



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# Justice Reform and Modernization Program (JRMP)



*“The purpose of justice is to give every man his due”*  
Cicero

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# USAID

“Working with Colombians to build a better future”

## STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FROM THE JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID or AID) is the institution responsible for implementing and administering the official aid programs for socio-economic development and humanitarian assistance of the United States government in Colombia.

USAID supports the socio-economic development of Colombia through four strategic activities:

1. Promoting economic and social alternatives to illicit crop production.
2. Promoting more responsive, participatory and accountable democracy.
3. Supporting the displaced population and other vulnerable groups.
4. Supporting processes of demobilization and reintegration.

In the area of democratic governance, USAID implements the following programs in Colombia:

1. Justice reform and access to justice.
2. Enhancing and increasing respect for human rights.
3. Regional Governance Consolidation.
4. Support to political parties and processes.

# “Colombianization”, sustainability, regionalization, and prioritization of vulnerable groups, the basis for the JRMP

The main objective of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Justice Reform and Modernization Program (JRMP) is to support the implementation of justice reform at the national, regional, and local levels, with the purpose of promoting a more transparent, democratic, and effective justice system in Colombia.

The principles of the Justice Reform and Modernization Program are:

**“Colombianización”:** Generate ownership of the Program from the communities and government as well as support the active participation of Colombians, promoting a spirit of collaboration and constant consultation with local counterparts.

**Sustainability:** Support the willingness and resolution of the Colombian state or the private sector to continue to finance and implement the Program’s initiatives as permanent and routine activities to provide justice services for citizens.

**Regionalization:** Benefit all Colombians, primarily those that live in rural areas or vulnerable populations residing in urban centers.

**Prioritization of vulnerable groups:** Support groups of women, youth, boys and girls, victims, the displaced population, and ethnic communities in the framework of the Justice Reform Program.

**Access to Justice:** The program aims to increase access to justice services that are opportune and free of charge for Colombians that are traditionally marginalized, vulnerable and/or victims of violence.



# A LOOK AT THE JUSTICE REFORM AND MODERNIZATION

## JRMP WORK AREAS

### Effective implementation of the Criminal Accusatory System (CAS), Access to Justice via Public Defenders and Legal Clinics

- Training for State entities to manage and implement the reform that established the Criminal Accusatory System in Colombia.
- Strengthening the Institute of Studies of the Public Ministry, the “Roberto Camacho W.” Training School of the National Ombudsman’s Office, and the Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Judicial Training School.
- Technical assistance to measure the results of the learning processes.
- Development of manuals and materials to enable better implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code.
- Curricular reform in Law Faculties and development of the University Oral Mock Trial Competition.
- Training and instruction for public defenders, students, and private defense lawyers.
- Reform of Legal Clinics.
- Creation of Victims Service Center in the Judicial Complex in Paloquemao.

### Management of Legal Offices and Legal Services Centers for vulnerable groups

- Establishment of virtual courtrooms to facilitate the oral proceedings established by the Criminal Accusatory System in vulnerable areas.
- Implementation of mechanisms to guarantee the quality of legal services – Quality Management Services ISO 9001 for judicial and administrative processes.
- Establish electronic systems to facilitate summons of the parties in the new Criminal Accusatory System.

## Justice Houses

- Establishment and improvement of information systems.
- Construction of 10 Regional Justice Houses with their respective satellite offices.
- Development and consolidation of community service for social groups connected to the Justice Houses.
- Training and instruction for Justice House personnel.
- Definition of sustainability strategies for the Justice Houses.
- Support to the Colombian government in the formulation of public policies to promote the Justice House Program.

## Alternative Methods for Conflict Resolution (MASC for its acronym in Spanish)

- Training for judges of the peace, conciliators, and lawyers.
- Creation of conciliation units in the Justice Houses.
- Adaptation of material on indigenous justice to be used by different legal practitioners.
- Support to universities to accredit them as Conciliation Training Centers.

## Civil Society

- Implementation of social networks and coalitions to promote judicial reform.
- Promotion of oversight programs in universities and among different civil society groups to enable monitoring of the reform and the judicial system.
- Promotion of more effective participation of the afro-Colombian and indigenous populations, women and youth in improving the justice system.

# FORM MODERNIZATION PROGRAM



*Victims Service Center CAV – Judicial Complex in Paloquemao*

## **GRANTS FUND FOR JUSTICE PROJECTS - PROJUS**

The Grants Fund for Justice Projects - PROJUS- supports high-impact civil society initiatives that are innovative and sustainable in order to promote the reform and modernization of the Colombian justice system. The Program manages a Grants Fund to support, *inter alia*, projects geared towards:

- Promotion of MASC
- Prevention for Victims
- Domestic and Sexual Justice
- Networks and Coalitions
- Strengthening of Justice Houses
- Reproduction of Information

Through its work in different areas, the Justice Reform and Modernization Program has benefited thousands of people throughout Colombia. The existence of a more agile and modern justice system will allow the proposed goals to be reached, by promoting a more transparent and effective democracy in the country.

The following are noteworthy illustrative cases:

## Teaching about justice through theater

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supported a project to educate Colombian children on issues of justice and human rights. The theater production “Pataplín Rataplán” has been such a success that while the initial goal was to present the play to 2,000 children to date almost 40,000 have seen it, making it a sustainable, high impact education project.



## No more disputes over water in Soacha

For over 20 years, the supply of water had become a full-blown problem in the altos de Cazucá, due to the scarcity of this essential liquid. Working as a plumber became one of the most dangerous occupations in this area, with its lethal combination of petty crime, armed groups, and extreme poverty. With support and financing from the USAID Justice Reform Program, CORNACESCUN, a local network of conciliators, was able to resolve the problem. USAID implemented the “Strengthening Conciliation with Equity in Soacha” project and, now, the disputes over water have ended.

No more disputes

## Justice and peace in southern Tolima

Previously, the Rural Centers for Peaceful Co-existence were working enthusiastically but with no training as conflict mediators in their communities. Now, thanks to support from USAID, a program began in 2008 to provide training for these groups and the southern region of Tolima now has a successful rural and community model of sustainable and enhanced justice.

Justice and peace



## Colombia backs the public defender system

With assistance from USAID, the government of Colombia has increased training for public defenders in various regions in the country. The Justice Reform and Modernization Program has trained and increased knowledge on human rights, the accusatory system, and oral litigation techniques of 1,194 public defenders throughout the country, 565 law students, and 157 private defense lawyers.



## Virtual justice for Colombia

The conditions of insecurity and remoteness of some Colombian regions make it impossible for judges, judicial workers, and the accused to arrive at the hearings in a timely manner, which seriously affects the implementation of the new Accusatory Criminal System. USAID installed virtual courtrooms that allow access to these remote areas.

## ISO and quality service in the courts

## ISO and quality service

In Itagüí (Antioquia) 10 courts and a Center of Judicial Services were re-certified in ISO 9001-2000 quality system certification. Additionally, in Envigado (Antioquia) 11 courts and a Center of Judicial Services were prepared and certified on Quality Management Systems following an intense work plan that lasted eight (8) months, which is record time considering that similar experiences have taken almost a year. Both judges and judicial and administrative personnel were trained on how to improve and standardize their processes and obtain the ISO certification.

## Better justice for minors in Colombia

## Better justice for minors

New mechanisms now guarantee the rights of young victims of sexual abuse in Colombia. Through the Creemos en Tí Association and with the support of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) and USAID, the role of the intérprete del menor (psychologist who interprets words and feelings of minors in courtroom scenarios) was strengthened and a protocol was designed for attention to victims of abuse, in order to guarantee the rights to protection and reparation for boys and girls as established by law, as well as to expedite the criminal cases for this type of crime.



## Justice Houses: a welcome program in Colombia

The Justice Houses are inter-institutional centers that offer information, guidance, referral and other services for conflict resolution and that apply and implement mechanisms of formal and informal justice. Thanks to the support of USAID, this program has been incorporated and is principally funded by the Colombian government in order to provide the rural populations with a mechanism to alleviate its problems of domestic violence, gangs, neighborhood conflicts, and forced displacement. A total of six Houses with 20 offices will be operating by 2009.

# Achievements

## Alternative Methods for Conflict Resolution (MASC)

1. Dissemination and implementation of MASC in vulnerable rural areas.
2. Strengthening the training of community leaders.
3. Commitment of local institutions to increase project sustainability.
4. Conciliation in Justice Houses and training of personnel and members of the community.
5. Implementation of a system to monitor the conciliation processes through a Call Center.

## Effective implementation of the Criminal Accusatory System (SPA for its acronym in Spanish), Access to Justice through Public Defenders and Legal Clinics

1. Establishment of a system to monitor the implementation of the SPA.
2. Education and training in:
  - Justice sector training schools
  - Universities
  - Popular legal education
3. Strengthening of the Public Defense system.
4. Access to justice for vulnerable groups with the participation of the State and civil society.
5. Special Support Office (OEA for its acronym in Spanish) as a model of defense management.

## Justice Houses

1. Support to the Ministry of Interior and Justice to establish the National Justice House Program in vulnerable areas.
2. Strengthening the Colombianization objective, through co-financing received from the national government, local governments, and the private sector.
3. Support to justice for ethnic groups, particularly in rural areas with indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations.
4. Consolidation of services for marginalized groups located in proximity to the Justice Houses.
5. Ownership of the Program on the part of mayor's offices and departments.
6. Articulation of civil society projects in areas where the Justice Houses are working, in order to strengthen this process within the communities.
7. Increase the visibility of the project through the leadership capacity and communication with the community on the part of the Justice Houses.



## Civil Society

1. Inclusion of the issue of justice in the agendas of civil society organizations.
2. Preparation and training of social organizations to strengthen their capacity for advocacy on justice issues.
3. Creation of pro-justice coalitions at the national and regional levels (gender, afro-Colombians, and youth).
4. Implementation of specific innovative projects for oversight in the justice sector.

## Communications

1. Broader dissemination of justice services targeted towards users. This information is available for any citizen at the different centers.
2. Training for the Program's institutional counterparts and civil society coalitions on topics related to communications.
3. Development of a social communications strategy based on the specific needs of each one of the four JRMP counterparts (Ministry of Interior and Justice, Inspector General's Office, National Ombudsman's office, and the Supreme Judicial Council).



## Management of Legal Offices and Legal Service Centers for vulnerable groups

1. Greater security and transparency in the exchange of legal documents (notifications).
2. Improvement in the system for reporting and notification in the disciplinary area.
3. Introduction of quality standards into legal offices and centers of judicial services.
4. Carry out judicial proceedings and increased access to justice in vulnerable rural areas.
5. Judicial procedures completed, improvement of customer service, and greater transparency.

## PROJUS Grants Fund

1. 62 projects approved, with an investment of close to US\$ 2,000,000.
2. Impact on the judicial sector through citizen oversight, protection to victims of crimes, and alternative methods of conflict resolution.
3. Information and legal instruction provided to citizens.
4. Support to communal and ethnic justice.

# Florida International<sup>®</sup> University

Florida International University (FIU) is one of three main public universities in the state of Florida, together with the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville and Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee. FIU is located in Miami and has two main campuses: the University Park campus, located on 344 acres in western Miami-Dade County; and the campus on Biscayne Bay, with an area of 200 acres in the northwestern section of the county. The university also has an important engineering research center in western Miami, a downtown complex dedicated to post-graduate studies, and an additional academic center in Broward County.

FIU has over 38,000 students and 124,000 alumni. The university also has almost 1,000 fulltime professors, 98% with PhDs. Based on enrolment, FIU is one of the 25 largest universities in the United States. Currently, its 21 faculties and schools offer a total of 200 degrees, counting bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.



For more information:

University Park Campus  
11200 S.W. 8th Street  
Miami, Florida 33199  
Tel. (305) 348-2000  
[www.fiu.edu](http://www.fiu.edu)



## Center for Administration of Justice

### CAJ

Created in 1984, the Center for Administration of Justice –CAJ- is an academic unit of the School of International and Public Affairs of the College of Arts and Sciences of Florida International University.

Since its inception, the CAJ has conducted important research projects and developed training, dissemination, and advisory activities in coordination with governmental representatives, academics, researchers, and lawyers from Latin America.

The main office of the CAJ is in Miami and it also has a Regional Office in Bogotá, Colombia. Its main objective is to support the efforts of developing countries to promote and strengthen accessible, independent, just, and efficient justice systems.

CAJ has become an international point of reference in the modernization and reform of Latin American justice systems, and implements projects throughout most of the region. Its achievements and results have been widely disseminated in international publications and academic journals.

The Center employs a multidisciplinary and international staff of specialists, including lawyers, political scientists, public administrators, sociologists, engineers, and other professionals that work on justice reform in Latin America.

Among other important services, the Center is also involved in research, technical assistance, design and implementation of evaluations, training, and dissemination of information. It also implements other activities that support Latin American governments or institutions in the formulation, financing, and implementation of innovative justice sector programs and projects.



For more information:

University Park Campus  
MARC 330 | 1200 SW 8th Street  
Miami, FL 33199  
Tel: (305)348-5952  
Fax: (305)348-4700  
<http://caj.fiu.edu/>

**JUSTICE REFORM AND  
MODERNIZATION PROGRAM (JRMP)**

Calle 113 No. 7 - 45  
Torre B Of. 605  
Bogotá - Colombia  
Phone: (571) 6292470  
Fax: (571) 6292472  
[www.fiu.edu.co](http://www.fiu.edu.co)  
[info@fiu.edu.co](mailto:info@fiu.edu.co)