

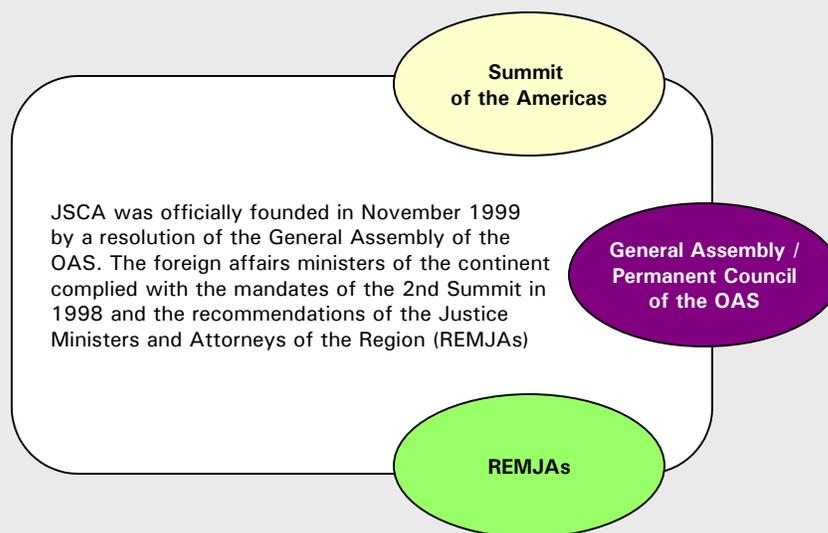
JSCA at a Glance

PROJECTS AND RESULTS – March 2003



CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE JUSTICIA DE LAS AMÉRICAS
JUSTICE STUDIES CENTER OF THE AMERICAS
CEJA - JSCA

JSCA and the Inter-American System



Mandates of the Second Summit

Governments will...

Expedite the establishment of a justice studies center of the Americas, which will facilitate the training of justice sector personnel, the exchange of information and other forms of technical cooperation in the Hemisphere, in response to particular requirements of each country.

To this end, they request the Ministers of Justice or other competent authorities to analyze and define the most suitable actions for the organization and establishment of such a center.

Mandate of the Third Summit

To develop a funding plan for the Justice Studies Center for the Americas that takes into account the interests and resources of both governments and other likely donors, and that will enable the Center to contribute not only to the modernization and formulation of public policy in this area, but also to the institutional development of judicial systems in the region.

The context

The establishment of democratic systems in the majority of the countries of the Americas has shown the justice sector to have special complications in complying with the changes required by the new political systems.

It is evident that these problems present a serious obstacle to the governability, the respect for rights, and social and economic development.

Twenty Years of Reforms

Over the course of the past 20 years, nearly all of the countries of the continent have undergone extensive programs of justice system reform. International cooperative agencies have made substantive contributions to this process. The primary areas addressed in the transformative process have been criminal justice, the government, and access to and management of the system.

What is the balance?

There is a wide-spread perception that the reforms have not produced the results expected. No systematic and in-depth evaluations have been undertaken to date. The strong initial incentive tends to diminish.

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BASIC QUESTIONS

What is JSCA?

The Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) is an international autonomous organization created in 1999 by the Inter-American System. Based in Santiago, Chile, its members are all of the active member countries of the Organization of the American States (OAS).

What does it do?

Supports the member states in their justice reform processes
Facilitates the exchange of information
Facilitates the training of human resources

How is it financed?

Through voluntary contributions from the member countries

Through projects presented to international cooperative agencies

Through courses and the sale of services.

JSCA was created by the Inter-American System to provide a new impetus for modernization of the justice systems of the countries of the continent

Mission

- Provide a new impetus for modernization of the justice systems of the countries of the continent
- Promote the highest standards of respect for and promotion of human rights and a greater efficiency in the performance of the judicial work

Vision

- Approach the transformation with a public policy perspective
- Take advantage of the synergies and economies of scale generated by regional work
- Create a united regional community to stand behind the changes
- Take advantage of the benefits of new technologies



Projects and Results

Three key goals

- 1) Generate and distribute instruments that improve the information available on justice in the Americas
- 2) Strengthen the cooperation and exchange of experiences among key parties in the justice sector at the regional level
- 3) Conduct in-depth studies of the workings of the region's justice systems, and strengthen innovative ideas in the discussion about judicial reform

1. Generate and distribute instruments that improve the information available on justice in the Americas

PROJECTS

Virtual Information Center (VIC)

The information collected regarding justice systems will feed our web site www.cejamericas.org. VIC includes JSCA's periodical publications, special reports, and thematic modules, among other dissemination products. The recently released Regional Register of Alternative Dispute Resolution Methods (ADR Module) is an example of the thematic module. **JSCA was responsible for preparing this database at the Fourth Meeting of the Justice Ministers and Attorney Generals of the Americas (IV REMJA), held in Trinidad & Tobago, March 2002.** The ADR Module is available at www.cejamericas.org/marc

Manual for collecting judicial statistics and indicators

JSCA has prepared a manual of the basic characteristics of a modern and efficient judicial information system. This manual provides a model for collecting and standardizing judicial indicators and statistics. The **Manual contains** criteria for institutional organization for data collection; a glossary to standardize terminology at the regional level (and compare the information); specifications on the content of the information to be collected; data collection methodologies; data analysis instruments (indicators); and strategies for disseminating the information and for general transparency.

Annual Report on Judicial Systems

This publication gathers information on the advances, projects, relevant news and basic indicators of the region's judicial systems. Indexes on issues of economics, health and education in the region are commonplace today, but there is no equivalent source of information available on justice-related matters in the Americas. Our idea is that the information system should be very simple and descriptive in the beginning, and that it should become more sophisticated over time, both in regards to the volume and the nature of the information. This project is financed by the Human Security Program from Canada.

Guiding principle
The greatest incentive for
improving the statistics and
information is disseminating
those available today

RESULTS

Website's VIC with 4,000 documents, reports, basic legislation, and links related to the functioning of justice in the 34 countries of the region.

The site has received more than 140,000 visits, currently averaging 238 per day.

20 editions of a monthly newsletter, in Spanish and in English, with 3,480 subscribers and 10,000 readers who receive it indirectly.

4 editions of the bi-annual journal *Sistemas Judiciales*, which prints 1,000 issues per volume.

We have finished collecting basic data on judicial productivity in each of the 34 OAS active member countries.

A statistical survey based on data collected with the spreadsheets contained in the manual is nearing completion in Argentina and the Dominican Republic.

Similar information will soon be collected in three other countries.

The Participa Foundation (Chile) requested the JSCA's collaboration in following up on the decisions related to the issues of justice adopted by the Americas Summit.

The manual was made available to the System of Central American Supreme Courts.

2. Strengthen the cooperation and exchange of experiences among key parties in the justice sector at the regional level

Creating a differentiated network of justice institutions

JSCA...

Coordinates and leads the Network of Civil Society Justice Organizations of the Americas;
Has promoted the creation of the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders;
Belongs to the Ibero-American Network of Judicial Schools;
Collaborates with the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors;
Collaborates with the system of the Summits of Supreme Court Presidents of Ibero-America;
Signs cooperation agreements with public institutions in the justice sectors of many countries

During the IV REMJA, JSCA organized a Special Meeting for the Representatives of the Caribbean Delegations. A main goal of that meeting was to identify key issues for future joint work in the region.

RESULTS

We have signed agreements with 23 public institutions of the justice sector (supreme courts, attorney generals' offices, public defenders' offices, etc.) from 12 of the continent's countries.

We have re-initiated and currently coordinate a network of 31 civil society organizations that work on issues of justice and citizen participation in 22 countries of the region.

We have organized and sponsored 32 regional and 14 local events in 18 countries, with as many as 800 participants per event, and delegations of up to 27 countries.

We have given lectures and presentations at 74 international events in 25 countries.

We have signed working agreements with 8 international private research institutions working in the area of judicial public policy.

Among the events organized by JSCA are the First Inter-American Meeting of Public Defenders, a Seminar for South American Attorney Generals, the First Annual Meeting of the Network for Civil Society Organizations for Justice in the Americas, and an International Seminar on Court Management.

3. Conduct in-depth studies of the workings of the region's justice systems, and strengthen innovative ideas in the discussion about judicial reform

The Follow-up Project

In 2001 the JSCA initiated a series of studies and activities to strengthen understanding of the functioning of the region's criminal justice systems, indicate their strengths and weaknesses, and discover the results obtained in the reform processes undertaken in recent years

What we expect to achieve

Complement the theoretical and conceptual approach toward the topics of justice with an empirical perspective
Encourage the groups that promote the reforms to adopt a critical approach to the implementation processes
Revitalize the original objectives of the reform

Major advances

A methodological framework was designed with experts from various countries.

The study was applied with local groups in four countries: Costa Rica; Córdoba-Argentina (sites with prior reform attempts); Chile; and Paraguay (without tradition)

National reports were prepared in each of those countries

A comparative report was written, published and distributed

The results were discussed in local and regional seminars

Current activities

The study has been broadened to four new countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador y Venezuela. The national reports of these countries have been concluded

A similar study has begun in Mexico, which does not have a reform similar to that of the other countries

A second study is finishing in Chile

The costs of the studies have been assumed by local groups in Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela, and Mexico

Between 2003 and 2004 the study will be broadened to include eight new countries. We will also support the development of follow-up programs in four countries where the study has had the greatest impact. In addition we will incorporate new countries that have not yet implemented reforms.

RESULTS

Motivation for concrete actions in the countries to correct problems:

In CHILE: JSCA was responsible for preparing normative and operative proposals for improving the system. A second study is concluding and has been making progress in the use of empirical information.

In CORDOBA: An intense debate in the local counterpart organization (INECIP) was held.. JSCA's collaboration was requested in continuing its research on the functioning of the criminal justice system as well as its training activities.

In MEXICO: JSCA has been invited to support their criminal justice reform process.

JSCA held an international seminar on judicial management, one of the major problem areas detected in the study. Twenty-seven countries and more than 170 experts and authorities participated.



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