

# **Protecting Women's Legal Rights in Mexico, Colombia and the Dominican Republic**

## **Final Report**

**Women and Families Program  
Programa de la Mujer y la Familia  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Section 1:

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Program Accomplishments toward Goals and Objectives.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Overall Accomplishments by Component .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Workshops .....	4
Small Grants.....	10
Technical Assistance.....	26
<b>Evaluation of Achievement .....</b>	<b>35</b>
IR3.1 –Support improved legislation that protects women’s legal rights.....	35
IR3.2 – Enhanced justice sector capacity to interpret and enforce legislation in a gender equitable manner.....	36
IR3.3- Strengthened civil society organizations to advocate for women’s legal rights	37
IR3.4- Increased knowledge of and receptivity to women’s legal rights .....	38
<b>Other Findings and Lessons Learned.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>40</b>

## Section 2:

### Financial Report

## Section 3:

### Baseline Study

### RFP For Small Grants

### Police Training Manual: Group GAP

### Policy Proposal: CAMT

### Press Coverage: Budget Oversight Project

### Technical Assistance Coverage: Colombia-Mexico

### CIMAC Articles and Press Releases

## **Executive Summary**

In September 2001, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Women in Development awarded Partners of the Americas a grant of \$602,765 over two years to enhance its community-based efforts to protect women's legal rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. Project activities targeted Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

The project provided workshops, seed grants, and technical assistance, offering non-governmental organization (NGO) recipients the opportunity to develop institutional capability in topics that they identify as priority areas, as well as use grants to put new learning into practice by developing and implementing community-based activities in support of women's legal rights. The project emphasized sharing of best practices and dissemination of results through Partners extensive regional network in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean.

Through eighteen sub-grants, sixteen technical assistance visits and four workshops, Partners generated 1800 hours of training on women's legal rights and skill areas, with the participation of 4,495 people. Over 300 NGOs received training and participated actively in grants or sub-grants. Sixty-eight new collaborations were created as a result of project activities. Women's legal rights messages reached over 440,000 people through 372 targeted and mass communication efforts.

Project participants effectively engaged local and national decision makers through their activities, achieving attitudinal and institutional change. While grantees had only a year to implement their activities, they succeeded in altering or creating nine laws or policies, resulting in long-lasting improvements in access to justice for women. No longer complete outsiders to government institutions, participating NGOs provided 74 consultations to policy makers, and engaged 756 judicial sector representatives in training.

Project results have been disseminated to participating NGOs, collaborating organizations and the general public through the project website ([wlr.partners.net](http://wlr.partners.net)) and to Partners' networks through displays and presentations at the international conventions in Quito, Ecuador (2002) and Lexington, Kentucky (2003).

## **Program Accomplishments toward Goals and Objectives**

The project goal was to enhance community-based efforts to protect women's legal rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, specifically in Colombia, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The objectives and notable accomplishments are:

1. Increase the capacity of women to understand and defend their legal rights
  - The project **trained 4,495 people** in the three target countries, providing over **1800 hours of training** in skills (advocacy, coalition building, media outreach, legal defense techniques), concepts (gender relations, self esteem, forms of gender violence), and tools (laws and treaties, international courts, local justice institutions). Each person included here received training of over 5 hours; the average training session was 12 hours. At least **968 of those trained** are currently training others.
  - The project generated **87 new channels** for informing women about their rights, including grassroots legal education programs, seminars, curricula, and web sites.
  - The project has created significant changes in attitudes toward gender violence, especially among women themselves, but also among police, judges, prosecutors and social service providers.
  - Today, **787 legal rights promoters** are guiding women through legal processes in communities throughout the target countries thanks to seven new or expanded legal education and defense programs.
  - Grant recipients provided **legal counseling to 2,301 women** in less than one year.
  
2. Support innovative programs that increase awareness of and protect women from rights violations in gender violence, with secondary emphasis on trafficking in women and sex tourism;
  - **Eighteen grants** were awarded to civil society organizations whose proposals demonstrated need, probable impact, collaboration and innovation.
  - There were **372 outreach activities** reaching at least **442,533 people** in the three countries, educating the general public, service providers, judicial authorities and the media about women's legal rights.
  - Grantees have produced **300 new publications** on women's legal rights, distributed to **68,922 people and institutions**.
  - Grantees trained **206 social service providers**, including social workers and medical staff, in ways to serve victims of gender violence more effectively.
  - Grantees also provided training about gender violence and trafficking to **756** representatives of each country's **judicial sector**, including judges, prosecutors, court officials, and police.
  - Additional ongoing training has been requested by, and subgrantees will provide or are providing training to, two police departments, one police academy, a

- university law program, a state human rights office, and a United Nations institute.
3. Generate constructive community responses to violations of women's legal rights;
    - The project generated **74 consultations** between participating NGOs and policy makers on behalf of improved policies and laws to protect women's legal rights.
    - As a result of these consultations and other efforts by grantees, **nine new policies or laws** were implemented to improve women's access to legal services or punish offenders.
    - A variety of grassroots community organizations and NGOs participated actively in the project; **323 organizations** were represented in training sessions.
  4. Connect organizations working on behalf of women's legal rights and promote sharing of best practices.
    - This project generated three national workshops led by Partners that brought together **55 organizations**. Grantees held an additional 5 sessions to share best practices within their countries.
    - Partners' online Virtual Conference continues to connect organizations and facilitate best practice sharing. The site shares case studies from 16 projects and summaries of all technical assistance provided. Visitors to the site can also access training materials, curricula, and workshop outlines.
    - Partners' training and grant requirements emphasized the importance of effective work in coalition. All grantees worked in collaboration with governmental or nongovernmental entities. They initiated a total of **68 new collaborative relationships** through their work. These collaborations promise to generate the most lasting impact of the project.
    - Partners supported **16 technical assistance visits** benefiting **20 organizations**. Visits were North-South, South-North and South-South and in all but a few cases connected organizations that had previously no knowledge of each other.
    - Many of the technical assistance visits centered on establishment and management of domestic violence shelters. The six recipient organizations are taking initial steps to start shelters in their own communities.

## **Overall Accomplishments by Component**

To achieve the above objectives, Partners implemented workshops, grants and technical assistance. The content of each component was shaped by consultations with local NGOs, consultations with USAID missions, and a baseline study (see annexes) assessing specific needs in each country. For each component, Partners used transparent selection processes and participatory methodologies. Processes and content emphasized capacity development of local NGOs; for example, staff assisted grantees in delineating results that flow logically from objectives and provided information on effective monitoring and evaluation.

## ***Workshops***

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Partners of the Americas planned and implemented interactive workshops in each of the three target countries. The objectives of the workshops in each country were to:

1. Introduce and/or strengthen applicable advocacy theories and skills on behalf of women's legal rights
2. Promote an exchange of best practices within women's rights advocacy to facilitate action plans to strengthen participants' advocacy strategies
3. Facilitate the establishment of inter-sectoral alliances for the defense of women's rights related to gender violence, trafficking in women and sex tourism

Workshop participants were recruited from among civil society organizations contacted through Partners chapters, the USAID missions, and other NGOs. Staff selected participants with a range of skills, political perspectives and backgrounds. All participants, however, had experience working on women's legal rights issues.

The workshops were divided into three modules focused on three skills: Advocacy, Coalition Building and Management, and Lobbying. In each module, participants had the opportunity to discuss the topic, to practice new techniques, and to hear a case study involving women's legal rights and the target skill. While the methodology of the three workshops was quite similar, content varied depending on the country's specific situation and needs.

Partners had also originally planned a three-country workshop to close the project. However, expenditures in the first three workshops exceeded expectations, mainly due to higher air fares following September 11, 2001. Project staff formulated a new strategy to achieve the same results as a face-to-face workshop, but with lower costs and greater accessibility for the general public. The Virtual Conference, launched in September 2003, resulted from this new plan.

The following are detailed results of each workshop:

### **Monterrey, Mexico April 17-19, 2002**

The capacity-building workshop, "Protecting Women's Legal Rights in Mexico," took place in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon in northern Mexico from April 17-19, 2002. A total of 39 women from 9 Mexican states and Texas participated in the workshop, which concentrated on three primary modules: Advocacy, Coalition Building and Management, and Lobbying/Media Communications. The participants formed a very diverse group, representing a wide span of the political spectrum, and came from both civil society and government institutions. All had experience defending women's rights through their

professional backgrounds based in law, social work, communications, health, education and politics.

Partners' network added richness to the workshop through the participation of Angela Mendoza-Waterhouse, a Mexican-American district judge from Texas. In addition to providing a different legal perspective, Judge Waterhouse illustrated how collaboration between the legal community and NGOs resulted in stronger laws to protect women and children after 30 years of perseverance. This collaboration produced further services such as conflict mediation instruction to students and the public, 24-hour hotlines and transportation for victims to shelters. Judge Mendoza-Waterhouse also described how a demonstration by domestic violence survivors in Austin, Texas, helped to sensitize and build awareness in the community about the realities of domestic violence in the state.

The workshop was covered in two articles in the most widely read city newspaper, *El Norte*.

The Mexico workshop centered on an intensive exploration of advocacy and public education skills, developed through facilitated discussions, hands-on practice, and exemplary case studies that showed how women's legal rights are promoted through use of these skills. The three skill sets identified through pre-workshop participant questionnaires were advocacy, coalition building and media-based lobbying.

Local talent was on center stage during this workshop. Graciela Ramos de Quintana, a seasoned advocacy expert with practical and theoretical background, facilitated the advocacy module. Sara Lovera, an accomplished journalist and activist with CIMAC (Comunicacion e Informacion de la Mujer, A.C.) facilitated the module on media, communications and lobbying. Only the coalition-building module was presented by a Northern representative, Mary Beth Hastings of Partners' Women and Families Program.

The case studies presented by selected participants offered excellent examples of how to apply key skills to everyday initiatives. In the coalition building module, Alicia Leal of Alternativas Pacificas, explained the work of her organization and the effort that has gone into creating not only one very successful women's shelter, but a growing network of shelters across the nation. The advocacy case study presented by Carmelita Amezcua from Mujeres por Mexico en Chihuahua generated high interest because Mujeres por Mexico en Chihuahua was instrumental in the successful fight to change a state law that had allowed rapists to go free with little to no legal punishment for their crimes. Julia Perez of Vereda/Themis presented their experience developing an innovative media campaign launched last year to build awareness about and prevent domestic violence through advertisements on TV, radio, billboards and posters.

On the second day of the workshop, participants divided into four groups for roundtable discussions about various issues, such as how to utilize the media and lobbying techniques, the establishment of women's shelters in Mexico, effective fundraising techniques, and awareness-building for authorities (police, judges, prosecutors) about women's legal rights. Because there were several different groups, the roundtables

provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue and exchange within the small groups. The more experienced participants took on a leadership role in order to guide each discussion, encouraging the sharing of experiences and facilitating brainstorming.

The diversity in the participant group was tremendous, ranging from legal scholars from Mexico City to grassroots activists from Chiapas. The variety of perspectives brought a great richness, but also some pre-workshop concern about the ability of participants to look beyond traditional political divisions to see the common goal. Workshop organizers were careful to establish ground rules about mutual respect at the outset. However, the participants went far beyond treating one another civilly; they together generated ideas and initiatives that crossed political barriers.

In evaluation surveys, participants reported that they learned a great deal about coalition building and the work of other institutions (rating the amount learned 4.1 and 4.5 out of 5, respectively) as well as advocacy and lobbying (3.8 and 3.5 out of 5, respectively.)

Specific comments include:

*"The exchange of experiences was excellent. I learned so much about the work of other Mexican organizations through the case studies."*

*"The idea to have participation from diverse organizations that can coexist in freedom and tolerance was excellent. Bravo for that!"*

*"It revived my personal obligation to myself as a woman, to work in solidarity with other women who do not know their rights."*

*"The diversity of the groups was great. At last we could work together with tolerance."*

*"I learned that you can achieve many important things if you are united and work together."*

*"This was excellent. The workshop covered the most important aspects for the growth of organizational staff."*

*"Congratulations! It was very useful to meet with such knowledgeable people who have so much experience. You should propose having more meetings such as these!"*

**Cali, Colombia  
March 13-15, 2002**

The capacity-building workshop "Protecting Women's Legal Rights in Colombia," took place in Cali, Colombia from March 13-15, 2002. The enthusiastic group of thirty-two participants came from seven Colombian cities and towns and two U.S. states partnered with Colombia. The participants represented civil society and governmental institutions

from legal, social services, human rights, and civic participation backgrounds. All had experience in direct work to protect and defend women's legal rights.

The workshop opened with a panel discussion, organized and moderated by the Cali Partners chapter. The panelists discussed women's reproductive rights, political rights, human rights and social services. Many distinguished Cali-based activists and professionals attended the panel. The participants also heard from Ana Isabel Arenas, advisor to former President Pastrana, about social politics for women and the need for a greater government role in promoting women's rights.

The capacity-building section of the workshop focused on skills development in advocacy, lobbying, and coalition building. Throughout the workshop, participants explored and discussed themes of gender violence, trafficking in women, and sex tourism. For these Colombian activists and professionals, the issue of violence against women as a result of the war was extremely important. Participants also discussed the use of Colombia's Casas de Justicia as a means for domestic violence and rape victims to press for justice. One of the participants had trained several women as "justices of the peace," and they found that rape reports went up dramatically – not because rape increased, but because victims had women available to guide them through the process.

The case studies presented by selected participants offered excellent examples of how to apply key skills to everyday initiatives. In the coalition building module, representatives of Fundación Esperanza, an organization that focuses on trafficking, discussed their work and how coalitions have allowed them to link trafficking victims with a variety of services, and to raise the issue with the government. The advocacy module included a presentation by Profamilia's representative Marcela Sanchez about their advocacy on behalf of the right to emergency contraception. There was extensive interest in the presentation of Sue Mahan, a Partners member and academic who works on domestic violence issues in Daytona Beach, Florida. Sue discussed the domestic violence legislation passed in 1993, and their successful efforts to bring together prosecutors, defense attorneys and NGOs to create standards for dealing with domestic violence. These efforts have led to anger management programs for offenders and protection initiatives for victims.

Participants also looked at how to present effective proposals and how to conduct project evaluations to assess impact. In addition to Mary Beth Hastings, trainers included two local experts selected by the Cali Partners chapter to facilitate the sections on advocacy and lobbying.

Participants reported that they had learned a great deal about coalition building and lobbying (4.1 and 4.5 out of 5, respectively) and a very good amount about advocacy and the work of other institutions (3.8 and 3.9 respectively). They had very positive comments overall about the workshop and the majority expressed interest in presenting projects for the grants competition in the next phase.

Specific comments include:

*"The group of participants was really well selected, with a very interesting equilibrium of professions and objectives of each organization. Thank you very much for this valuable opportunity."*

*"The workshop has filled all expectations because it has given me many tools that will be useful to me as a trainer and activist in the thematic content through the experiences of the well selected group."*

*"Through our interdisciplinary team, all of the tools acquired will be integrated to strengthen all the programs that exist and our future projects will cover all that was mentioned to generate optimum results for our community."*

Media outreach included a radio interview with Partners staff on the Javeriana University's radio station, with a large professional audience in Cali. Also, a television report and interview was broadcast by Telepacífico, one of Cali's main networks, on their program "The Day's Mirror."

### **Dominican Republic February 7-9, 2002**

The training workshop "Protecting Women's Legal Rights in the Dominican Republic," held in Santo Domingo from February 7-9, 2002, brought together 26 Dominican professionals and activists from women's organizations and government institutions all over the country.

The workshop began with a reception featuring a number of speakers on the advances and challenges in Dominican women's legal rights. USAID- Santo Domingo officer Lisette Dumit opened with a brief welcome, followed by a panel presentation by expert analysts on women's rights from various sectors. The panelists spoke on topics such as the design, advocacy, and implementation of the law granting Dominican women equal rights (law 24-97); the role of healthcare providers in domestic violence cases; and the growing problem of sex trafficking and sex tourism in the country. Their presentations drew upon their government, health, lobbying and education backgrounds. The Secretary of Women's Affairs, Yolanda Enriquez, attended the reception and panel along with workshop participants, local NGO leaders, and Partners members.

The three modules were facilitated by local facilitator Raynelda Rodriguez and program director Mary Beth Hastings, and the case studies were selected from among the participants themselves. To give examples of a best practice in coalition building, Lisselot Batista of the hospital Alcarrazos II and community educator Consuelo Guzmán, discussed how they gained the support of different sectors within the hospital for innovative domestic violence response programs. The lobbying case study featured Francisca Ferreira of the Center for Integral Study and Orientation (COIN), an

organization that works to prevent trafficking in women, presenting their success in lobbying the government to create CIPROM, an interagency task force that addresses trafficking.

Discussion groups each highlighted a different aspect of women's legal rights: domestic violence, rape, sex tourism and trafficking. The workshop concluded with presentations by each group on their proposed follow-up actions, including supporting the National Plan for Gender Equity, promoting standardized norms for the treatment of victims of violence, and advocating for national monitoring of sex tourism agreements.

The workshop received very positive evaluations from the participants. Asked to rate on a scale of one to five how much they'd learned about the highlighted skills, the average response was four on coalition building and 4.1 on lobbying (five being highest). Participants indicated that they'd also learned a fair amount about the work of other institutions in the women's legal rights area, and about the legal protections available to women in the Dominican Republic. Most participants had little to no awareness of the extent of sex tourism and trafficking in their country before the workshop, and praised the event for raising the issue.

Specific comments from the participants included:

*"I loved the work dynamic, it was very interactive and participatory. There was a lot of sincerity among the participants."*

*"You really maximized the time available, and the panelists were very clear in the themes explored."*

*"We shared work experiences with a methodology that facilitated comprehension of the topic."*

*"It was very animated, consensus-oriented, a lot of fellowship and sharing of knowledge among the participants."*

In conjunction with the workshop, Partners staff was interviewed on a morning radio program in Santo Domingo, and an article was placed in the national newspaper El Listin Diario.

### **Workshop Follow –Up**

To continue communication among the workshops' participants and encourage widespread use of the techniques and tools generated by the workshops, Partners staff compiled and distributed a CD-ROM with full notes and an updated contact list to each participant following the workshop.

### **Online Workshop and Dissemination**

To ensure widespread dissemination of project results, Partners developed and launched a virtual conference in September 2003. This website, allowing varied access to resources based on user permissions, facilitated dialogue among project participants about key project themes while at the same time giving the public access to findings and innovative project models.

The main content of project results is divided into four themes: Public Education, Ensuring Enforcement, Legal Reform, and Legal Rights Services. Within each section, subgrantees have posted their relevant case studies resulting from their projects and can engage in dialogue about comparative results and methods. In addition, they can read about technical assistance travel covered by the grant, and get in touch with participants. The site also offers a space for action planning divided by country, so that project participants from each can post and reply to postings about suggested next steps for the women's legal rights movement. Each participant can view organizational profiles of other participants and post information about relevant events in their countries. The site also offers links to other legal rights sites to provide more information and context for the work they are doing.

The site substantially extends the impact of the project, both in terms of space and time. Because activists from all over the world can see the work done in Latin America, participants can feel that they have advanced the international debate on these universal problems. And because the website will continue through August 2004, participants can engage in ongoing dialogue and further planning well beyond the termination of funding.

### ***Small Grants***

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Partners' 18 small grants, ranging from \$4,000 to \$15,000 each, generated the highest impact of the three components. Partners' grantees were able to reach into the most inaccessible rural communities and into the highest levels of local, state and national government. Results of the small grants were largely dependent on the implementing organization's experience and ability to form positive new relationships.

Most grantees focused their work on domestic violence (9) or on women's legal rights in general (6). Only one focused on rape and two on trafficking (the one focused on sexual violence also included trafficking). Grassroots training for women victims or potential victims of violence was a common intervention, as was training other NGOs. However, many groups are clearly getting more comfortable working with unfamiliar partners, such as police, prosecutors and government ministries. These grants take significant steps toward ensuring the relevance of international treaties; international law was covered in 14 training sessions and projects.

The grant selection process was designed to incorporate diverse perspectives and expertise, while providing a consistent standard for proposal selection. Project staff scored 69 proposals received (36 from Colombia, 23 from Mexico, and 10 from the Dominican Republic) and selected 30 finalists. Cross-sectoral committees comprised of experienced program and grant managers performed the final selection of the winners. When scoring the proposals, the selection committees considered the following criteria:

- Demonstrated need and a clearly developed action plan
- Concordance with the overall project goals and objectives as developed with USAID
- Achievable impact on women's legal rights
- Sustainability and the integration of the project into ongoing efforts of the organization
- Proven need among the target population
- Collaboration with other implementing organizations
- Organizational experience in project theme and activities
- Innovation and possibility for duplication
- Clear, realistic and reasonable budget and budget narrative
- Clear and thorough evaluation plan

The criteria were scored individually and then totaled to give each proposal a final score. After discussion, committee members ranked the proposals to be chosen for funding. A weighted ranking system was used to account for scoring variations among the selection teams.

The following are detailed descriptions of each project by country.

## **Mexico**

Partners supported five projects in Mexico to promote and expand women's legal rights. The projects vary greatly in terms of content, target population, and focus, likely reflecting the diversity of Mexican women's NGOs and the different needs that exist in the different communities. Two focus on grassroots education, primarily among indigenous women. Two other projects look for impact on a higher level, with lawyers and the media. The fifth attempts to bridge the gap between the grassroots, newly informed of their rights, and the policy makers, seemingly unaware of the realities faced by their constituents.

### **Tzome Ixuk**

#### **Tzome Ixuk: Organized Women**

**\$15,000**

In rural Chiapas, legal services and counseling for women is almost impossible to find. A cooperative of indigenous women, Tzome Ixuk, in the community of Nuevo Despertar, decided to bring legal counseling to the women of their community by empowering themselves to understand Mexican laws and human rights conventions and by building a center where women could come to learn about their rights and find protection.

The cooperative of Tzome Ixuk first sought out training in human rights and women's rights, which they covered in six sessions. They then announced the project and shared the basic concepts of this training with five surrounding communities, bringing together 65 women to discuss the center and its planned services. These communities then requested further training in women's legal rights.

At the same time, the group took on the construction of the physical and programmatic components of the Women's Assistance Center. The group learned a great deal in the process as they took charge of contracting personnel, picking out equipment and actually performing aspects of the construction. In addition, they designed educational materials and produced a brochure, which they distributed to churches, local authorities, and to the general public. They received much positive feedback from the community about the initiative.

To further educate women in the region, they offered workshops on human rights and women's rights in the five participating communities, including audiences of both men and women. One of the most important results of the project is that the women of Tzome Ixuk, at first unsure of themselves as they led a group discussion, are now quite confident in speaking and sharing with the groups they have trained. Within their workshops, participants pointed to women's disadvantages in education as the primary source of lack of respect for their rights. They also found a broader context of rights violations by the government in these communities, which generates a lack of trust in authorities and a more permissive attitude about violence toward women.

In addition to the human rights training, the cooperative received training in psychological accompaniment and legal defense, so they could better assist the women who seek help at the center. They have since accompanied five separate cases since the Center began offering services, intervening in cases of violence, delinquent child support, and deprivation of legal rights. While their training in human rights and legal issues is by no means complete, it is an important first step for their community.

### **Unidad de Atencion Sicolologica, Sexologica y Educativa Para el Crecimiento Personal (UNASSE)**

#### **Legal Professionals: An Important Sector for the Protection of Women's Rights \$15,000**

UNASSE provided training and education on legal rights for women under Mexican laws and the use of international agreements like CEDAW to promote and defend women's rights. While originally planned to target only law students and lawyers, during the recruitment process, UNASSE found that other students and professionals were very eager to participate. Thus, they opened up the training to others, particularly social workers and psychologists.

The lawyers and a consultant offered training on gender and rights, gender violence, and sexual and reproductive rights. Twenty-seven students from several different institutions in Merida from the disciplines of law, psychology, political science and anthropology participated in three sessions, each four hours long. In addition, UNASSE offered the same three workshops to lawyers, prosecutors, social workers, NGO representatives and political scientists, 30 people in all.

Dr. Alda Facio, Women, Gender and Development program director at the Latin American Institute of the UN for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Criminals (ILANUD), provided two additional workshops. One focused on CEDAW and its local applications with participation from 32 lawyers, psychologists, social workers, anthropologists and professors. The participants analyzed the treaty and formulated proposals to incorporate its principles within Mexican law. Another workshop by Dr. Facio focused on Reproductive Rights as Human Rights, with a participation of 50 people (20 students, 23 from the group of professionals, and 7 special participants).

Through testing, UNASSE evaluated the degree to which participants acquired knowledge from the events. The students, with an average starting grade of .5% on the pre-test, received a 90% grade on the post-test. Similarly, the professional group scored 15% on the pretest and 90% on the post-test.

Another important advance from this project was the strengthened relationship between UNASSE and universities and state agencies. Two formal agreements were signed; one with the Law Department of the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan to provide women's legal rights training for students in their legal clinic, and the other with the Human Rights Commission of Yucatan to train their staff. UNASSE is also working with ILANUD to reach an agreement on offering a continuing education course on women's legal rights. And together with state officials, UNASSE has helped plan state/NGO collaborations to improve Yucatan's responsiveness to women's rights violations. UNASSE has been designated by state officials as an employee trainer, workshop implementor and monitor of Yucatan's work in this area.

**Comunicación e Información de la Mujer, Asociación Civil (CIMAC)  
Social Communication Strategies for Feminist Organizations that Provide Legal  
Counseling and Attention for Women Victims of Violence  
\$15,000**

CIMAC and its media specialists developed this project to increase quality and quantity of coverage on gender violence issues. Over the course of the project, they produced 263 articles, reports, and interviews about women's legal and social rights. They interviewed legal specialists, followed specific cases, researched contexts, and worked with all the stakeholders in women's legal rights issues to gain access and promote their work. Their reports and articles were shared with the 900 subscribers to the CIMAC network, including magazines, newspapers, radio and television news programs, and websites. In addition, all their information was available on their web page.

To assist journalists in their ability to cover gender violence adequately, CIMAC developed a manual on how to develop articles on the theme, as well as a resource book that explores dimensions of gender violence, relevant laws and international treaties, and current data on gender violence. These are posted on the website and receive 12,000 hits daily.

In two workshops, CIMAC worked with civil society and government institutions that address gender violence and helped them develop communication and media strategies.

As part of their information campaign, CIMAC gave special attention to two paradigmatic cases of violence against women: the murder of Digna Ochoa and the rape of two indigenous women. In the case of Digna Ochoa, they provided journalists with 37 press reports with background data, they participated in radio programs to discuss the case, and they consulted with journalists covering the story. In the case of the indigenous women, they produced 22 articles, traveled to Guerrero to study the case, and issued editorials on the radio.

**Centro de Atención a la Mujer Trabajadora (CAMT)  
Public Policy Advocacy against Violence against Women  
\$15,000**

Faced with a state legal system that gives women little in the way of recourse when their rights are violated and no public participation in the formulation of policy, CAMT undertook a massive mobilization of public opinion to generate concrete proposals to modify Chihuahua's laws related to gender violence.

CAMT called together various groups within civil society to generate participation in the project. Representatives from these different groups formed the facilitator corps, who were then trained to lead groups toward consensus on policy issues. These 23 facilitators held several sessions with 10 groups of women from Chihuahua, Creel and Juarez. These 280 women included: social workers from the city of Chihuahua; housewives and community leaders; health workers from the Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social, nurses and social workers; grassroots educators and teachers; women in prison; and indigenous women. In the workshops, not only did participants get a unique chance to express opinions that would be heard by policy makers, they also learned a great deal about violence and gender relations. The workshops awakened participants on many levels, opening their eyes to the impact of violence directly affecting and surrounding them and empowering them to value and use their voices to make suggestions and work for change.

Emerging from these workshops was a document containing concrete proposals for substantial change in the approach to gender violence, including specific suggestions for state agencies, the legal sector, hospitals and civil society. This document was distributed to participating institutions (Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social, Ayuntamiento de Chihuahua, Escuela de Trabajo Social del Estado, Instituto Chihuahuense para la

Educación de los Adultos) and presented at a conference to participants and government representatives, including a congressional representative.

**Nosotras por la Equidad: Grupo de Apoyo a la Educación de la Mujer (GAEM)  
Actions to Reduce Family Violence in Oaxaca State  
\$11,250**

Through workshops, advocacy and media outreach, GAEM brought new awareness about family violence to thousands of people in the state of Oaxaca. The project specifically targeted indigenous communities for education and outreach.

Indigenous women from various small Oaxacan communities participated in intensive self esteem and violence prevention training. In addition, GAEM trained health services personnel, often on the front lines of the domestic violence issue. A total of 215 people received training. Many of the participants had experienced domestic violence and the workshop offered them their first opportunity to share their experiences in a supportive atmosphere. It was also the first time many of them realized they had a right to live free from violence and to seek justice when that right is violated.

In addition to this direct education, GAEM reached out to thousands through radio programming, the most popular media form in the state. They designed and produced 30 radio announcements about domestic violence, which are being broadcast morning and afternoons on an indigenous radio station. They participated in 6 programs on three different stations, discussing violence prevention, women's rights and access to justice.

In order to remove structural barriers that prevent women from gaining access to the justice system, GAEM staff set out to assess relevant state laws and research obstacles to quality attention. While they had great difficulty gaining necessary cooperation from employees in state institutions, they gathered significant information from their workshops with women and interviews with judicial authorities. They plan to continue pushing for information to fully complete the study, but will use their preliminary results to shape an advocacy campaign in the meantime. The report is an important first step to a coherent advocacy strategy.

They were, however, able to carry out two events that have had an impact on state justice institutions. They held two forums, one at the state level in coordination with the Equity and Gender Commission of the legislature, the other at the regional level in Tehuantepec. In the first, there was dialogue between GAEM's leadership and judicial authorities, provoking significant discussion and positioning GAEM as a knowledgeable resource. In the second, judicial officials participated along with women trained by the project. These women were not reticent to express their thoughts and needs to the officials gathered there.

## **Colombia**

Colombian NGOs represent both the highest number of proposals submitted and the highest number approved (eight). The Colombian grantees seem to be more eager (or perhaps just more able) to work with authorities than their Mexican and Dominican colleagues; three of the eight involve police training and another two involve close collaboration with local government agencies.

### **Centro de Recursos Integrales para la Familia Promoting Legal Rights of Women Victims of Sexual Violence \$15,000**

To promote awareness of sexual violence among parents, students, teachers, women displaced by the war, grassroots women's groups and the general public, CERFAMI developed and implemented an intensive campaign of training and mass communication. As a result, they reached over 300,000 people through an impressive array of different media, including print, television, radio and internet. In addition, they provided intensive training to 1,878 people on project themes and provided counseling services to 41 victims of sexual violence.

Within their communications campaign, they distributed a 16-page document dealing with the forms, causes, consequences and prevention strategies of sexual violence; sexual and reproductive rights; and rights of victims of sexual violence. This document was distributed widely among NGOs and government institutions in the Antioquia province. Recipients include the public libraries, youth legal advocates, the Social Well Being Ministry, media outlets and schools.

Incorporated in the theme of preventing sexual violence was prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation. This theme is particularly important among displaced women, as they are more vulnerable to kidnapping for sexual exploitation by armed groups internally. CERFAMI reached 606 low-income and displaced women with workshops and lectures on prevention of sexual violence and coercion.

### **Corporación Grupo de Apoyo Pedagógico (GAP) Community Alternatives to Access Justice for Women Victims of Gender Violence in 9 Areas of Bogotá, Colombia \$15,000**

GAP has worked for years in low income areas of Bogotá. Through this project, they engaged nine communities in the fight against gender violence and the improvement of victims' services by training grassroots legal educators and police officers.

GAP selected 119 women from 9 communities to participate as legal educators. Despite their poor living conditions (economic levels 1 and 2), these women made time for extensive training, participating in 20 to 40 hours of training. The training focused on

human rights, gender, domestic violence causes and laws, project planning skills, and working in coalition. These legal educators are now valuable resources in their communities, able to direct women to appropriate authorities when violence occurs, and to work with those in danger of becoming victims to help prevent it.

The final training sessions were dedicated to planning concrete projects to establish accompaniment of domestic violence cases. In seven of the communities, legal educators are working directly with local institutions, including mayors' offices and local affiliates of the Family Services Network (Red del Buen Trato/Red para la Democratización de la Familia). This collaboration will enable the groups to train others and offer support for violence victims.

To promote fair and just treatment of victims of domestic violence, GAP also trained local police and other officials in the causes, characteristics and consequences of domestic violence, as well as the mandates of applicable Colombian and international laws. GAP was successful in recruiting participation from 404 police officers and 48 other officials. In each workshop, they looked at case studies of incidents of domestic violence, exploring how the officers would respond and what the legal requirements for response are.

An important finding during these training sessions was that within the police department, there is a strong disincentive to respond to cases of domestic violence. Officers are penalized in their personnel file if they record more domestic violence cases than the previous month. Thus, many officers avoid responding to domestic violence complaints.

The officers responded to this training by requesting more. In fact, based on officer requests, GAP has implemented educational programs for police and their spouses. There is a high incidence of domestic violence within police households, a particularly dangerous situation given that the officers are armed. GAP conducted four workshops on gender and violence prevention for 100 officers and their wives.

The most important achievement of this project was the great improvement in the relationship between local justice institutions and the community organizations working with GAP. The women trained and those they counsel can now approach government institutions with confidence and trust, instead of fear and doubt. The rapid and significant change has already generated improved responses in these communities to women's petitions for justice.

**Corporación Para el Desarrollo Humano – Humanizar  
Training in Human, Sexual and Reproductive Rights and International  
Humanitarian Law for Women Displaced by Violence  
\$14,876**

Research has shown that women displaced by violence in Colombia are at high risk for sexual violence and other rights violations. Humanizar targeted this vulnerable

population to empower them to exercise their rights and educate others in their communities about these rights.

Through the project, 88 women were direct beneficiaries of three days of intensive training. Training was conducted in Medellín, Bogotá and Cartago, and employed participatory activities to explore rights, leadership, violence, and other themes. Humanizar arranged the participation of local institutions that work with displaced persons, to help the women take full advantage of the resources available to them.

One day in each workshop was dedicated to a project planning session, in which the participants learned conceptual tools to develop a project and guided the women through the project planning process. As a result, women from each of the three workshops emerged with a concrete plan to build a better situation in their communities.

- In Bogotá, participants will train other women in their sexual and reproductive rights
- In Medellín, women will provide resources and training for 20 women in human rights and sexual and reproductive rights,
- In Cartago, the group plans to educate young women about planning their families and avoiding sexually transmitted infections

Each project has a budget and has been evaluated by experienced staff. In addition, several of the government and nongovernmental entities present at the workshops offered their assistance in implementing the women's projects.

## **CEDESOCIAL**

### **Training and Awareness Raising in Women's Legal Rights in Southwest Barranquilla for Women Leaders, Local Police and Family Court Officials \$15,000**

CEDESOCIAL trained 280 people who are in turn training others, an estimated 2,200 in all. They targeted women leaders, police officers and officials in the local Family Courts. Training content included exploration of the myths surrounding family violence, rights and laws related to violence, and the legal basis for women's rights. Their trainers conducted 20 workshops with women leaders, 5 with police, 9 with police academy cadets, and 5 with Family Court officials.

They worked closely with community organizations to identify and recruit women leaders for the workshops. They conducted trainings in 4 areas of southwest Barranquilla, with 200 women total. These women showed great interest in the training, learning to recognize their rights and the violence that exists in daily life. These women are now participating in the local municipalities, training others, referring cases and working with CEDESOCIAL to continue women's legal rights work at the grassroots level.

CEDESOCIAL's greatest obstacle was training the police, since there was considerable resistance to the theme. However, at the same time, the participating officers recognized that many among them are violent in their homes. This in turn affects their ability to deal fairly with abusers in the field. Due to these findings, CEDESOCIAL adjusted the project to train police academy cadets, thus attacking the problem before it begins. They have found these cadets to be eager participants in the training, who are now active in promoting legal rights concepts within their homes and communities.

In the Family Courts, CEDESOCIAL trainers were able to go more in depth into laws and international agreements. Their goal was to raise the awareness of court officials about the causes and impact of domestic violence, so that they might treat the women who seek assistance with greater understanding. As a result of this training, CEDESOCIAL points to several positive changes among the participating court officials, including a closer relationship between the courts and CEDESOCIAL.

Other activities included a public campaign around November 25 (No Violence Day) and a large closure meeting for all the participants trained in the project, which allowed them to share their perspectives and plans for improving women's legal rights.

### **FUNDESAP**

#### **Strengthening the Inter-institutional Network for the Defense and Promotion of Women's Rights**

**\$15,000**

On the island of San Andrés, small projects have a big impact. Through this initiative, FUNDESAP successfully trained 327 women, including women in prison, in human rights and conducted a public information campaign that reached thousands. In addition, they conducted a diagnosis of the family violence situation on the island, and created support groups so that women will be able to gain the help they need from each other. In addition, they provided training to each of the six institutions that supported the project on services available to victims of rights violations.

In February, FUNDESAP began a weekly, half-hour radio program that included lawyers, religious leaders, human rights workers, women leaders and others who analyzed women's rights issues. The program ran for 6 weeks, reaching thousands. They also produced a three-minute television spot that was repeated over 10 weeks. FUNDESAP used a ten-minute video to raise awareness about violence and women's rights with many audiences as a starting point for dialogue.

As a result of their efforts, FUNDESAP found that women are speaking out more about violence and sharing their knowledge with their communities. They have educated 327 women, 34 of whom are now in support groups. Many of the support groups are offering training to their communities, including the group in Sound Bay, which has conducted a day of talks on domestic violence at the request of the community. Project leaders are confident that they have reached over 1,500 people directly and indirectly on women's

legal rights themes, and have generated 13 groups of women who continue to promote and defend women's rights at the grassroots level.

Also, by reaching out to various institutions and individuals at the outset of the project, the group sparked an important conversation on violence and rights, generating new ideas and solutions.

### **Fundación Esperanza**

#### **Prevention, Juridical Guidance and Lobbying on Trafficking of Women in Colombia** **\$15,000**

Fundación Esperanza, one of the strongest groups in Latin America on trafficking issues, conducted a project to improve their legal support to trafficking victims, improve the laws on trafficking, and assist Colombian social service groups in their treatment of trafficking.

During the project, Fundación Esperanza gave legal support to nine women victims of trafficking. Two of these people did not want to press charges, and the rest are receiving ongoing assistance with their cases from the Fundación. They also provided advice and referrals to others seeking assistance whose cases were not pertinent to trafficking.

To assist other agencies in an effective response to trafficking, Fundación Esperanza undertook the development of a manual describing the legal procedures to follow for prosecuting trafficking and for assisting the victim. They printed and distributed 1400 copies among various state and nongovernmental institutions.

The Fundación assessed the effectiveness of Colombian legislation and enforcement against trafficking through two studies. First, they analyzed the pertinent laws punishing trafficking in nine countries where trafficking initiates and five destination countries, including the United States. This analysis served as a basis of comparison for Colombian laws. The second study looked at specific cases of trafficking and their treatment in the courts. They have found several problems with the current legislation as enforced, and discussed these issues with prosecutors in order to propose legal reforms.

A significant portion of the project was dedicated to drafting and lobbying for a reform of Colombia's trafficking law. Based on their experience in the field, project directors found the current law too piecemeal, and thus drafted a proposed law that would encompass prevention, assistance, protection, international cooperation, and data collection, as well as assigning responsible institutions and necessary funds. They developed a working group with various NGOs and state agencies to contribute to the proposal, which was presented to Congress in March 2003 by 4 senators and 2 representatives. It was unanimously passed out of committee in June.

**CAMI**

**Awareness Raising and Training about Women's Legal Rights for Government Officials**

**\$15,000**

Finding that few of their local judicial sector representatives were fully aware of women's legal rights, CAMI set out to train these officials in conceptual and methodological elements of these rights so that they could better understand gender violence and its impact. They trained 126 representatives of the regional prosecutor's office, the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, the Metropolitan Police, and local Casas de Justicia (Justice Houses).

The training explored gender equity, gender violence and legal protections. Each of the three modules was five hours. Facilitators observed a significant change in the attitudes and beliefs of the participants. At the close of the workshops, participants themselves designed messages for posters to be displayed in their agencies. They also created action groups within each agency to promote ongoing debate and education, and to build awareness among their colleagues.

For example, one community police chief was so interested in the theme that he has incorporated it into his ongoing work with organized groups in his community, applying the concepts and skills learned in the training. In another case, a defense attorney from a Casa de Justicia said that he had changed his perception of rape victims, and he now understood their situation.

In addition to increasing their knowledge about violence and rights, the trainings promoted inter-institutional collaboration that will positively impact treatment of clients. To assist this process, CAMI held a forum to close the project with the participation of eighty people from the participating institutions, including workshop participants and their directors. CAMI presented the project's results and invited dialogue about next steps.

To extend the education process, CAMI distributed 220 posters with four different messages to the participating institutions, along with 2000 pamphlets on sexual and family violence to their clients.

**Corporación Regional de Rehabilitación del Valle**

**Legal Rights of Disabled Women**

**\$4,000**

With these funds, the Corporación Regional de Rehabilitación sponsored a meeting of disabled women and their advocates, visited local institutions to discuss the project and the issue, and launched a network to promote information and support for disabled women.

The staff, along with a contracted attorney, visited over 15 institutions in the Valle province, including Casas de Justicia, mayors' offices, and hospitals. They found minimal information on women's rights and even less for disabled women. Working with these institutions, they formed an interdisciplinary committee to set the agenda for the regional meeting and recruit speakers and participants.

The two-day meeting brought 60 people together from all over Southwestern Colombia and included discussions on sexual abuse and mistreatment of disabled women and steps that can be taken to prevent and punish this violence. Alicia Contreras, a disabled woman and trainer from California, was able to provide context for the discussion (see technical assistance section).

The participants in the event formed a network to continue discussing and taking action on disabled women's rights. They are also planning additional events to continue the momentum.

## **Dominican Republic**

While Colombia had the highest number of proposals submitted and approved of the three countries, the Dominican Republic's five approved proposals were considered the strongest received. The NGOs winning grants show ambitious goals, yet focused efforts and clear strategies, as well as an encouraging willingness to collaborate with other entities. If their advocacy goals fall short, it is only due to the barriers they face in working with entrenched prejudices.

### **Asociacion Tu Mujer Prevention and Management of Violence against Women from a Participatory Perspective in Five Barrios of Los Mina Norte in Santo Domingo \$15,000**

In the low-income neighborhoods of Los Mina, domestic violence is widespread and rarely reported. Strong community organizations exist, and Tu, Mujer set out to convert these organizations into powerful transformative tools to prevent and deal effectively with violence.

Tu Mujer trained a network of 35 volunteer educators, who participated actively in 92 hours of training on a range of themes, from "Mechanisms of Legal Protection and Existing Institutions," to "Personal Development and the Role of the Community Volunteer." These workshops enabled the volunteers to conduct home visits monthly, providing the families with educational chats, materials, and support if there is violence in the home. Their interventions include prevention, if no violence exists in the home, and case management, if abuse does exist. The educators refer abuse cases to the lawyers of Tu, Mujer. During the project period alone, the educators made 8,500 home visits.

The staff of Tu, Mujer and the volunteers have educated over 2,000 people, through discussions, public outreach campaigns, community education and legal orientations. The Tu, Mujer lawyers have provided 1,776 legal consultations for women and their families. Most cases involved sexual assault, rape, threats, domestic violence, and marital issues.

Tu, Mujer also worked with government institutions to gain their collaboration and support for the project. As a result, they have closer relationships with several institutions, and this has helped make the communities themselves more able to access these institutions for support and response. Tu, Mujer has also seen an improvement in services offered by the government's legal program as a result of the project.

### **Nucleo de Apoyo a la Mujer (NAM)**

#### **Training and Awareness-Raising for the Guaranty and Protection of Women's Human Rights**

**\$15,000**

NAM's project sought to improve access to justice for women victims of rights violations by training and educating judicial sector representatives, human rights lawyers, civil society and the general public.

NAM developed a thorough information packet on women's legal rights and provided this to 70 judicial sector employees in Santiago, including judges, justices of the peace, and prosecutors. The packet contains information on Universal Human Rights, legal articles on gender, and relevant cases decided by the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. When NAM evaluated this component, they found that several recipients were actively using the information in trials and found it very useful. However, most recipients did not respond to repeated requests for evaluation, limiting the assessment of full impact.

Through this project, NAM's legal office provided in-court legal assistance in 7 cases of women's rights violations, involving 21 trials. They have also given legal advice in 45 new cases, 51% of them involving domestic violence. They have had success in getting a sentence in two cases. One involved the rape of a minor that wasn't reported until a month after the incident. The convicted man received a light sentence, but the family decided against appealing. In the other case, a woman received a \$60/month child support ruling against the father of her 3 month-old child.

Fourteen human rights lawyers from eight institutions participated in NAM's three-day workshop on the use of the Inter-American system to protect women's rights. During the workshop, they distributed material on relevant cases brought before the Inter-American Court and Inter-American Human Rights Commission. Also, participants studied hypothetical cases to examine the possible uses of these international legal systems and learned how to present reports to these international bodies. Through tests before and after the course, NAM found that participants had very little knowledge about the international system before they came (100% received 0-59 points). Following the

course, 92% had over 60 points, reflecting knowledge about what cases are admissible, jurisdiction of the inter-American system, and the importance of civil society in documenting cases.

NAM also worked with civil society in general to emphasize the importance of the inter-American system. They offered a seminar to 18 representatives of NGOs about the system and explored the human rights situation in the Dominican Republic within this context. In addition, there were three televised interviews with the facilitator (Roxana Altholz of the group CEJIL) on the inter-American system on human rights.

NAM also contributed their expertise to the National Assembly. They spoke in a hearing on the consequences of the considered modifications to the penal code and what these modifications would mean in the context of CEDAW and other international laws.

**Centro de Servicios Legales para la Mujer (CENSEL)  
Training and Awareness Raising for Women Leaders of Community Groups as  
Legal Educators  
\$15,000**

CENSEL expanded their grassroots legal promoter training and provided legal services to victims of rights violations through this project, in addition to building awareness among justice sector officials about women's legal rights and preventing reforms that would set back women's rights.

The project, carried out in Santo Domingo and San Cristobal, reached over 1,000 people through 31 different educational activities, including lectures, seminars, and workshops. The audience included judges, lawyers, doctors, police, government officials, NGO representatives, students, parents, and teachers. In all of these educational events, CENSEL trainers provided a complete picture of women's legal protections under Dominican and international law, as well analyses of how these laws are applied.

By training 37 grassroots legal educators, selected from among community leaders in the participating areas, CENSEL has generated even greater impact. These educators participated in an extensive training program, exploring relevant laws, international accords, legal procedures, referral institutions, the cycle of violence and group dynamics. These skills have enabled the educators to form support groups and act as valuable resources in their communities, able to accompany women who have experienced violence and guide them if they choose to enter the legal system.

CENSEL conducted seminars and educational events for judges, lawyers, government ministries and doctors on current law and its application. One event trained 26 lawyers and doctors about proposed modifications to the Dominican Republic's most important statute on gender violence. The goal was to reach a message by consensus to urge the continuation of the law as is. In addition, they worked directly with legislators to prevent modification to the law, and succeeded in postponing action until the next session.

CENSEL also provided direct legal services, reaching 126 women, 95% of whom had more than two cases (360 cases total). Of these, 198 are currently in the court system. In addition, 119 women survivors of violence received group psychological counseling and education.

The project has had a measurable impact on women's awareness of their rights, and the judicial sector's recognition of these rights. CENSEL reports a 40% increase in demand for their services in the areas where the project has taken place, as well as a 20% increase in the number of cases referred to them by judicial sector representatives.

### **Fundacion Vida y Salud**

#### **Human Rights Training to Reduce Sexual Trafficking of Women**

**\$15,000**

Through this project, Fundacion Vida y Salud set out to educate community leaders about trafficking and human rights, help empower rural women to educate others about trafficking, and generate momentum among local authorities and civil society to counter trafficking.

Project staff successfully trained 63 women leaders from 31 grassroots organizations. They explored gender roles, self esteem, universal human rights, trafficking and sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and teens and trafficking. The course included 14 sessions of six to eight hours each. These women have already integrated this training into their ongoing work in their communities.

As a lasting result of this project, those trained now form the Municipal Network for Lobbying, supported by the Fundacion. They envision this network as the base of ongoing work to combat trafficking in their municipality and surrounding areas. Because it has both grassroots reach and the power of their combined groups, the network will act at the individual level (educating women about the realities of trafficking) and at the decision maker level (urging action to shut down active traffickers).

One unplanned impact of the project was the strengthened relationship with local authorities, including civil, police and military leaders. Although they have not established formal agreements with these entities, they have strong verbal commitments and cooperation from them for the project's activities and goals.

### **Centro de Apoyo Aquelarre**

#### **Making the Law Work: Advocacy and Social Mobilization for the Full Implementation of Law 24-97**

**\$15,000**

While the Dominican Republic has laws to punish gender violence, there have been considerable difficulties ensuring this law is fully enforced.

One issue is lack of funds for full implementation. Aquelarre tackled this issue by holding a seminar for 46 governmental, nongovernmental, international and community representatives to raise awareness about the issue and take concrete steps to remove barriers to implementation. The participants learned how to analyze budgets and then formed a multidisciplinary team to conduct the first national budget analysis on gender violence. They developed a plan of action for advocacy and media outreach activities to raise awareness about this work. The event was covered by 5 different media outlets.

Complementing this larger effort were several events and media outreach activities. Aquelarre developed and distributed fact sheets on four themes about women's legal rights, visited various authorities to discuss the law, participated in 28 radio, television and newspaper interviews, and coordinated other public events.

Aquelarre implemented a targeted advocacy effort on behalf of Law 24-97 in the community of Los Alcarrizos in Santo Domingo. They created a Community Network against Violence with 19 representatives of local organizations participating. In addition, women survivors of violence help guide the network's activities. With the ability to keep close watch over daily events in the neighborhood and educate their community about violence. They also meet regularly with local authorities to update them on their activities and on their perceptions of the law's enforcement.

These 19 leaders within the network received three days of training provided by Aquelarre on Law 24-97, social mobilization strategies, institutional and cultural barriers that limit application of the law, network management, advocacy, and other skills.

To support their lobbying effort, Aquelarre conducted and publicized a study of 80 cases of domestic violence that were settled through mediation. They interviewed prosecutors, looked at current research, and compiled data on complainants. This information has helped them sharpen their analysis and message as they continue their advocacy for full implementation of the law.

### ***Technical Assistance***

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Partners offered workshop participants and grant applicants access to a wide network of organizations and professionals able to provide high quality technical assistance. Recipient organizations defined their own needs and the type of assistance, and staff worked to develop appropriate opportunities within its network. Partners chapters played a significant role in providing or identifying technical assistance resources in nine of the 16 trips.

The development of domestic violence shelters and programming figures prominently in ten of the technical assistance visits. Participants clearly see a strong need in their communities for shelters, yet require on-the-ground training and assistance to develop

these programs. However, training alone is not sufficient, and participants will have to identify significant funds to make this vision a reality in their communities.

## **Mexico**

### **Self Defense Training: July 23-27, 2003 Partners of the Americas– Texas-Coahuila**

Through the Texas-Coahuila partnership, a representative of a Texas police department traveled to Saltillo, Coahuila to train 70 community leaders in how to train others in self defense and rape prevention.

Mary Sharp is a professional self defense instructor trained to certify others. Seeing a need in their community for women to be able to defend themselves, the local Partners chapter sought her assistance to bring self-defense training to Coahuila and recruited 70 police representatives to participate in the training. During the seminar, the group selected a program coordinator and learned how to setup a self-defense training program, in addition to learning all the elements of self-defense that should be included in the course.

In a second session, Ms. Sharp demonstrated these skills to other community members, including Rotary Club, Sister Cities of Saltillo, and Municipal government officials.

The partnership is providing its own follow up to the project, working to identify funds to purchase equipment. As this project ended, they were in the process of working with the newly-trained leaders to establish sustainable self-defense courses in their community.

### **Shelter Services Programs: June 5-8, 2003 Partners of the Americas—Texas-Veracruz**

Judge Angelita Mendoza–Waterhouse, a district judge from Texas and member of the local Partners chapter directed a workshop in the city of Veracruz on June 5-8, 2003 to train members of the chapter and staff from five other local NGOs to develop stronger programs for women with the goal of developing shelter services in the future. No shelters or refuges for victims of domestic violence currently exist in this region of Mexico, despite the great need cited by these local organizations. Through educating employees and volunteers from five organizations that had no prior training in advocacy, legal defense or coalition-building, Judge Mendoza- Waterhouse helped build the technical skills of a population that did not know how to create better services for women or advocate for policy change in Veracruz.

### **Legal Abortion Access for Poor Women: August 1-15, 2003 Grupo para la Información y Reproducción Elegida (GIRE)**

While Mexican women have a legal right to obtain an abortion in specific circumstances, including rape, very few women are able to exercise this right. For poor women, a major

barrier is financial. Shawn Towey, Communications Director of the National Network of Abortion Funds, provided a training session for the staff of Mexican NGO GIRE in how to create and manage a funding network that would generate financing for these women from individual donors.

Her training sessions include abortion fund models, strategic planning, identifying donors, database development, evaluation and follow up.

## **Colombia**

### **Improving Services for Disabled Women: February 9-14, 2003 Corporacion Regional de Rehabilitacion**

From February 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, Alicia Contreras, Director of Whirlwind Women of Whirlwind Wheelchair International, traveled to Cali to assist the Corporación Regional de Rehabilitación del Valle during the Meeting of Disabled Women of Southwestern Colombia. During the visit she also accompanied their staff to a number of meetings with government offices and local NGOs to discuss how to improve services for disabled women.

- Alicia visited with government officials from the Office of Social Development, Programs for the Disabled, the Department of Education, the State Women's Program, the Casa de Justicia de Siloe and the Casa de Justicia Agua Blanca to discuss the services desperately needed by disabled women in Colombia who are victims of domestic and sexual abuse, as well as the obvious lack of physical access to their buildings.
- As a guest facilitator and speaker at the Conference for Women with Disabilities, Alicia presented a variety of new ideas to the participants, including the concept that disabled women can do many of the same physical activities as those without disabilities. She demonstrated this through a video featuring disabled women participating in activities such as whitewater rafting and rock-climbing. They also talked about income generation and taking initiative to solve problems instead of waiting for someone else. A large part of the discussion revolved around the issue of violence against women with disabilities. Alicia was surprised to find that there was widespread agreement among participants that the primary issue was "how to prevent pregnancy" in such situations, not the issue of rape and sexual abuse causing these same pregnancies, and how to prevent these crimes from occurring. They also discussed that disabled women had the same rights as anyone – that basic human rights were their rights as well. Alicia provided participants and Rehab many printed resources for disabled women around the world. Alicia reported that the community of disabled women she encountered at the workshop need far more assistance to recognize and learn about their legal and human rights, especially with regard to domestic and sexual abuse.

**Domestic Violence Shelter: February 17-28, 2003  
Centro de Apoyo Aquelarre (Dominican Republic)  
Centro de Recursos Integrales para la Familia (CERFAMI)**

From February 17<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, Margot Tapia and Rosa Reyes of Centro de Apoyo Aquelarre in the Dominican Republic and Diana Vasquez of the Centro de Recursos Integrales para la Familia - CERFAMI (Center of Integrated Resources for the Family) in Colombia traveled to Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico to visit a women's shelter created by the local NGO Alternativas Pacificas (Peaceful Alternatives). The goal of the visit was to learn how to create and sustain a shelter for domestic violence victims as well as maintain a network of organizations working on similar issues. The visitors learned the “nuts and bolts” of administrative and financial managerial tasks, appropriate projects and programs to implement at a shelter, security strategies, and how to ensure medical assistance and counseling. All three participants planned to pass on the knowledge they gained in Monterrey to colleagues in Dominican Republic and Colombia. Margot Tapia and Rosa Reyes not only want to found a women's shelter, but also plan on working more with media resources to build awareness and support around the need for a shelter in Santo Domingo. This South-South technical assistance trip provided a rare opportunity for organizations of three different countries to collaborate and learn about each other's experience and the distinct challenges they encounter.

**International Trafficking of Women and Children Prevention: April 6-12, 2003  
Fundación Esperanza**

From April 6-12, Olga Lucia Gomez and Paulina Calderon of Fundación Esperanza visited Washington, DC to strengthen their peer network by meeting organizations/institutions that are working against the international trafficking of women and children and discussing possibilities for collaboration in the future. They also shared the success Fundación Esperanza has had in defending victims of trafficking as well as their efforts for further legislation in Colombia to protect present and potential victims. Olga Lucia and Paulina met with the following institutions and individuals:

- PAHO – Dr. Marijke Velzeboer, Director of Gender and Health
- Free the Slaves – Dan Hammer and Jolene Smith
- U.S. Dept. of State, Office of Trafficking in Persons – Gregory Holiday
- OAS Interamerican Commission on Women – Laura Langenberg
- The Protection Project, Johns Hopkins University - Dr. Mohammed Mattar
- Vital Voices – Panel discussion about violence against women and the trafficking of women
- Colombia Program at Georgetown University - Miguel Ceballos, Program Director and Gerard Martin, Research Director
- Women's Edge – Ritu Sharma, Executive Director
- Peace Corps - Lyn Messner
- Inter-American Democracy Network, Partners of the Americas – Sarah Levin and Oscar Chicas

As a result of the visits, the above named individuals are now more familiar with Fundación Esperanza's work in Colombia regarding trafficking of persons and the importance of efforts to counter negative affects of trafficking on its victims and their families. The visits allowed Fundación Esperanza to create more links with multilateral institutions and NGOs, some of which noted strong interest in supporting their initiatives either economically or politically in the future.

**Intervention Strategies for Domestic Violence Against Women: June 18-20, 2003  
Partners of the Americas—South Carolina-Colombia**

From June 18-20, Nelssy Bonilla of the Universidad Javeriana in Colombia traveled to South Carolina to receive technical assistance from Deanne Messias, RN, PhD and professor at the University of South Carolina. During the visit, Nelssy learned about integrated intervention strategies for domestic violence against women through visits to different agencies, health centers and shelters. With this knowledge she will work with colleagues to better mobilize Universidad Javeriana's resources to create more effective outreach tools to serve women whose rights have been violated. During her trip she participated in the following activities:

- A visit to the University of South Carolina's Women's Studies Program to learn about the documentation center at the Center of Women's Studies housed at the university
- A meeting at the Office of the Attorney General to learn about the S.T.O.P. Violence Against Women Program, a state program in South Carolina.
- Meeting with the executive director of "SISTERCARE, Inc.", services for battered women and their children
- Visit to a shelter for abused women and their children, operated by SISTERCARE in Casey, SC
- Meeting with staff members of Sexual Trauma Services
- Discussion with Health and Family Studies division and a researcher at the Institute for Families in Society
- Meeting with the Coordinator of the Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Deanne Messias also traveled to Colombia June 30 to July 3 to share her knowledge through small group consultation, lectures and workshops for faculty, students, researchers, and community representatives at Universidad Javeriana in Cali, Colombia. The principal focus of the consultations and presentations was to incorporate a gender perspective into research, teaching, and outreach. DeAnne gave two public presentations (How to Incorporate a Gender Perspective into Research and Research on Women, Work, and Health) and held four consultation sessions at the university. About 30 persons, including faculty and students from the Universidad Javeriana and from other local universities, attended the public workshop on gender perspectives in research. About 20 faculty, students, and health care professionals attended the session on Women, Work, and Health from the community. At both sessions there was active audience participation, which allowed for practical application of the theoretical concepts and principles

presented. DeAnne also met with eight faculty members of the Interdisciplinary Gender Group to discuss strategies for assessing the existing assets and resources in terms of teaching, research, and community outreach and discuss the specifics of several proposed and ongoing research projects. With this assistance the group is building on its ability to plan and implement projects with a more sustainable end.

**Police Training on Domestic Violence Issues: July 5-12, 2003  
Grupo GAP (Colombia):**

Experienced police trainers Lydia Walker and Linda Osmundson went to Bogota to further train police groups working with GAP to improve their services and treatment of women whose rights have been violated. Travel occurred July 5-12, 2003.

They met with as many as 60 women, young and old, from various organizations working in different zones in the city. They provided:

- Descriptions of their programs in the US.
- Training on domestic and sexual violence against women.
- Specifics on working with children that have been abused.
- Group discussions on working together in coalition.

They also had the opportunity to meet with 50 police officers and two police psychologists. They discussed different methods of police intervention in domestic and sexual violence, described model programs and policies in the US, and encouraged the police to work closely with the coalitions of women being organized by Grupo Gap.

**Prevention of Sex Tourism and Trafficking: July 21-25, 2003  
Fundesap (Colombia)**

Mexican human rights activists Laura Aguilar and Patricia Medina provided training on prevention of sex tourism and trafficking. Travel occurred July 21-25, 2003. They conducted the following activities:

- “Sensibility and Prevention Workshop”- There was an analysis and a discussion about the local reality with different members of the community.
- Radial Socialization – They discussed their efforts to use the media to reach out to the community in general with messages about information and prevention on sex tourism. They captured young people’s attention, through seminars with the different educational centers. Different dynamics were created by the questions and doubts that were being formulated.
- “Association of Hotels Workshop” - Involving the hotel industry in prevention activities is essential for the prevention and punishment of sex tourism. Their collaboration with police authorities in view of the existing network of young people involved is essential. They left behind a practical methodology for implementation of informative talks and support material for counseling.
- They motivated the community, the different groups involved in tourist activity, youth organizations and the authorities about the necessity in advancing a joint plan of action to prevent sex tourism and under age abuses.

**Community Education and Domestic Violence Reduction: December 10-20, 2003  
Partners of the Americas—Florida-Colombia  
Nuevo Retiro**

From Dec. 10-20, Partners sponsored the technical assistance visit of Pilar Santamaria, the director of Colombian education foundation Nuevo Retiro, who visited six innovative organizations in Florida working on domestic violence reduction and community education. Because of Pilar's interest in implementing direct education with women, Partners staff organized visits to the Women's Center of Jacksonville and the Betty Griffin House. The Women's Center of Jacksonville focuses on reducing sexual violence and the Betty Griffin House provides shelter services to domestic violence victims and their children and directs local youth and community education initiatives. Pilar also visited the Domestic Abuse Council, which implements educational programs in schools. While visiting domestic violence court she was able to observe firsthand how domestic violence crimes are managed legally in the state of Florida.

Pilar also observed education models created by the Turner Technical High School in coordination with the Center for Folk and Community Art. These models aim to integrate various art media in community and youth education with the goal of addressing social issues in a nonthreatening manner. Pilar will integrate this newly acquired knowledge into education programs in several local schools in Colombia. She will also share this information with teachers, parents and community leaders with whom she collaborates with the idea of establishing similar models in Colombia to effectively lower rates of domestic violence.

## **Dominican Republic**

**Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Exploitation: March 23-28, 2003**

**Fundación Vida y Salud**

The medical director from the Dominican Republic's **Fundación Vida y Salud** (Life and Health Foundation), Dr. Bithers Anderson, traveled to the municipality of Santos, outside of Sao Paulo, Brazil to visit the **SEAC** (Secretary of Community and Citizen Action). Dr. Anderson visited SEAC from March 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> to learn about and observe the services this government office provides to victims of domestic violence and sexual exploitation. Fundacion Vida y Salud hopes to replicate SEAC's successful strategies. Among the 10 SEAC projects and 12 sites Dr. Anderson visited were a number of outstanding examples in which Fundacion Vida y Salud was particularly interested. Site visits included:

- A domestic violence shelter for women and their children provides legal assistance, education regarding women's legal rights, training and counseling to improve self-esteem, and in-house schooling for children. The location of the

- shelter is undisclosed to the public to ensure the women's security. There is also a 24-hour hotline.
- An assistance center for adolescent victims of sexual exploitation offers legal assistance, psychological and medical help (in collaboration with the Health System), training for income generating activities, and helps them reestablish relations with their families.
  - The Center for Integral Attention for Women Living with HIV offers a full range of medical attention, including pre- and postnatal care, and supplies medication to lengthen the lives of its patients. (Brazil purchased retrovirals for this purpose.)
  - Centinela Program employees and youth volunteers search for victims of sex tourism, trafficking and abuse in the port area of the city and bring them to centers to ensure their safety and prevent further illegal activity.

### **Proposal Writing for Gender Violence Programs, June 16-23 FISOE**

In the Dominican Republic, FISOE received Nicole Matthews-Creech from June 16-23 to improve the organization's ability to write proposals, evaluate project impact from a community perspective, and collaborate with government institutions in enforcing laws against gender violence. Nicole provided training to FISOE and other local NGOs invited to participate.

### **Shelter Creation and Management, June 23-30 Nucleo de Apoyo a la Mujer (NAM) Promocion de la Mujer del Sur (PROMUS) Fundacion Dominicana para la Promocion y Accion Social (PRO-PAS)**

A significant technical assistance trip took place June 23-30 when a women's shelter in Michigan, the Livingston Area Council Against Spouse Abuse (LACASA), hosted representatives from three organizations in the Dominican Republic: Nucleo de Apoyo a la Mujer (NAM), Promoción de la Mujer del Sur, Inc. (PROMUS) and the Fundación Dominicana para la Promoción y Acción Social, Inc. (PRO-PAS).

- NAM requested technical assistance with the interest of creating a women's shelter in Santiago, and was interested in observing how the U.S. legal system utilizes alternative conflict resolution techniques in cases of domestic violence and how the legal system itself handles violence or gender-related cases.
- PROMUS requested technical assistance to learn more about the management of a shelter and the services it offers to domestic violence victims, as well as observe the technical aspects of training workshops, psychological services and educational support offered at LACASA. PROMUS is very interested in developing skills and knowledge to manage a shelter for women since the Dominican government has expressed interest in establishing more shelters in the country and they would like to lobby for more substantial government action on this issue.

- PRO-PAS is also interested in establishing a shelter in Santo Domingo and plans to collaborate with other organizations to eventually establish a shelter in each province of the country. The goal of their visit was to gain more knowledge about how to establish, manage and sustain a shelter for victims of domestic violence. They were also very interested in learning about services possibly provided to women seeking refuge at a shelter, such as education services, psychological therapy, and legal defense.

During the visit to LACASA, the three visitors from the Dominican Republic participated in the following activities:

- Interviews with local police regarding their coordination with LACASA
- Visit to Howell Courthouse to observe how victims of domestic violence register for assistance
- Observation of an interview between a small child and a psychologist regarding family abuse
- Discussion with lawyers at the Howell Attorney-General's office in which the Dominican visitors shared their experiences working with women's legal rights and the incidence of domestic violence in their country. The attorneys informed the visitors about the Michigan domestic violence laws, how cases are entered into the system, and police procedures when responding to an emergency 911 call.
- Participation in LACASA's strategic planning meeting
- Interviews with LACASA staff, including the education programs coordinator, psychologists, and the volunteer coordinator
- Observation of jury selection for an incest case at the court
- Discussion of alternative conflict resolution with a volunteer lawyer at LACASA

All of the three visitors were especially impressed to observe the excellent coordination between LACASA, which is a private organization, and public institutions such as the attorney general's office and the police. The visitor from NAM said, "It has given us an idea of the possibility of such a relationship between government and NGOs [in the Dominican Republic]." NAM plans to propose new ideas in their own strategic plan, including the establishment of National Police intervention in cases of domestic violence; creation of a protocol for the justice sector when assisting victims; and the purchase of digital cameras for the Department of Women's Protection, the police and forensics to document abuse. PROMUS and PRO-PAS are also highly interested in involving public officials more profoundly, and intend to develop a collaborative relationship with officials so that in the future officers will work with them to assist domestic violence victims in a positive and effective manner. Another result of this technical assistance visit was the strong bond forged among the three Dominican organizations that may work together in the future toward their common goal of protecting women and establishing safe havens for victims of domestic violence.

## **Evaluation of Achievement**

Partners evaluated this project through participant surveys, final reports by grantees, and participant interviews conducted through an appreciative inquiry technique. Partners staff received three days of in-depth training from expert Dr. Beryl Levinger of the Education Development Center on how to use appreciative inquiry in project monitoring and evaluation. Based on its successful use for this project, Partners plans to utilize the appreciative inquiry approach in all future program evaluations, and continues to develop more effective evaluation standards. Seven Partners staff members assisted with the development of evaluation questions for the field visits for this project using the appreciative inquiry methodology.

Two staff members conducted on-site visits with three grantee organizations in Mexico, three in Colombia and two in the Dominican Republic. Partners selected these projects in order to evaluate a diverse group in terms of project design and organizational capacity. Evaluators interviewed grantee staff about the successes and challenges encountered during their projects, and then met with each organization's target populations and beneficiaries to elicit quantitative data on the impact participation in the project had on their lives. Grant recipients also evaluated Partners' guidance and assistance offered during the life of the project.

In addition to building an important capacity within Partners, employing the appreciative inquiry model will have lasting impact on participant organizations. Selected grantees learned a great deal about the evaluation process and its methodology, and can use the same tools in future projects. Through the process, they also appropriated important information about the success of their project and the values and future goals of the organization.

The following summarizes program qualitative and quantitative results, using planned indicators, grouped by USAID's intermediate results and by country.

### ***IR3.1 – Support improved legislation that protects women's legal rights***

#### **Mexico**

- Project participants held fourteen consultations with policy makers on gender violence issues
- In Chihuahua, a grantee developed a legal proposal based on focus groups/workshops held with 300 people statewide. The proposal was presented to policy makers and representatives of different state institutions.
- A grantee in Yucatan worked with the state agency responsible for gender equity to collaborate on the creation of their annual plan to combat gender violence

### **Colombia**

- Grantees held 24 consultations with policy makers on domestic violence and trafficking in women to discuss, reform and propose legislation and policy
- As a result of a grant recipient's workshop and awareness generated about lack of access to justice system, the San Andrés Family Court is now open on weekends to serve victims of domestic violence
- Fundación Esperanza had several meetings with lawmakers to reform trafficking law. They succeeded in getting reform through legislative committee with sponsorship by 6 legislators.
- Fundación Esperanza's visit in Washington, DC helped consolidate international networks to assist them in their reform efforts

### **Dominican Republic**

- Grantees held 25 consultations with policy and decision makers, including local prosecutors, government ministers, and police chiefs
- One grantee held a seminar for lawyers and doctors about implications of proposed changes to Law 24-97, which deals with gender violence. They also worked directly with legislators to oppose modification to the law, and succeeded in delaying action until the next session.
- Another grantee testified in a congressional hearing about the potential consequences of modifications to Law 24-97 in the context of international laws and agreements
- The project produced two new policies to improve access to justice, including a signed agreement between grantee and local prosecutor, police chief and other justice agencies pledging to expand and improve legal services for violence victims

### ***IR3.2 – Enhanced justice sector capacity to interpret and enforce legislation in a gender equitable manner***

#### **Mexico**

- Grantees recruited and trained 11 members of justice sector, including lawyers, law students, prosecutors and judges
- In Oaxaca, the grantee performed a thorough analysis of current treatment of gender violence victims by the justice sector and presented the results to justice sector representatives. They will use this diagnosis to prepare and lobby for reforms.
- In Yucatan, the grantee is in the process of introducing women's legal rights course into a law school curriculum and is conducting ongoing training with state officials

#### **Colombia**

- Grantees provided training for 635 representatives of justice sector, including police, prosecutors, attorneys, judges, justice center officials

- In Bogota and Barranquilla, police have asked for additional training, including training on gender violence for spouses of police due to the high rate of domestic violence among police officers
- Grupo GAP and the police they worked with participated in additional training provided by two police experts from the United States
- Technical assistance provider Alicia Contreras visited with government officials to promote services needed by disabled women who are victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

### **Dominican Republic**

- Measurement of attitude changes have been difficult to achieve, but observed on a case-by-case basis. One grantee reported that, as a result of their visibility and collaboration with the justice sector, there was a 20% increase in cases referred to them for legal counseling by judicial authorities
- Project participants trained 60 judicial representatives in international laws, gender violence and trafficking in women
- Asociación Tu Mujer reports that their collaboration with the government on gender violence issues has resulted in improved legal services offered by local authorities
- 25 representatives received full information packet on legal norms protecting women
- A grantee submitted petition to Dominican Supreme Court for first time, using international law to object to reduction of sentence for rapist of 5-year-old child
- Another grantee trained 19 community organizations to provide ongoing oversight to justice sector in application of Law 24-97 (gender violence law) and trained 46 leaders to analyze public budgets for domestic violence coverage.
- Two of the groups promoted international law as an important tool for women's legal rights. A legal advocate representing NAM reported that by mentioning international law, she elicited a more favorable response from the judge to the woman's case before him.
- Grantee Aquelarre produced a study of 80 domestic violence cases settled through mediation to help them advocate for better legal services

### ***IR3.3- Strengthened civil society organizations to advocate for women's legal rights***

#### **Mexico**

- Nine new coalitions or collaborations were established to advocate for women's legal rights protection
- Five grants implemented to combat gender violence
- Three groups implemented legal advocacy projects for the first time;
- One group had never been legally registered before receiving the grant and through the project developed the capacity to oversee a project, conduct workshops, and defend women's legal rights
- Thirty-seven NGOs received training from Partners and grantees

- Three Mexican groups received technical assistance on women's legal rights; two Mexican groups provided technical assistance to other countries

### **Colombia**

- Participants launched 33 new coalitions or collaborations to combat rights violations and implement projects
- Eight projects were implemented on gender violence and trafficking
- Grantees incorporated 119 NGOs in their training sessions
- Seven Colombian organizations received technical assistance, benefiting from interaction with and training by 21 organizations from Mexico and the United States
- Two technical assistance recipients studied integrated domestic violence services, including shelters and legal services, to promote adoption of these models in their communities
- Eighty-five women received counseling services, including legal and psychological

### **Dominican Republic**

- Five new coalitions or collaborations were established by project participants to combat rights violations and implement projects
- NGOs implemented five sub-grants on gender violence and trafficking
- 129 NGOs received training from subgrantees and Partners
- Six Dominican organizations received in-depth technical assistance
- Four technical assistance recipients studied model techniques to improve enforcement of women's legal rights through shelter services
- Civil society organizations provided legal counseling to 2,211 women and their families
- One legal services provider reports a 40% increase in demand for its counseling services in the area where the project took place.

## ***IR3.4- Increased knowledge of and receptivity to women's legal rights***

### **Mexico**

- Grant recipients conducted 58 outreach activities reaching 406 people
- Grantees provided 136 hours of training, including 586 people trained for over 5 hours each
- Of those trained, 180 were social service personnel, trained to provide more sensitive services to victims
- Three new channels were created to inform women about their rights
- Outreach campaigns generated 269 publications, reaching 24,523 people
- Media outreach included 263 reports and press releases reaching 900 media outlets. Eighty seven printed articles were published in five different states.

### **Colombia**

- Grant recipients conducted 215 outreach activities, reaching over 400,000 people by conservative estimates
- Grantees performed 1267 hours of training for 3,519 people
- Twenty service delivery officials trained to better provide services to violence victims
- Fifteen new channels were created to inform women on their rights
- Grantees produced fourteen new publications and distributed them to 10,741 people
- Grantees reached into marginalized populations, included disabled and displaced women, to raise awareness among them and to promote their rights

### **Dominican Republic**

- There were 77 outreach activities by subgrantees, reaching close to 34,000 people
- Grantees trained 293 people in training sessions of over 6 hours on national and international law, gender, violence and trafficking.
- 69 new or improved channels for informing women on their rights were created by subgrantees
- 18 publications were issued on women's legal rights, reaching well over 30,000 people
- Evaluations show 92% of those participating in training had significantly increased their understanding of women's legal rights.

## **Other Findings and Lessons Learned**

Based on the experiences in and feedback from this project, staff and project participants have found the following:

- Turnover rate for government officials causes significant limitations to long-term work. Elections in the three countries generally mean that many of the civil employees that NGOs have worked with are no longer in place. This creates obvious problems for generating long-term change.
- Budget crunches hinder enforcement. Another widespread problem was the lack of sufficient funding to adequately enforce gender violence laws and policies.
- Domestic violence shelters are a critical shortage. For those involved in this project, shelters for women and their children to find protection from abusers are not an abstract concept only applicable in the United States. The relevance of this model to Latin America and the Caribbean is shown by the number of requests for technical assistance visits involving shelters.
- The power of international networking is felt at the grassroots. During the evaluation visits, project staff heard participants talking about what they heard was being done in other countries. Projects like this one that cross borders offer fresh visions and opportunities not just to sophisticated NGO leaders, but also to women at the grassroots just learning about their rights.

- The power of coalitions. While Partners has long preached the power of the coalition, many of our colleague organizations in Latin America have found coalitions difficult to form and manage. Due to the strong emphasis of this project on collaborating with other groups and institutions, all of our grantees and technical assistance recipients worked in coalition in their project activities. Of all the results, participants stress that these relationships are some of the most important. Partners is proud to have given local groups the technical capacity through workshop training and the impetus through grant funding to make these collaborations work.
- Technology can provide networking opportunities, with some wrinkles. The virtual conference has offered varied results. On the one hand, it has given project participants a rare opportunity to disseminate their innovative methodologies across borders and gain important recognition for their work. It has enabled hundreds to view specific materials, including workshop outlines for training police, and current thinking on alternative conflict resolution methods for domestic violence cases. However, it has been difficult to fully engage participants across cyberspace. Part of the problem was technical; there were several difficulties in the early days of the site, leading some participants to believe they couldn't gain access to the site.

## **Conclusion**

Partners of the Americas is very pleased to have had the opportunity to continue its work on behalf of women's legal rights protections in Mexico, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the many excellent nongovernmental organizations that are making a tremendous difference with limited resources. We congratulate the Office of Women in Development for their continued support of such important work and we hope to have the opportunity to collaborate again in the future.