

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT No. EDG-A-00-0A-00005-00

STATUS REPORT MARCH-MAY 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the regulations of the Cooperative Agreement No. EDG-A-00-0A-00005-00 of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR or the Institute), the IIHR submits its status report on the activities that took place from March 1 through May 31, 2001 that were in whole or in part funded by USAID. The overall period of the Grant is from March 1, 2001 to February 28, 2002.

II. THE MISSION AND NATURE OF THE IIHR

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR) is an independent international institution, created in 1980 under an international agreement that mandates it to engage in educational and research activities related to human rights, and to promote the observance of these rights and of democracy throughout the Americas.

The IIHR's Statute defines it as an academic institution, which means that it refrains from investigating cases, presenting or supporting formal complaints against States, or monitoring the compliance of States with their international human rights obligations. This self-imposed limitation has proven to be an effective tool for the IIHR, as it has permitted the Institute to serve as a facilitator of dialogue among the different actors in the human rights movement, and between them and government representatives.

Politically, the work of the IIHR is predicated on the idea that the effective exercise of human rights is only possible within the framework of pluralist and representative democracy. In other words, the IIHR maintains that there is a close link between the full exercise of political democracy and the effective exercise of human rights.

To achieve this, democracy must transcend merely formal considerations and must incorporate excluded and disadvantaged sectors of the population. The indigenous peoples of the Americas, and women as a social group, are perhaps the most important examples. For this reason, the IIHR focuses especially on these segments of the population.

In methodological terms, the work of the IIHR is based on three premises:

- An integrated approach is essential for human rights work. Human rights constitute an integrated system, in which no single right, group of rights, or so-called 'generation' of human rights, takes precedence. Economic, social and cultural rights are as important for the effective exercise of human rights as civil and political rights.

- An interdisciplinary approach is essential for human rights work. As human rights cut across the entire social fabric, no single academic discipline can adequately address their complexity. The issues involved include those of a legal, political, historical, anthropological and philosophical nature. Only an approach that incorporates all these perspectives can explain such a complex phenomenon.
- A multisectoral approach is essential for human rights work. Human rights issues concern different agents and sectors of society. Activists, government officials, political leaders and representatives of minorities all have a stake and share a common interest in this field, which, being one of the main areas of political consensus of modern times, also allows for different perspectives and is a source of strong internal tensions.

III. CURRENT STRUCTURE

The Institute's Board of Directors is its highest governing body and, as such, is responsible for establishing general policies. Its members are acknowledged authorities on human rights from all parts of the hemisphere. The Board meets once a year, while the Permanent Commission, a group that advises the Executive Director, usually meets several times a year. The person directly responsible for implementing the Institute's projects is the Executive Director. The post of Executive Director is currently held by Roberto Cuéllar, a native of El Salvador.

For operational purposes, responsibility for implementing the IHR's activities is assigned to the following:

Department of Civil Society Entities. This area carries out activities of human rights training and promotion with organized sectors of civil society (organizations devoted to human rights in general, and the rights of women, migrant and indigenous peoples in particular); organizes specialized fora for the discussion of emerging issues in the field of human rights; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

Department of Public Institutions. This area carries out activities of human rights promotion and training with the judicial, legislative and executive branches of governments, the military, the police and the prison system; promotes legislative reform designed to improve access by members of the public to their fundamental rights; promotes the institution of the ombudsman throughout the hemisphere and provides advisory assistance to existing ombudsmen's offices; provides advisory assistance to ministries of education for the modernization of academic programs; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL). Among its activities, CAPEL provides advisory and technical assistance on electoral matters to organizations responsible for organizing electoral processes; holds fora for discussions and promotion with different political sectors; analyzes and discusses the issue of governance with political actors; provides advisory assistance and training and conducts research aimed at strengthening political parties; sends missions to observe elections in all parts of the hemisphere; and gathers, publishes and distributes specialized materials.

The units, on the other hand, are responsible for proposing and implementing Institute policies related to their respective fields of action, based on the guidelines established by the Board and the Executive Directorate.

Administrative-Accounting and General Services Unit: comprised of the following sections: treasury, accounting, informatics, human resources and general services.

Institutional Development Unit: proposes and implements policies regarding the Institute's relations with donors, external promotion and the control of the quality of the Institute's products.

Applied Research Unit: responsible for the Institute's policy in the areas of thematic research, integrated plans, special programs and topics that cut across all the Institute's areas of work. It oversees the "active promotion" approach, particularly as regards the three core topics (political participation, education and access to justice) and their impact in the countries on which the IIHR wishes to place special emphasis.

Educational Unit: designs, tests and implements the methodologies, teaching aids and educational and evaluative techniques that the IIHR uses in its training activities. It is creating and will maintain a data base on educational policies for primary, secondary and higher education in Latin America, and proposes ways of harmonizing the IIHR's action with educational reform projects in the region.

Information and Editorial Service Unit: responsible for the IIHR's editorial policy, for incorporating the use of Internet into the Institute's work of promoting human rights, for meeting the information needs of the target population, and for strengthening the IIHR's formal and informal networks.

IV. USAID-FUNDED ACTIVITIES

A. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

1. NINETEENTH INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1 General framework

The Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights is one of the IIHR's emblematic activities, not only on account of its outstanding academic caliber, long tradition and the high regard in which it is held by the human rights movement in the hemisphere, but also because it epitomizes the entire work of the Institute: it serves as a forum for members of the human rights movement in the region; it focuses on human rights research, promotion and education; and it provides a unique opportunity for the different sectors represented to discuss issues, negotiate new initiatives and create human rights networks.

That the activity continues to be relevant is evident from the large number of applications received each year, as well as specific requests from many organizations asking the IIHR to disseminate the Course content, conclusions and methodology.

Different thematic focuses were established for the courses scheduled to be held in 2000, 2001 and 2002, in line with the priorities of the institutional strategy. Although the Course remains an interdisciplinary and multisectoral activity, the Institute now implements academic programs that are thematically more coherent and integrated, and uses a methodology that makes the event a true learning process.

1.2 Objectives

- To hold an interdisciplinary and intersectoral course for the study of human rights doctrine and jurisprudence in the Americas, with special emphasis on the rights related to political participation.
- To provide an opportunity for analysis and the exchange of experiences, and to generate local and regional initiatives designed to increase the political participation of all sectors.
- To establish linkages and networks that will bolster other efforts aimed at the promotion and defense of human rights.

1.3 Performance indicators

- 120 multiplier agents trained, drawn from every sector, a wide variety of areas of work and more than 18 countries in the western hemisphere.
- Proposals implemented by the participants, with the support of their organizations, as a direct result of the Course.
- National cooperation networks created or strengthened.

1.4 Implementation of the project

1.4.1 Development of the theoretical framework and design of the academic program

In March, the Course organizers completed the theoretical framework for the activity, based on the thematic focus. This task was carried out by a working group composed of representatives of the IIHR's different departments and units.

As was explained in the annual work program, the thematic focus chosen for this year's course was political participation, defined as being "all the activities carried out by the members of a given community based on their right to choose their system of government, elect political representatives, be elected to and hold public office, have a say in the discussion and drafting of legislation and public policies, and hold their representatives accountable."

Based on this definition and bearing in mind the objectives of the Course, the working group proposed a number of core topics that it felt needed to be covered during the lectures, panel discussions and participative activities.

Having determined the thematic focus, the organizers were able to establish a participants' profile based on the professional and academic link with political participation, from all sectors, areas of work and disciplines.

1.4.2 Publicizing of the Course

Last year the Course organizers decided to take advantage of the new technologies available and made changes in the way that the activity was publicized. In the past, two posters had been sent out, one five months in advance. The first of these posters was eliminated and information on the

Course was disseminated via the Institute's web page and email.¹ These changes yielded good results and were therefore retained this year.

A single poster was produced and over 2500 copies were sent out to recipients in all parts of the hemisphere. The organizers also compiled a list of the email addresses of civil society and governmental organizations, institutions and agencies whose work is related to the thematic focus of the Course, to ensure that information about the activity reached people whom the IIHR was particularly interested in having apply.

A section on the Course was designed especially for the web site. In addition to academic and logistical information, this included an on-line registration form, to make it easier for candidates to apply and for the staff to process the data. This effort proved so successful that 80% of all the applications received were submitted via the Internet.

1.4.3 Selection of the teaching staff

The high academic caliber of the Interdisciplinary Course is largely due to the care that is taken in selecting the teaching staff. They are always internationally renowned specialists in their particular fields.

For this year's course the organizers selected over 20 experts who specialize in topics such as the protection of human rights at the international and national levels, electoral processes, electoral observation, electoral justice, forms of political representation, freedom of expression, discrimination and social exclusion, human rights education and ways in which society can monitor the political system.

All the experts who accepted the invitation to take part in the course were sent a letter giving details of the subject matter and the methodology that would be employed. Specific suggestions were also made regarding how they should approach their respective topic and any related issues, in order to avoid duplication and ensure that all the necessary points are covered. The aim was also to reinforce the concept of the Course as a process.

1.4.4 Receipt and processing of applications

As already mentioned, a clearly defined profile was established for the participants. This made the selection process easier. Indeed, some would-be applicants even ruled themselves out. Despite being interested in the Course, they informed the IIHR that they would not be applying because their field of work was not related to the thematic focus.

Despite this apparent restriction, some 500 applications were received from all sectors, areas of work and professions, from 28 countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa.

As has already been noted, the process of studying and processing the applications was made easier by the fact that the registration form was available on the Institute's web site. Only the data that the IIHR required was included.²

¹ The second poster is still distributed, to ensure that people who do not have access to email or the Internet are made aware of the Course.

² In the past, a lot of lengthy documents were received and the staff had to spend many hours garnering and processing the information.

The data base that is used was designed specially for this process. The personal information that is keyed in includes each applicant's full name, sex, profession, area of work, sector, addresses, type of work, reasons for applying, the target population that would benefit from their participation, references and the type of scholarship requested. All these elements are taken into consideration to ensure that a balanced group of students is chosen.

Once the closing date for applications had passed and all the information had been keyed into the data base, detail lists of the candidates was printed out and distributed among the members of the Selection Committee.

1.4.5 Preselection of participants

In order to ensure that a balance was struck among the types of participants chosen, the Selection Committee included representatives of all the IIHR's departments and programs.

After holding several meetings to study each application carefully, the Committee finally chose a group of 110 people from 26 countries. It included officials from electoral bodies, government agencies, judicial and legislative branches, international organizations, churches, NGOs, universities, etc. Also selected were individuals whose work is related to gender, indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples, the gay population, migrants and refugees, human rights education, etc.

In the informational materials about the Course distributed this year, the organizers explained that only a few scholarships were available and that if various applicants met all the requirements, preference would be given to those who were in a position to cover part or all of the cost of attending the Course. Nonetheless, since many human rights organizations in the region are strapped for funds to cover the cost of attending activities of this kind, the IIHR did earmark some resources for scholarships.

Letters were sent to all the successful applicants informing them of the Committee's decision, the type of scholarship they had been awarded and the conditions they would have to fulfill in order to attend the Course. They were required to fill out and return a form by a specific date. They also had to agree to observe the rules of the Course and present a research paper. Instructions regarded the research project were enclosed with the letter.

Each preselected participant was asked to research a problem related to political participation in his/her area, province or country. This work involved conducting a brief diagnostic study, explaining the causes and effects of the problem, and suggesting possible solutions. These research papers will be used to undertake a regional diagnostic study during the participative activities at the Course.

Failure to submit this research paper by the date stipulated would be interpreted as meaning that the person in question had decided not to attend the Interdisciplinary Course.

All preselected participants also agreed to furnish the Institute, prior to the start of the Course, with copies of certain legislation and documents that will be passed on to the IIHR's Documentation Center and Library. These include their country's Political Constitution, and laws governing unconstitutionality, habeas corpus, *amparo*, territorial distribution, electoral matters, etc. As well as material related to indigenous peoples, gender, the ombudsman, human rights education, etc., depending on the nature of their work.

1.4.6 Receipt and processing of research papers

The research papers were processed and synthesized in a single document, using quantitative and qualitative criteria. This document will be used as input for the workshops scheduled to be held during the Course. A regional diagnostic study of the status of political participation will be conducted, with the participants themselves identifying solutions and proposing actions.

Copies of the document synthesizing the research papers will be distributed among the participants at the start of the Course. This will require an intense effort on the part of the staff to analyze and process the information in the days immediately prior to the activity.

1.4.7 Final selection of participants

Once all the prior conditions had been met, the organizers confirmed who would be attending the Course and made the necessary arrangements (air tickets were issued, hotel reservations made, internal transportation coordinated, personalized materials prepared, etc.)

1.4.8 Production, selection and compilation of materials

Each participant will receive a package of didactic and informational materials that are essential for the smooth implementation of the logistical and academic aspects of the Course. In addition to a number of IIHR publications, the students will receive a copy the Participants' Guide, which is currently being prepared. It will contain information about the IIHR, the Interdisciplinary Course, the thematic and methodological content, logistical matters and other points that the participants' need to be aware of during their stay in Costa Rica.

A number of articles and documents are also compiled for the Course each year. These include the Course Anthology, which is regarded as basic support material, an Interdisciplinary Bibliography (bibliographic records of over 1000 documents available from the IIHR Library and Documentation Center), and the synopsis of the academic papers described above.

All these materials are currently being prepared.

1.4.9 Logistical organization

The logistical strategy implemented for the Interdisciplinary Course is another element that sets this activity apart. The following steps have already been completed:

- Price quotations were obtained from several hotels. A hotel was then selected and a contract signed. The IIHR also hired other services (internal transportation, audio and video equipment, technological support, etc.).
- Price quotations were obtained for office supplies and the respective purchases were made.
- Price quotations were obtained for the printing of the didactic materials.
- The implementation of activities was coordinated with the staff of the hotel that will be hosting the event.
- Reservations were made and air tickets purchased.
- The organizers coordinated the travel arrangements of the participants and teaching staff.
- Entry visas were processed with the local authorities.
- Special activities were planned and organized (inaugural and closing ceremonies, activities away from the hotel).

- The Institute made arrangements with the Office of the President of Costa Rica for the President to attend the inaugural ceremony.
- Invitations were sent out to government officials, donor organizations and members of the diplomatic corps stationed in the country.

1.5 Results achieved

With two weeks to go to the start of the Nineteenth Interdisciplinary Course on Human Rights, the following results have been achieved:

- A theoretical framework was established for the development of the thematic and methodological content of this activity.
- An academic program was designed incorporating the most important aspects of human rights in general, and political participation, in particular.
- A specific methodological proposal was drawn up for research, training and the drafting of national proposals, involving lectures, panel discussions and participative activities.
- Research was carried out by the 110 people preselected to take part in the Course, making it possible to conduct a regional diagnostic study on political participation.
- A group of 110 participants from 26 countries was selected. They work for electoral bodies, government agencies, the judicial and legislative branches, international organizations, churches, NGOs, universities, etc.
- A team of 35 professors was put together; each is a specialist in his/her field.
- The content of the informational and didactic materials was defined and prepared.
- All the logistical arrangements needed for the smooth implementation of the Course were made.

B. PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RELATED TO ELECTORAL MATTERS

Between March and May 2001, CAPEL built on the results of the institutional planning process implemented in the first two months of the year. In May the *first meeting of training units of members of the Tikal Protocol* was held in Panama City. This activity marked the start of a major training program for the technical personnel of the electoral bodies.

Progress was also made in determining the date and site of the *Tenth Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy*. The Electoral Tribunal of Panama expressed interest in co-hosting this academic event and the IIHR Executive Director traveled to Panama City to meet with the President of Panama and members of the Electoral Tribunal. The Tribunal is now finalizing certain financial details so that the activity can be held in Panama.

Following a hiatus in technical assistance and exploratory (early warning) missions in recent years, CAPEL has been quite successful in repositioning itself in these areas. Especially important was the technical assistance provided to the National Elections Board of Peru, for both the first and second rounds of voting. A series of meetings and negotiations were also held with the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua and the USAID office in that country. It is highly likely that CAPEL will be implementing a technical assistance project in Nicaragua in the run up to the November 4 elections.

CAPEL also visited the electoral body of Honduras, which is in the early stages of organizing an electoral process that will culminate with general elections in November of this year. As well as

visiting the National Elections Tribunal, CAPEL's representatives met with the local representatives of international cooperation agencies. However, despite the conspicuous technical weaknesses that exist in the electoral field, the international cooperation agencies do not seem interested in financing efforts to enhance the Tribunal's technical capabilities.

The secretariats of the different associations contacted the members in order to set the dates for the two annual conferences. Preparations are already under way for the Fifteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol, scheduled to be held July 26-29 in the Dominican Republic, and the Ninth Conference of the Quito Protocol, which is due to take place August 28-30 in Quito, Ecuador.

Finally, *UNIORE's Monthly Newsletter* has developed into a very useful tool. It enables UNIORE members to communicate and share information and experiences. The newsletter has been very well received and we have begun sending it to other institutions working in the electoral field, and to other regional associations of electoral bodies.

1. STRENGTHENING OF ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS: SECRETARIATS OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

1.1 General framework

In its capacity as the executive secretariat of both the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean, and of the South American association, CAPEL is responsible for organizing their respective annual conferences.

This year the conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean will be held in the Dominican Republic. Preparations for the event are being coordinated with the host country's Central Electoral Board. The electoral bodies of South America will be holding their conference in Quito, Ecuador.

1.2 Objectives

- To generate a specialized forum for the promotion of democracy and the organization of transparent and free electoral processes through the discussion of the priority issues and problems faced by electoral bodies in the Americas, by celebrating the Ninth Conference of the Association of South American Electoral Bodies and the Fifteenth Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean.
- To expand interactive communication and foster productive communication and reciprocal learning among electoral bodies in the hemisphere, as a means of determining the strategies to be followed in electoral matters in the Americas.
- To identify potential initiatives for the improvement of the organizational and administrative capabilities of the electoral bodies: electoral legislation, electoral administration, electoral systems, technology applied to electoral matters and institutional development.

1.3 Performance indicators

- At least three horizontal cooperation projects being implemented as a result of initiatives proposed at the conferences, involving the use of these mechanisms.
- Survey of the electoral bodies carried out, to pinpoint major changes in their organization and management capabilities.
- Talks, seminars and debates organized for the staff of the electoral bodies, on issues discussed during the Conferences.

1.4 Implementation of the project

1.4.1 Meetings prior to the Fifteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol (Peru, May 31, 2001)

CAPEL has started to organize the Fifteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol, scheduled to be held July 26-29 in the Dominican Republic. The Director of CAPEL, José Thompson, and officials Ileana Aguilar and Ricardo Valverde met for the first time with the President of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic, Manuel Morel, and Board member Luis Arias. During their meeting, on May 31 in Lima, Peru, agreement was reached on the work program and thematic focus of the Conference.

1.4.2 Preparatory meetings for the Ninth Conference of the Quito Protocol (Ecuador, May 10-11, 2001)

CAPEL official Ricardo Valverde visited the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Ecuador from May 10-11 to discuss the date and thematic focus of the Ninth Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of South America. It was decided that the activity would be held August 28-31. Agreement was also reached on the focus of the event and each counterpart institution's financial contribution.

1.4.3 First meeting of training units of members of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (Panama, May 10-12, 2001)

The first meeting of training units of members of the Tikal Protocol was held May 10-12 in Panama City, following a decision taken at the association's fourteenth conference, held in Guatemala last November. During that meeting, the delegates of the electoral bodies expressed interest in continuing to train their technical personnel and step up horizontal cooperation among the electoral bodies. The academic event in Panama, which consisted of participative workshops, was attended by representatives of the electoral bodies of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic and Honduras. Other UNIORE members were also invited to take part in the meeting and Mexico, Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia all sent representatives.

1.4.4 UNIORE Newsletter

As part of its work with the associations, CAPEL developed and now publishes the UNIORE newsletter for the member organizations. Distributed electronically, this monthly publication includes information on electoral processes and the projects and activities of the different bodies, the Executive Secretariat and other topics such as political rights and electoral law.

1.5 Results achieved

- The work program was drawn up for the Fifteenth Conference of the Tikal Protocol.
- Decisions were reached regarding the date and the thematic focus of the Ninth Conference of the Quito Protocol.
- Training on specific topics was provided to the technical staff of the electoral bodies of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay and Bolivia.

Three UNIORE monthly newsletters were widely disseminated, via the Internet.

2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, HORIZONTAL COOPERATION AND EARLY WARNING MISSIONS

2.1 General framework

In its capacity as the Executive Secretariat of the associations of electoral bodies, CAPEL is especially attentive to the technical assistance needs of the member organizations and facilitates horizontal cooperation among them. The exploratory and early warning missions are very important, inasmuch as they allow CAPEL to identify the technical needs of the electoral bodies and provide solutions, either through cooperation projects or horizontal cooperation.

2.2 Objectives

- To foster the exchange of experiences and knowledge among the electoral bodies, in order to help improve the region's electoral systems.
- To contribute to the design and implementation of electoral technical assistance projects in order to enhance institutional capacity of electoral institutions in the region.
- To gather and analyze information *in situ* on situations that are potentially controversial or could pose a threat or danger to the democratic stability of a given country, in order to make recommendations aimed at containing or addressing the threats or the risk factor in question.

2.3 Performance indicators

- Letters requesting technical or advisory assistance received by the IIHR to support the work of the electoral bodies.
- Financial assistance secured from the international community.
- At least two technical assistance projects implemented effectively.

2.4 Implementation of the project

2.4.1 Technical assistance to the National Elections Board of Peru: *Election Monitoring Program* (Peru, February 7-August 8, 2001)

Following the decision taken at the Fifth Conference of UNIORE, and at the request of the JNE, in February this year the IIHR signed a cooperation agreement with the electoral body. The aim was for CAPEL to implement a technical assistance project to support the General Election Monitoring Plan for the April 8 elections. The agreement runs from February 7 through August 8 and is being implemented with funds from USAID/Peru.

The basic objectives are to assist the members of the JNE's governing body and the Office for the Monitoring of Electoral Affairs. CAPEL is providing technical support to ensure that the activities called for in the plan are implemented pursuant to current electoral legislation, and that the Board can identify any flaws and/or irregularities during the electoral process.

CAPEL organized a team of experts to assist the JNE, composed of six advisors, a project leader and a coordinator. Three of the advisors are in charge of monitoring the technical activities being implemented by the Special Electoral Boards (JEE) and the Decentralized Offices for Electoral Processes (ODPE). To accomplish this, they make regular visits to the provincial capitals and other parts of the country. The other three advisors are monitoring a series of activities (related to logistics, electoral administration, training and informatics) being implemented by the ONPE in Lima and the ODPEs in Lima and Callao.

By means of written reports and frequent meetings with the members of the JNE, the CAPEL keeps the Board abreast of the latest developments. Copies of these reports are passed on to the ONPE, so as to provide it with up-to-date information on the situation in its offices in the interior of the country. The CAPEL will continue to provide technical assistance to the JNE through the second round of voting.

With funds provided by the members of UNIORE, a mission was also organized to observe the elections on April 8. Composed of representatives of the electoral bodies of Mexico, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, Guatemala and Paraguay, the delegation met with the presidential candidates of the major parties, academics and representatives of the media, Peru's electoral bodies and organized civil society.

2.4.2 Technical assistance to the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua (Nicaragua, March 11-12; May 17-18 and 27 y 28, 2001)

At the request of USAID/Nicaragua, CAPEL mounted a technical mission (March) and two working meetings (May) with a view to assisting the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) of Nicaragua in organizing this year's electoral process (elections are scheduled for November 4). CAPEL conducted a diagnostic study of the organization's different operating areas. The mission was composed of Ileana Aguilar, a Program Officer of CAPEL, and three specialists (experts in electoral informatics, electoral logistics and voter lists and electoral rolls, respectively). After that mission, negotiations got under way between USAID/Nicaragua, the CSE and CAPEL, aimed at formalizing a technical assistance project. CAPEL's Director José Thompson and consultants Ricardo Valverde and Carlos Claramount, have held several working meetings in Managua with USAID and CSE officials and the US Ambassador to Nicaragua, Mr. Oliver Garza.

2.4.3 Exploratory mission to the National Elections Tribunal of Honduras (Honduras, April 23-24, 2001)

CAPEL officials José Thompson and Ricardo Valverde held a series of meetings April 23-24 in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to discuss possible areas for technical cooperation in the run up to the Honduran elections slated for November this year.

They met with members of the National Elections Tribunal, the head of USAID/Honduras, Timothy Mahone, and SIDA representative Ian Roberts.

2.5 Results achieved

- Technical flaws were identified and corrected during the first and second rounds of the Peruvian electoral process.
- Negotiations were held with the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua with a view to CAPEL helping to organize the electoral process.
- Exploratory talks were held with the National Elections Tribunal of Honduras to discuss possible areas of technical cooperation.

3. TENTH INTER-AMERICAN COURSE ON ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

3.1 General framework

The Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy is an academic activity targeted at roughly 85-100 people, primarily representatives of electoral bodies, political parties and civil society organizations working in the area of political rights. These are individuals who play an active role in the social and political life of their countries. As such, they can have a positive impact on the electorate and thus help strengthen the democratic system. The teaching staff for the course is made up of leading academics and specialists, who contribute both their knowledge and practical experience to the methodological strategy of the event.

The thematic focus of this year's course is *education for life in democracy*. This subject was chosen because empowering the citizenry and inculcating democratic values and practices is essential if democracy is to be strengthened. Education is a key means of achieving this objective.

3.2 Objectives

- To provide an opportunity for a high-level group of representatives of electoral bodies, political leaders, academics and members of NGOs to address issues related to education for life in democracy, political participation and democratization, with a cross-cutting perspective (gender, ethnic diversity and the participation of civil society).
- To maintain the Course's space as a forum for the exchange of visions, interpretations and projections of what the situation of democracy in the hemisphere (particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean) is and could be, identifying possible tendencies and potential threats.

3.3 Performance indicators

- National projects on education for life in democracy generated in at least five of the countries represented at the Course.
- Work related to education for life in democracy incorporated into the work program of the training units of the electoral bodies.

3.4 Implementation of the project

IIHR Executive Director Roberto Cuéllar and Dennis Allen, a member of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama, met with the President of Panama, Mireya Moscoso, to invite her government to host the Tenth Inter-American Course on Elections and Democracy. They explained to her the nature, scope and prestige of this academic event. The Electoral Tribunal of Panama and CAPEL are following up on these efforts, with a view to holding the course in Panama City in October this year.

3.5 Results achieved

- The thematic focus was chosen so that the organizers could proceed to design the academic program for the Course.
- The site and date of the activity were decided.

C. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1 General framework

During the period under review, the Institute used the funds earmarked for institutional support and development to run and coordinate the work of its different departments and units, support all its ongoing projects and activities, and operate independently from other cooperation agencies, counterpart organizations and governments.

1.2 Objectives

- To improve the professional training provided to the staff so that they, in turn, provide services of the highest quality.
- To ensure the sustained economic growth of the IIHR, by diversifying its sources of funding.
- To strengthen the Institute's capabilities in the specialized area of information, with a view to maximizing the results of the projects.
- To create new ways, electronic and published to disseminate the results and reach new audiences.

1.3 Performance indicators

- The IIHR will have managed to operate its headquarters and maintain its managerial and administrative staff for a period of twelve months.
- The IIHR positioned as the leading academic institution in the hemisphere dedicated to the promotion of human rights and the provision of assistance and training in this field.
- New technologies and/or methodologies applied in at least three projects, as a result of the training processes implemented for IIHR staff.
- Agreements with the traditional cooperation agencies renewed and at least one new donor secured for the IIHR.
- Planning, strategies and integration with donors improved.
- IIHR web site identified as a key source of information on human rights and democracy.

1.4 Implementation of the project

1.4.1 Training

1.4.1.1 Diagnostic Study by *HG Consultores*

The IIHR has made further efforts in the areas of institutional development and project evaluation, mindful of the need to enhance the quality of its services and thus strengthen its position as a leading organization in the region.

The firm *HG Consultores* was hired to prepare a report that will permit the Institute to update its internal procedures and improve the technical quality of its services.

During the reporting period, representatives of the firm held meetings with several Institute officials who, given the positions they hold, are regarded as key members of the personnel.

1.4.1.2 Staff training

The IIHR regards training for its staff as extremely important. Members of the personnel are encouraged to take training or updating courses that will enable them to perform their duties even better. During the period under review, three members of the staff (one from the finance unit and two secretaries) completed training courses in their respective areas.

1.4.2 Outreach/Project development

1.4.2.1 Participation of Ana María Rodino and José Thompson in the USAID Performance Management Program (Washington D.C., April 23-27, 2001)

At the invitation of USAID, Ana María Rodino and José Thompson, Coordinator of the Educational Unit and Director of CAPEL, respectively, took part in a training activity for USAID personnel on the formulation of indicators for monitoring and evaluating development projects. This technique is being used increasingly, because it makes the management of project activities more efficient.

The workshop was particularly useful on account of its practical approach: once the participants had studied the methodologies used to monitor and evaluate projects, they looked at specific cases and discussed real situations, in order to familiarize themselves with the use of indicators. The delegates from the IIHR were able to make a useful contribution to the discussions. As beneficiaries of the resources provided by USAID, they were able to cite their work on the ground.

On their return to San Jose, the IIHR officials gave a presentation to a group of colleagues on the most important aspects of the training. The Institute decided to organize a training activity to share the methodology of this instrument with the academic personnel.

1.4.3 Board of Directors and Permanent Commission

The Executive Director of the Institute, Roberto Cuéllar, presented his first report of activities to the Board of Directors during its annual meeting, held March 15-16 in San Jose, Costa Rica.

In his presentation he described the main lines of action implemented by the IIHR between October 1999 and December 2000, under the 50 projects implemented during that period.

He said that the reorganization process had improved coordination and communication among the operating departments and support units. This would have a positive impact both on project implementation and institutional synergy. The process had preserved the Institute's comparative advantages, i.e., the inter-American scope of its work, its wide range of educational activities, its transparent financial and administrative management, the interdependence of its actions between public institutions and civil human rights organizations, and its role as the technical secretariats of regional and subregional associations and federations, such as UNIORE, the FIO and the Central American Council of Human Rights Ombudsmen.

In the coming months the Executive Directorate will be turning its attention to staffing policy and the implementation of regular performance evaluations.

Mr. Cuéllar also said that it was vital to upgrade the IIHR's informatics resources, modernizing both its intra- and extranet communications.

1.4.4 On-line information systems

1.4.4.1 Preparation of the Strategic Information Plan (SIP)

As explained in the work plan, the IIHR is currently working on the design of a Strategic Information Plan that will enable management to develop the institution's informatics capabilities over the long term. This plan will be complemented by an informatics audit that will enable the Institute to establish policies, rules and procedures for the internal or external development of its informatics systems.

At the time of writing efforts are being made to determine the Institute's level of technological development. In other words, the Institute's information systems are being analyzed to determine what adjustments need to be made to the current technological infrastructure. At the same time, a plan is being drawn up to provide the Institute's academic staff with training in information techniques, to familiarize them with informatics tools so that they use them to the full in their work in the future.

1.4.4.2 Web site

The IIHR web site is being redesigned. The improvements include the information available, the quality of the graphics, ease of navigation and access to the Institute's services (Digital Library, publications, specialized discussion lists, virtual communities and direct links to counterpart organizations, i.e., those that work with the same target populations as the IIHR).

1.4.4.3 Virtual communities

The IIHR has designed information systems for specific target groups, such as the personnel of electoral bodies, ombudsman's offices, public school teachers, NGOs specializing in gender and/or human rights. These systems are:

- The Integrated Ibero-American Information System (SIII), whose web page contains links to discussion forums, data bases and sections that provide access to information.
- The EXPODH-virtual, which will provide teachers and researchers with access to educational resources they can use in their work and information on human rights education for specific age groups.
- The OmbudsNet, intended primarily for the staff of ombudsman's offices in Ibero-America, which will promote specialization in this subject through the material available.
- The SIRPEG, intended for the personnel of NGOs whose work involves gender issues and/or human rights.

1.4.5 Infrastructure and administrative support

These are indirect costs incurred in implementing projects (security services for the IIHR's premises, janitorial services and the cost of utilities such as water, electricity and communications, and office and other supplies needed for day-to-day operations).

1.5 Results achieved

- The Institute's activities during the period were programmed to coincide in the same places, thus enhancing the IIHR's presence in the countries and improving coordination among the different departments.
- The teams and individuals responsible for implementing the projects were appointed.
- Price quotations were requested for the preparation a three-module plan on informatics and networking.
- Price quotations were received from firms specializing in the auditing of informatics systems.
- The web site was redesigned (<http://www.iidh.ed.cr>)
- Communication forums and new data bases were activated as part of the SIII.

- An inventory was carried out of educational resources available in an electronic format, which will form part of the EXPODH-virtual.
- The first version of the operating plan of the OmbudsNet was drawn up.

2. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

2.1 General framework

The institutional strategy sets out three areas of rights as priorities: access to justice, political participation and education in human rights, cross-cut by three focuses: gender, ethnic diversity and the participation of civil society.

The first stage in this process is the generation of knowledge to achieve the necessary precision for operational definitions regarding the scope and potential of the areas of rights and the cross-cut perspectives.

Secondly, the process will design tools to effectively apply the strategy, including systems of indicators of impact (for the projects) and progress (to be applied to selected countries). These indicators are expected to improve the design of the project interventions.

By providing special training to staff members regarding the implementation of the framework, methodology and the application of the system of indicators, a comprehensive evaluation of all projects underway and in preparation is expected, in order to analyze their relevance and pertinence in terms of the new strategy.

2.2 Objectives

- To develop theoretical definitions and a methodology of the three priority areas with the cross-cutting perspectives, for the design and validation of a system of indicators.
- To conduct studies on the progress of human rights from the perspective of gender, ethnic diversity and civil society, in the six selected countries, through the application of the system of indicators.
- To strengthen the institutional capacity of the IIHR in order to work on the three priority areas, keeping in mind the perspectives of gender, ethnic diversity and participation of civil society.

2.3 Performance indicators

- Document containing the system of indicators, including: conceptual and operating definitions, methodological instructions, the setting of goals, and the design of indicators and indices.
- IIHR professional staff trained in the use of the system of indicators.
- At least 18 country reports on the subject of political participation, viewed from the three cross-cutting perspectives, using the system of indicators of progress in human rights.

- By the end of 2002, at least 30% of the IHR's projects will be designed taking into account the results obtained from the application of the system of indicators.

2.4 Implementation of the project

The following activities were completed during the reporting period:

- The terms of reference were drawn up, the consultants were selected and hired, and the results were received for the component *Annotated human rights bibliographies, 1998-2000*, for the six countries on which the Institute is focusing.
- The terms of reference were drawn up, and the consultants selected and hired, for general conceptual studies on access to justice, political participation, human rights education, gender equity and ethnic and cultural diversity.
- The terms of reference were drawn up, and the consultants were selected and hired, for four studies on experiences with political participation from the perspectives of gender equity, ethnic diversity and the participation of civil society.
- The status of ratifications, measures adopted and legislation governing political participation was documented in the six countries.
- All the information available on the six countries was organized and keyed into the Documentation Center's data base.
- A system, a methodological instrument and a schedule of events was designed in consultation with IHR alumni and other specialists in the six countries, to establish priority areas, desirable goals and mechanisms for measuring performance, related to the three thematic focuses and from the three crosscutting perspectives.
- Meetings/workshops were held to present and elicit feedback on the proposal and the general methodology with alumni and representatives of women's groups and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities.
- Internal training activities were organized to keep the staff abreast of the progress being made in implementing the institutional strategy and to give them an opportunity to make suggestions as to how it could be improved. These sessions were programmed for two Thursdays each month, from 14:30 to 17:00, as shown below:

Date	Topic	People in charge
April 15	Startup session, general framework and programming	Line Bareiro Diego Iturralde
April 26	Cross-cutting perspectives (Gender emphasis)	Line Bareiro Cristina Zeledón
May 10	Analysis and discussion of the thematic focuses	Diego Iturralde
May 24	OAS General Assembly (Inter-American System)	Javier Mariezcurrena

- A working group was set up to review the results in each of the countries and draw up a list of obligations fulfilled by the states.

Progress was made with the strategy in the following areas:

- A document was prepared describing the conceptual and operating framework of the system of indicators. This includes the initial operating definitions of the three thematic focuses and two of the crosscutting perspectives (gender equity and ethnic and cultural diversity), the general methodology of the process and some of its stages, and the design of validation exercises and the establishment of goals. At the time of writing, 60% of the work has been completed.
- Pilot studies are being carried out on experiences regarding political participation. These will make it possible to confirm the relevance of the conceptual and methodological studies, compare them with the results of the consultations and make the necessary adjustments to the instruments. Some 30% of the work has already been completed.
- Parallel to the training the staff is receiving on the general approach of the strategy, a group of officials is being trained to specialize in the situation in the six countries. Some 25% of this training has been completed.

A series of obstacles, that have had an adverse effect on the pace of the implementation, have also been encountered with regard to the strategy:

- Identifying possible consultants proved difficult, since the tasks specified in the terms of reference are a new concept. Many of the candidates did not possess the required experience.
- Several consultants turned in their documents late and this held up progress in other areas of the strategy, since the different components are interconnected.
- Some program officers have been reluctant to adopt the idea of working "by country," since certain tasks are still assigned by department or program.

2.5 Results achieved

- *Annotated bibliographies on human rights 1998-2000*, with emphasis on the three rights and the three perspectives, prepared by:
 - Vanesa Vázquez (Guatemala)
 - Human Rights Center of the Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico)
 - Claudia Urey, Bufete Jurídico Popular of the UCA (Nicaragua)
 - Clyde Soto, Centro for Documentation and Studies
 - National Human Rights Office (Peru)
 - PROVEA, (Venezuela)
- Documentation completed regarding human rights in the countries:
 - Status of ratification of human rights instruments
 - Study of the reports of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 1995-2000
 - Reports on measures to combat racial discrimination
 - Study of rules governing electoral matters and participation

- Information on the six countries organized and keyed into the Documentation Center's data base.
- Conceptual studies on:
 - Political participation: José Enrique Molina (University of Maracaibo, Venezuela)
 - Access to justice: Farith Simon (Universidad Católica, Ecuador)
 - Education in Human Rights: Duarte y Asociados, Costa Rica
 - Gender equity and three thematic areas: Laura Guzmán (University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica)
 - Ethnic diversity and three thematic areas: Ricardo Calla (Universidad Cordillera, Bolivia)
- Studies on experiences with regard to political participation (first version):
 - Women in Mexico: Dalia Barrera (GIMTRAP, Mexico)
 - Indigenous people in Peru: Adda Chuecas (CAAAP, Peru)
 - Civil society in Peru: Rudesindo Vega (Transparencia, Peru)
 - Indigenous people in Mexico: François Lartigue (CIESAS, Mexico)