



# 2017 PLAN OF ACTION

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This document sets out the main activities that the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) proposes for 2017 in fulfillment of its institutional mission and the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

The activities described herein seek to satisfy four strategic goals: i) to reposition JSCA as a key and visible stakeholder in justice reform processes in the region; ii) to promote sustainable civil and criminal justice reforms in the region that capitalize on the best practices identified at the regional and global levels; iii) to strengthen JSCA's role as a facilitator of information on justice systems in the region; and iv) to achieve long-term financial sustainability for the Center.

This plan of action is unique because it coincides with the launch of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

The 2017 Plan of Action is structured around the following areas:

- Impact on specific topics
- Geographic impact
- Institutional strengthening

### Impact on Specific Topics

In the area of **civil justice**, JSCA's priority is to create a civil justice reform movement in which the information that the Center produces can have an impact based on elements shared by countries around the region. Evaluation and monitoring of the region's most recent civil procedure reforms will be vital to this process.

There is also a need to strengthen the Center's network in the area of civil justice, which will be achieved through the implementation of the second version of the Inter-American Civil Justice Reform Training Program (CIP) in 2017. The CIP will present the basic structure of civil processes based on hearings, their characteristics and principles and the skills required to litigate in them (for attorneys) and direct them (for judges). In addition, the discourse of change will be installed in this new network composed of established (criminal justice network members) and new leaders in the region.

In addition, over the course of this year the impact of the Center's work will be strengthened by the execution of a larger number of replicas and technical assistance activities.

This year we also will reinforce the NGO network that was created in 2016. The objective of this effort is to actively incorporate the perspective of civil society into the discussion of justice needs and the design of reforms. We want this network to contribute its perspective to our discussion of the evolution of reformed justice systems, which are referred to as RPP, SJA or SPA in different countries of the region.

In the area of **criminal justice**, during 2016 the Center conducted the project "Evaluation of the Criminal Procedure Reform Ten Years after Its National Implementation" in Chile. During 2017, we

will disseminate this study throughout the region due to the significant amount of interest in Latin America about the evolution of Chile's reform and the lessons that can be extracted from it. In this way, the challenges faced by the adversarial systems that are already well-established in the region will be explored. Similarly, we will disseminate the methodology used so that it can be applied in other countries and in possible evaluations developed or supervised by JSCA.

It is very important to mention the efforts that will continue in Uruguay and Brazil, the last countries in the region to launch criminal procedure reform processes.

The Center plans to promote the Network of Crime Analysis Directors in Public Prosecutor's Offices that was created by JSCA in Buenos Aires in 2016. The goal is to strengthen the paradigm of Strategic Prosecution also in keeping with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

In the area of **transparency**, the 10<sup>th</sup> Index of Online Access to Judicial Information will be disseminated and the methodology of the Index of Online Judicial Services will be redefined in anticipation of the development of the third version of this publication. In addition, the Center's staff will identify quantitative measurement instruments used in the region's judicial systems as part of an effort similar to the study historically conducted for the Report on the State of Justice in the Americas, which was last published in 2008-2009.

We also hope to develop a new version of the Seminar on Judicial Management this year, giving priority to civil justice matters while including criminal justice issues.

### **Geographic Impact**

JSCA plans to consolidate the work conducted over the past three years as part of its efforts to achieve a high level of impact in Mexico, Brazil and Central America. We will continue to offer the Central American Certificate Program on Criminal Procedure Reform and will implement a training course on criminal justice topics in three locations in Brazil. The Brazil network will soon have 200 active members at an ideal point for criminal procedure reform. We will secure approval for a fourth stage of the Chile-Mexico Cooperation Program to be executed by JSCA. We also will continue our efforts to strengthen the training of operators in Mexico's reformed system in order to improve the performance of the criminal justice system.

We propose formally launching work in the Caribbean during 2017 with the organization of an initial meeting to create a small network of operators. This will allow us to obtain information from Caribbean judicial systems and incorporate them into the regional process. This has been a major historical debt that JSCA will seek to resolve beginning in 2017. This comes in addition to the work that we will conduct in Haiti through our partnership with Chemonics in the execution of the project financed by USAID.

We also will prioritize the opportunity to add the main countries that have led ALBA (Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia) to JSCA's agenda. We have positioned JSCA in Bolivia and Nicaragua with activities related to criminal and civil justice. We hope to start working in Cuba and Venezuela in 2017.

In Uruguay, the Center reached an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior to conduct a six-month consultancy (February-June 2017) prior to the entry into force of the criminal procedure code (July). The consultancy will consist of training and technical assistance for justice system operators.

Finally, members of JSCA will continue to take part in activities such as seminars, discussions and meetings in the region in order to shape public policy development processes and include JSCA's perspective in discussions around justice reform processes.

### **Institutional Strengthening**

The main areas of JSCA (Research and Training) have been strengthened, and we currently have a pool of eight researchers. We have prioritized the presence of women (five researchers) and the inclusion of individuals from various countries (Argentina, Guatemala and Brazil).

Areas in which JSCA has historically presented lacks when multidisciplinary teams were to be formed have been reinforced. We have added a specialist in methodology with training in the field of anthropology and an education specialist to strengthen the training area and course design. We also have added a community manager to our team who is responsible for managing the institution's social media presence.

One priority for 2017 will be the identification of support for work on issues related to gender.

We will continue our efforts to secure voluntary contributions from OAS member states and other funding sources linked to projects or multiyear programs.

We are optimistic that we will continue to receive the contribution that Chile has historically made despite budgetary restrictions. We hope that with our increased activity in Brazil will lead to a contribution from that nation as well. Finally, following the incorporation of a new Board member sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, we hope that Argentina will make a voluntary contribution to the Center.

We have continued talks with the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) in an effort to secure support that would allow us to develop a new research and dissemination project in 2017. We hope that we can open up new lines of conversation with the governments of Mexico and the U.S. during 2017 in order to secure voluntary contributions or funding for triangular cooperation projects with the participation of JSCA.

The funding search for the criminal justice area will be a priority for JSCA as well, and we will turn to all possible sources including multiyear projects, programs, technical cooperation, specific consultancies, and funding for courses.