

INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM OF JUDICIAL FACILITATORS (IPJF/OAS)

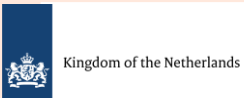


OAS

More rights for more people



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



INTRODUCTION

Access to justice is defined as the ability of people to defend and uphold their rights and obtain fair resolutions for their legal problems, if necessary, through impartial judicial institutions, whether formal or informal, and with adequate assistance of legal counsel.

International human rights standards recognize access to justice both as a right in itself, and as a resource to enable the protection of other universally recognized rights. Even when rights are protected under national regulatory frameworks, there are often significant gaps in their effective exercise, especially for vulnerable groups.

Alternative means of conflict resolution is recognized by the OAS as a key and necessary resource.

In response to the difficulties faced by many vulnerable communities and groups in the Americas in accessing national justice institutions, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) created the Inter-American Judicial Facilitators Program (IPJF/OAS) which started in Nicaragua.

The IPJF/OAS has evolved into a regional program. It provides technical assistance to countries for the implementation and institutionalization of the Judicial Facilitators Service.

To date, eleven countries have benefitted from the program: Nicaragua; Paraguay; Panama; Honduras; Argentina, in the provinces of Cordoba, Corrientes, and Formosa; Guatemala; Costa Rica; El Salvador; Puerto Rico; Colombia through the National Program for Equity Justice; and Peru through the Program of Female Judicial Counselors. Additionally, there is a country interested in the program: Dominican Republic.



OVERVIEW

Under the IPJF/OAS, judicial institutions implement a strategy that involves community leaders in providing mediation, information sharing, and legal guidance services usually to isolated communities and regions located far from the judicial bodies.

Judicial facilitators (FJs), as they are known, promote dialogue in their communities and help resolve “low-intensity” social conflicts; that is, disputes that do not involve acts of violence or criminal offenses.

The GS/OAS has succeeded in establishing a new model that provides a direct judicial response to the needs of the most vulnerable communities in the region.

In countries benefiting from the presence of the IPJF/OAS, the program has been credited with contributing to the reconstruction of the social fabric particularly in communities in which it is being implemented.



Through their service, judicial facilitators promote justice, solidarity, and coexistence among neighbors, aiming to create an atmosphere of peace and social harmony in their community.

INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM OF JUDICIAL FACILITATORS



Vision

To lead efforts in the region, to promote and enable the right to access justice through the peaceful management of low-intensity conflicts, and the inclusion, promotion, and dissemination of information on rights among the communities and vulnerable groups.

Mission statement

Provide capacity-building technical assistance, and support to judicial facilitators, members of judicial facilitator services, justices of the peace, and other operators so as to contribute to the development and enhancement of their roles in the remote areas where the Program is implemented.

Overarching objective

To contribute to the implementation, development, and institutionalization of the Judicial Facilitators Service or other alternative conflict resolution projects in the countries of the region.

Specific objectives

- Provide technical assistance for the implementation and institutionalization of the judicial facilitator services.
- Strengthen the capacities of judicial facilitators, equity conciliators, and female judicial counselors through ongoing training processes.
- Provide technical assistance to optimize the operation of judicial facilitator services or other alternative conflict resolution projects.
- Disseminate information on judicial facilitator services or other alternative conflict resolution projects among the public, institutions, and regional stakeholders.



Structure

The IPJF/OAS is part of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions (DSDSM), which is part of the OAS Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy.

IPJF - OAS



The Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators of the Organization of American States (IPJF/OAS) is the entity in charge of providing technical assistance to the judiciaries that have a judicial facilitator service (JFS), at the national, state, provincial, municipal or communal level. The Program also provides support to countries requesting the establishment of a JFS.

The JFS is the body designated in each country or region to supervise and instruct the judicial facilitator service.

OAS Strategic Line

The IPJF/OAS responds to objective (5.5) of the Human Rights and Democracy pillars of the OAS: "Support the judicial branches of the member states that so request in initiatives to strengthen, innovate, and improve capacities"; of strategic line 5 related to "Strengthening legal cooperation in justice and combating corruption."

General data

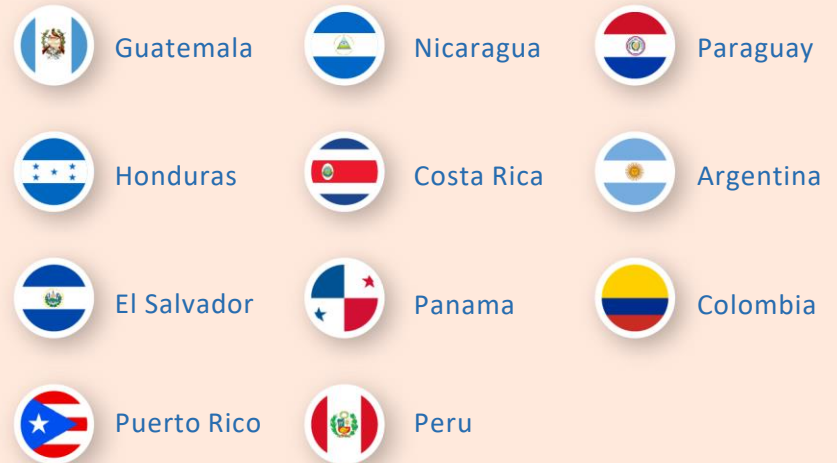
More than **7,000** Judicial Facilitators
More than **10,000** Equity Conciliators
More than **800** Female Judicial Counselors



More than **600,000** people reached



Beneficiary countries



1 agreement in progress for the establishment of strategic partnerships with Dominican Republic.

Areas of incidence



CORE ACTIVITIES OF IPJF/OAS



1

Promote the implementation, institutionalization and expansion of Judicial Facilitator Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.

The IPJF/OAS works on strengthening Judicial Facilitator Services (JFS) and other alternative conflict resolution projects and provides support to countries for the implementation and institutionalization of the same. To achieve this, the Program:

- Supports the expansion of the JFS or other alternative conflict resolution projects in communities where their coverage has not yet reached.
- Also supports the expansion of the JFS to other countries of the region.
- Builds strategic relationships with potential donors and partners.

2

Strengthen the knowledge and skills of justice operators within the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.

The IPJF/OAS offers didactic tools to strengthen the skills of judicial facilitators, equity conciliators and female judicial counselors, in the performance of their duties, through:

- Educational resources and ongoing training: IPJF/OAS provides self-learning manuals, online training courses, virtual and in-person workshops, and an online diploma.
- Opportunities to further their education in collaboration with academic institutions: IPJF/OAS makes available scholarship programs, courses for judges, justices, and other legal professionals.



3

Optimize the operation of the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.

The IPJF/OAS prepares reports for each Judicial Facilitators Service and other alternative conflict resolution projects based on an assessment to guide efforts towards improving their operations and development. In this regard, the Program:

- Monitors the status of the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects through studies.
- Introduces computer-based tools to automate and improve the recording of information and presentation of management reports on the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.
- Develops workspaces, discussion forums, and provides learning opportunities for technical teams to improve the internal administration and coordination of each Judicial Facilitators Service and other alternative conflict resolution projects.



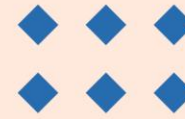
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Dissemination of information on Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.

The PJF/OAS share good practices, events, and activities, as well as the services and benefits of the JFSs, so that people can understand the importance of the Program. To achieve this the IPJF/OAS:

- Develops a communication plan and manages social media.
- Shares content online.
- Trains IPJF Coordinators on communication-related topics.
- Informs Judiciaries, Permanent Missions, NGOs, cooperation agencies, and local institutions about the Program's activities and results.
- Creates informative and educational material about the program.

JUDICIAL FACILITATOR SERVICES



Access to justice



Conflict resolution

Achievements 2023



Cooperation Agreement with the Peruvian Judicial Branch



Creation of **3** self-learning manuals



Cooperation Agreement with the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico



Opening of the **IPJF/OAS Moodle** platform



New Facilitators sworn in Córdoba, Argentina.



Computer-aided automation tools



1 agreement in progress for the establishment of strategic partnerships with Dominican Republic.



More than **9,800** individuals and institutions at the regional level are aware of the existence of the IPJF/OAS through social media.



More than **1,700** people trained in soft skills topics.



More than **15 meetings** held throughout the year to provide technical support to the coordinators of the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects.



More than **373** people registered in the educational platform.



Engagements with media outlets in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, and Peru to promote the Program's work.

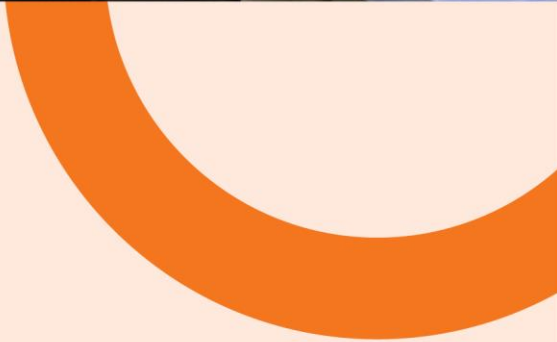


Looking forward

In 2024, the Program Coordination, with the support of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions (DSDSM), aims to contribute to the successful operation of the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects; with the objective of promoting a culture of peace, as well as generating trust and closer ties to justice institutions in the region.

The goal is to expand the Program to other countries in the Americas, while providing support to strengthen the Judicial Facilitators Services and other alternative conflict resolution projects already in operation.

Ongoing training and education activities are critical and much needed, as well as communication with citizens, institutions, and regional actors to promote the work of the IPJF/OAS to better serve the people.





Thanks to the leadership of volunteers serving as judicial facilitators, equity conciliators and female judicial counselors, communities are informed about their rights, receive support to initiate legal procedures, as well as guidance and facilitation services in resolving community conflicts.





OAS | JUDICIAL
Facilitators



Organization of American States
Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions
Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators