attachment B of the USAID contract specified the development of a sub-brand under the USAID identity, USAID's Information and Communications Office agreed that the USAID Colombia logo would be used separately from the AJP title. AJ used the identity on distribution materials, including document templates, informative brochures, folders and banners incorporating imagery that alluded to regional projects and work with vulnerable groups.

“Justicia al Día” Newsletter

AJP published ten editions of the bimonthly newsletter entitled “*Justicia al Día*” to disseminate information on Program activities and results. A specific regional section was incorporated into the newsletter to highlight CSDI zone activities implemented by the AJP.

Press relations and promotional activities

At the start of AJP, the Program organized an informative breakfast for journalists with Ken Yamashita, then-USAID Colombia Mission Director, and several Colombian government representatives to give an institutional perspective to the joint work of the AJP and the Colombian government. This encounter began AJP press relations.

As part of the Component 1 (Justice Reform) activities, training workshops for journalists were carried in several cities out in collaboration with the DOJ and the Embassy’s Public Affairs Section. Not only did journalists receive training on oral accusatory system procedures, but they also became acquainted with AJP activities. This helped build relationships with journalists and led to the positive reception of AJP press releases and activity launches.

Support of program actions

Grant activities and component activities received communications support that included, among others:

- Revision of deliverables for inclusion of USAID graphic standards in texts and audiovisual products.
- Events and event logistics preparation: design of products and materials, invitations, editing of letters, participant confirmations, and press coverage.
- Publications: studies, reports and assessments, terms of reference, graphic design coordination, text editing, and distribution.
- Audiovisual materials and new media: Several materials, including a blog and several video clips, were created to promote component activities, such as the blog for the virtual training course “Differential treatment to enhance access to justice.” The blog distributed session material and encouraged additional participation. In addition, several regional events used a free access live streaming format (USTREAM) to reach interested audiences that could not travel to attend the activities.⁴⁰

AJP Website

To reach out to the general public, AJP launched a website in April 2011. As part of the site’s design process, USAID’s Branding and Marking Manual and XWeb Manual were studied and applied to the webpage mockups. The site published program information, including extracts from grant activities, such as audio clips, activity updates, publications, announcements, terms of reference and success stories, to reach interested audiences. AJP’s Communications Officer

⁴⁰ <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/accesoaljusticia>

administered the website. The website included a web metrics system to determine the number and frequency of website visitors. These metrics were used as input for website modifications.

USAID communication activities

The AJP Communications Officer participated in bimonthly meetings with USAID Program Communications Officers to establish best practices and draft joint and individual social media plans. During one of the meetings, Barbara Feinstein, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), reviewed the key conditions that need to be met by Washington communications. AJP applied these conditions subsequently to Program communication outputs.

To promote the public affairs efforts of USAID programs in Colombia and raise public awareness, AJP provided quarterly success stories. Additionally, AJP communication activities provided USAID's Communications Office with input for the radio campaign "*Esta es mi Colombia*," a joint activity between USAID, *Caracol S.A.* and *Acción Social* to promote and demonstrate processes of development and change in CSDI zones. The chronicles for the "*Esta es mi Colombia*" campaign are aired in over 13 departments and 22 municipalities nationwide through Caracol radio stations.

Justice Education Network

AJP supported justice education activities to build an inter-institutional network of possible allies to work on legal education projects, with a strong emphasis on artistic and cultural teaching methods. As a result of the event "*¡Todos por la Justicia! Educación para la Paz a través del Arte!*," AJP created a network of interested parties and discussed possible AJP education projects.

Specific activities for civil society outreach in CSDI zones

One of the objectives of AJP's communications strategy was to showcase CSOs' grant-funded activities in CSDI zones. Communications support for these activities included event planning, content editing, branding of grant publications, and the use of new media formats.

Each AJP regional office designed and implemented its own communication strategy in coordination with regional institutions and organizations, with supervision from the Bogota office communications team. Due to the dynamics of the regional offices, Bogotá initiatives were often not carried out.

Lessons learned

- Under AJP, which focused on increasing the level of access to justice of vulnerable groups, USAID's Communication and Information Office requested a change of strategy to communicate the agency's accomplishments. Under this strategy, success stories emphasized civil society beneficiaries and focused on direct beneficiaries rather than on institutions. From this, we learned that that the Branding and Marking Plan must be more flexible and that working in CSDI zones requires a more permanent communication with the USAID's Communication and Information Office.

- Due to the dynamics of the regional offices, there was an important difference between regional communication initiatives and national-level communication activities: the regional level usually provided information on activities and results on a weekly basis, whereas the national level provided information on a monthly or bimonthly basis.
- AJP integrated into the newsletter and website special sections on regional activities. These updated AJP outputs replaced the information sheets for GOC counterparts that had been published sporadically by the regional coordinator, since using two publications on the same topics to reach different audience was deemed counterproductive.
- To facilitate communications between and among AJP's central and regional offices, the Program acquired virtual communications hardware and software that allowed direct communication with all regional staff. The frequent lack of Internet access was, however, problematic. The use of new media formats like live-streaming is valuable at national events. However, it is not as useful for showcasing regional events in municipalities where Internet access is limited.

Recommendations

- The Program budget for a follow-up program should include resources for a regional communication strategy aimed at beneficiary communities (including alternative communication mechanisms). Additionally, as part of regional justice service baseline assessments, community-specific information on the most effective media should be collected. These steps will facilitate the design of local strategies that respond to the Program's dissemination, promotion and mobilization objectives. The USAID Communication Office and the Embassy's Public Affairs Section should provide strong support with regional communication activities.
- Communications with regional offices must have a backup mechanism other than the Internet.
- Given AJP's experience with the website design process, it is better to design a new website for access to justice than to modify the existing site.
- Security is a key issue in CSDI zones because of the presence of armed groups. Branding and marking rules for security reports issued by regional offices should take into account the changing security situation in CSDI zones.