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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM STRENGTHENED PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

April 2021

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Cover photo: Women engaged as community leaders in 2021 to support the CJH las Caobas' outreach strategy to promote citizens' rights, civic education, and a peaceful coexistence in the neighborhoods. (Credit: Hilda Pellerano for DR CJSSP)



PHOTO: YOUTH READY TO COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ON MARCH 8, 2020, OUTSIDE THE CJH CIENFUEGOS. THE MARCH WAS ORGANIZED TO ENSURE INCLUSIVENESS FOR PWD AND SENIOR CITIZENS. GRABANDO DR FOR CJSSP

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ACRONYMS

ADR	alternative dispute resolution
AG	Attorney General
CCCJ	Center for Community Justice Houses (Centro Casas Comunitarias de Justicia)
CIMUDIS	Círculo de Mujeres con Discapacidad
CJH	Community Justice House
CJSSP	Criminal Justice System Strengthened Project
COIN	Centro de Investigación y Orientación Integral
CONADIS	National Council on Disability (Consejo Nacional de Discapacidad)
CSO	civil society organization
DA	District Attorney
ENJ	National School of the Judiciary (Escuela Nacional de la Judicatura)
ENMP	National School of the Public Ministry (Escuela Nacional del Ministerio Público)
F/GBV	family/gender-based violence
FINJUS	Fundación Institucionalidad y Justicia
FY	fiscal year
GBV	gender-based violence
IAWJ	International Association of Women Judges
ICT	information and communication technology
IG	Inspector General
IGO	Inspector General's Office
IWD	International Women's Day
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex
LOP	life of project
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning

MIP	Ministry of Interior and the Police
PACAM	Patronato de Casos y Mujeres Maltratados
PDO	Public Defender’s Office
PEPCA	Specialized Unit for Prosecution of Administrative Corruption (Procuraduría Especializada de Persecución de la Corrupción Administrativa)
PM	Public Ministry
PPP	public-private partnership
PWD	person with disability
RELEVIC	National Service for Legal Representation for Victims’ Rights (Servicio Nacional de Representación Legal a los Derechos de las Víctimas)
SDW	Santo Domingo West
STIP	science, technology, innovation, and partnership
TIP	trafficking in persons
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAU	Victims Assistance Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION. Over the last decade, the political and institutional leadership in the Dominican Republic’s criminal justice structures has invested to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system to deliver swift, certain, and fair justice to citizens and stem widespread concerns over rates of crime and violence. After launching a new citizen security strategy in 2013, the national government attempted to weave together initiatives across different elements of the criminal justice system, from police and judicial reform to crime prevention and education. This level of national leadership resulted in meaningful strides toward reorganizing key justice institutions, such as the National Police, the Attorney General (AG) Office, and the Public Ministry’s Supreme Council.

Nevertheless, crime rates have proven resistant to these efforts and continue to outpace institutional capacity. Organizational weaknesses, poor inter-institutional coordination, and limited service availability or accessibility contribute to access to justice challenges faced by Dominicans, particularly among vulnerable populations. Citizens seeking legal recourse and assistance from the criminal justice system encounter institutions burdened by heavy case backlogs and lengthy or opaque bureaucratic processes that discourage victims from pursuing cases to completion and erode public confidence.

To address these challenges, in April 2015 the USAID/Dominican Republic launched the Criminal Justice System Strengthened Project (CJSSP, or “the project”) to improve the quality and effectiveness of prosecutions and increase access to justice for vulnerable people. To achieve this, the project aimed to: 1) improve intra- and inter-institutional criminal case management and coordination between the police, prosecutors, and judges; 2) strengthen the local Community Justice Houses (CJHs); 3) increase access to justice for vulnerable populations; and 4) reinforce oversight mechanisms within justice institutions.

CJSSP served to progressively expand on the work of predecessor USAID project investments stemming as far as back as 2002. Since then, a common thread between projects has been a guiding emphasis on integrated, multisector, and inter-institutional strategies grounded firmly in partnerships with the Supreme Court of Justice and lower courts, the AG Office and the Public Ministry, and the National Office of the Public Defense. The CJHs, established with USAID support, have evolved over this time and consistently played a prominent role in bridging the access to justice gap between public institutions and citizen justice needs. CJSSP has further cultivated partnerships with important local system actors, particularly civil society organizations (CSOs) such as Participación Ciudadana and Fundación Institucionalidad y Justicia (FINJUS), as well as Patronato de Ayuda a Casos de Mujeres (PACAM) and Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN). Each partner has played a critical role in advancing many of CJSSP’s results areas related to institutional strengthening and access to justice capacity building. Additionally, the project drew selectively on international partner implementers with specific expertise, such as the International Association for Women Judges (IAWJ), to enrich learning system-wide.

CJSSP prioritized working with DA offices and CJHs, two primary justice provider institutions in the country. Selected locations throughout the country over the project’s six-year timeline reflect areas with some of the Dominican Republic’s highest levels of reported crime. The CJHs are located along the Duarte Corridor, a major transversal northwest-south-central route linking some of the country’s largest urban cities (see also “Geographic Focus” exhibit below). With respect to DA offices, over the course of implementation, CJSSP narrowed its focus from the three biggest DA offices in the Duarte Corridor to eventually only the sole DA office in Santo Domingo West (SDW). This focus allowed the project to ensure the level of support necessary to deliver significant impact, thereafter using the experience and lessons learned to support scale elsewhere.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



PILLARS OF APPROACH. The following pillars guided CJSSP’s work in tailoring and implementing initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness of prosecutions and increase access to justice:

- **EMPHASIZE DECENTRALIZATION AND TARGET EFFORTS AT THE LOCAL/MUNICIPAL LEVEL.** With a focus on strengthening local justice providers, the project sought to introduce and institutionalize innovative and effective management models to improve service quality. Importantly, the management models prioritized being responsive to the local context and community special needs, particularly those of vulnerable populations. As part of this effort, the project emphasized working with youth, family/gender-based violence (F/GBV) victims, migrants, persons with disabilities (PWDs), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI), and victims of trafficking in persons (TIP). CJSSP’s integrated targeted services included alternative resolution

mechanisms, as well as community outreach programs to prevent, deter, or mitigate conflicts at the community level.

- **LEAD WITH EVIDENCE-BASED LEARNING AND PROGRAMMING.** CJSSP continuously looked to and relied on evidenced-based programming, whether via well-documented best practices in justice reform writ large or practical lessons from within the lived experience of the project and its partners and counterparts. The aim was to better grasp root causes of performance gaps and iteratively seek meaningful solutions, layering small tweaks with larger changes over time. Building on this learning, the project concentrated on consolidating and systematizing innovative models, leveraging windows of opportunity with counterparts to pilot ideas and build consensus for change that ultimately served to reshape criminal justice policy and the citizen security policy landscape. Always, the project sought to make evidence-based change sustainable, for example embedding updated training curriculums for career justice operators within the country's lead justice training schools, the National School of the Judiciary (ENJ) and the National School of the Public Ministry (ENMP).
- **ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVEN INTERVENTIONS.** At the heart of CJSSP is a focus on building sufficient capacity and providing the necessary tools and expertise to contribute to local partner sustainability and independence. To this end, CJSSP concentrated heavily on building organizational and networking capacity across the public and private sectors, as well as with civil society partners. CJSSP worked closely with CJHs and the CCCJ to develop their collective ability to expand their financial and technical partnerships. To further enhance justice service quality and access, CJSSP focused on strengthening key institutional counterparts, such as selected, high-demand district attorney offices in Santo Domingo, by introducing results-driven models to increase efficiencies and streamline case resolution. To address acute rates of F/GBV, CJSSP also worked to reinforce specialized attention and resources for the Victims Assistance Unit (VAU), where the concept of people-centered justice allowed the project and counterpart to upgrade victim case management and support processes.
- **PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS.** CJSSP worked to prioritize and bring vulnerable population needs and rights to the forefront of the justice system's agenda. Through technical training and support for the active participation of representatives from vulnerable groups across activities and assessments, the project sought to empower these groups to transform into change agents in their communities. As part of this effort, the project incorporated vulnerable groups themselves into strategies to build capacity of institutional actors to appropriately respond to vulnerable people's distinct needs. For example, CJSSP engaged persons with disabilities and representatives from LGBTI communities to inform design and delivery of training for prosecutors and case managers to respond to cases involving these populations more effectively and reduce the likelihood of victims being re-victimized by justice system actors and processes.

EVOLUTION OF CJSSP STRATEGY OVER TIME. Following a USAID mid-term performance evaluation review in 2017, CJSSP made strategic adjustments to its efforts in line with new USAID/Dominican Republic guidance “to deconflict, rationalize, realign and coordinate criminal justice system reform and modernization activities by the various individual US agencies...”

operating in the country at the time. With a more selective and refined scope of work, the project revised its results framework to more clearly reflect the new focus, as presented in Exhibit I below.

EXHIBIT I: CJSSP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

To strengthen prosecutor effectiveness and increase access to justice for vulnerable populations in the Dominican Republic

RESULT AREA 1	RESULT AREA 2	RESULT AREA 3	RESULT AREA 4
More effective pre-trial case dispositions (speedier and fairer) in the District Attorney’s Offices of Santo Domingo West	Expanded availability of community justice, psychosocial, and violent crime prevention services in priority high-crime communities	Increased access to effective and humane justice and related services for victims of F/GBV and other vulnerable groups	Improved justice practitioner transparency, accountability, and integrity

The advent of this second phase of CJSSP more strongly embraced operating with, integrating, and promoting a people-centered justice approach. This subtle, but important, shift aimed to better complement ongoing institutional strengthening initiatives while infusing stronger human rights-based promotion into activities for enhanced justice support. Within this user-focused paradigm, the project worked to position criminal justice practitioners — particularly prosecutors, public defenders, judges, and CJH staff — as citizen-centered defenders of due process, fairness, and impartiality.

By expanding successful pilots, layering small shifts to processes with larger shifts in resourcing or structures, and allying the project with institutional champions of change, CJSSP worked within the existing system to safeguard the equities of accused and victims. Importantly, this effort enabled institutional actors to be more clear-eyed in their collective expectations of themselves and one another to uphold high standards of integrity. The mid-course shift in strategy also served to operationalize USAID’s principle of selectivity, aiming to focus resources and deepen impact by pursuing a more targeted geographic area and set of prioritized institutions. In turn, the institutions would serve to spur replication of their successful CJSSP-support efforts within other institutions and geographies over time.

CONCLUSION. This report highlights the key achievements within the project’s four result areas, as summarized below in “CJSSP In Numbers”, and briefly elaborates on respective strategy of each area to address challenges. In addition, the report features success stories, bringing forward voices and perspectives of those whose lives were impacted. Finally, the report closes with actionable recommendations to reinforce sustainability and further consolidate project impact.

CJSSP IN NUMBERS

Key Results (June, 2015– March, 2021)



59,045

F/GBV services provided

198

judicial staff receiving anticorruption training

237,442

people accessing community justice services

52,260

vulnerable people accessing justice, including F/GBV victims and people with disabilities

143,821

conciliation and mediation processes undertaken

5,330

judicial staff with improved skills in investigation and assistance to victims of crime and violence

1

The increased use of pre-trial case disposition from 13.6% in 2015 to 25% in 2020, contributes to a **speedier resolution of cases** at the SDW DA's office. The percentage of cases solved in less than three months increased from 0% in 2018 to 66% in 2019.

2

The multiplier effect of the community justice services reaches beyond individual and family level and **contributes to peaceful coexistence** in the communities served by the CJHs.

3

Vulnerable people like PWD and GBV victims are today facing **reduced geographical and physical barriers** to legal assistance in criminal procedures and to legal aid and psychological counseling, especially in SDW.



PHOTO: "WHEN YOU FEEL PASSION AND JOY, IT IS EASIER TO PASS IT ON TO PEOPLE". THE WORKING MORALE AMONG STAFF IMPROVED THANKS TO CJSSP REMODELING WORKS OF THE SDW DA'S OFFICE, WHICH IN TURN POSITIVELY IMPACTED THE SERVICE PROVISION. HILDA PELLERANO FOR CJSSP

Result Area I

PROSECUTOR EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY

To position prosecutors to be effective in their roles, DA offices must count on streamlined, efficient internal management systems that guide, monitor, and advance criminal cases through the justice process, from the initial complaint filing to case resolution. Justice system challenges, such as large-volume case backlogs, extensive processing timelines, and weak coordination and communication among justice operators, hamper effectively delivering swift and fair justice. Further, these challenges contribute to a pervasive erosion of public trust in justice institutions, a barrier to accessing justice not easily restored. For these reasons, building public trust and strengthening opportunities to enhance interconnections between the public and justice operators were integral to CJSSP's strategy. Hence, CJSSP's comprehensive reform strategy was guided by five elements: 1) institutional strengthening; 2) inter-institutional coordination; 3) evidenced-based programming; 4) policy development; and 5) people-centered justice.

The project sought not only to remedy management performance deficiencies, but also engage prosecutors and other justice operators in an organizational cultural transformation, pivoting from a strictly institutionally driven mindset of rendering justice to one redefined as more responsive to specific access needs of those seeking assistance. For example, in the SDW DA Office, prioritized for its heavy caseloads, proximity in or near high crime areas, and commitment to address organizational inefficiencies, this required both revitalizing its operational management system and remodeling its physical facilities. To guide these changes,

the project worked with the DA's office leadership to instill a focus on customer service and client satisfaction among staff. CJSSP supported creating an upgraded work environment conducive to advancing efficient and effective results in service provision to citizens and victims of crime in a more holistic manner. Every action ultimately sought to strengthen access to justice and increase public confidence in the responsiveness of the SDW DA Office as a local justice institution by reducing workloads, pressures, and stresses on its workstreams.

To seek scale, CJSSP sought to introduce innovative models in pilots in priority geographic areas and then facilitate replication elsewhere. For example, once the impact was evident in the SDW DA Office, the project supported replicating the changes in people-centered justice and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) elsewhere in the Santo Domingo National District. To further consolidate and sustain these advancements, CJSSP worked with national entities to revise or build new institutional or operational policy frameworks for key justice sector agencies. By bringing on national and international experts along with inputs from project-led, innovative justice initiatives such as the 2016 Judicial Reform Summit, CJSSP's sustained support set in motion national policy development processes using the most updated and contextual data available. For example, the project supported the Public Ministry to draft and advance approvals of a new criminal justice policy and, with the Ministry of Interior and Police, a national citizen security policy, both of which establish more accountable, responsive, and coordinated processes among key justice leadership and operators. This practice of planning for scale and replicability, despite maintaining a geographic and technical focus, allowed CJSSP's work with individual counterparts to build out management models, tailored guidelines, standard operating protocols, and procedural manuals to ultimately shift justice practices beyond CJSSP's zone of influence.

ACHIEVEMENTS

UPGRADING THE DA OFFICE MANAGEMENT MODEL. CJSSP used a multifaceted approach to address the large case backlogs accruing in the SDW DA Office, including the integration and upgrading of case management, data management, and chain of custody systems. These systems form the backbone channels of organizing and advancing case files while maintaining their integrity throughout the judicial process. For proper prosecutor use, they need to be user-friendly, accessible, and accurate. For example, prosecutors operating with a stronger chain of custody system can readily access properly documented evidence in building a case fully assured that its integrity is maintained. The improved elements of the management model introduced by the CJSSP enhanced the DA Office's resource management capacity and streamlined once onerous processes. This allowed prosecutors to dedicate greater time to more complex and serious cases.

In 2017, when CJSSP began working with the SDW DA Office, the primary paper case filing system was easily overwhelmed in the wake of the high rates of crime reported to their offices over several years. Evidence registration was not uniform nor centralized, and there was a strong need for case data management. Without easily accessible data analysis, the DA Office operated without a clear framework of metrics indicating progress made, milestones reached, challenges, or areas of improvement to guide its performance and quality of service.

To start, CJSSP focused on digitizing case files, records, and evidence custody. Specific actions included designing and operationalizing a case data registry, organizing an evidence custody storage system, and integrating a barcode system using the Tabularium software to facilitate efficient evidence and case registration. CJSSP then carried out training for both DA and AG staff on these new systems, ensuring fluid migration and upkeep of data and files into the digital systems. With these innovations, prosecutors and customers alike can now quickly access information on case status, assigned personnel, and other basic information critical to advance cases more likely to result in a successful resolution and conviction. By storing case data in the institutional information system, Justicia 2, data reliability enhances case management and decreases the risk of data loss. From 2018 to 2020, CJSSP support to the SDW DA Office resulted in digitally registering or filing more than 43,000 cases into a project-supported database or Justicia 2 (see box).

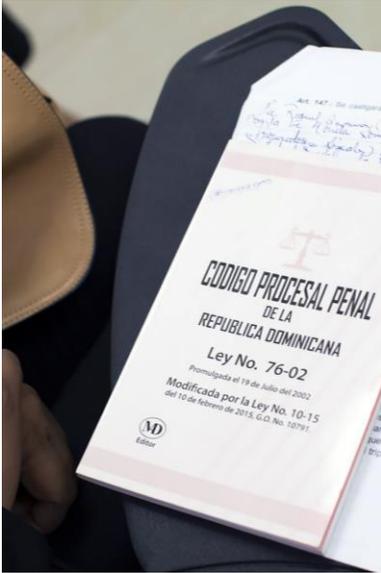
CLEARING FILES IN TACKLING CRIME

“[Without the CJSSP-supported push to digitize and catalog files] the prosecutors would not have the evidence at hand or would not so easily locate the case files. Today, we can say that the files and evidence are organized, which has contributed to an increase in convictions.”

– SDW DA office

REVITALIZING ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION. ADR tools such as conciliation and mediation are well-documented, evidence-based mechanisms to more efficiently resolve cases prior to trial. While ADR was an alternative for prosecutors and encouraged by the Public Ministry, ADR mechanisms were largely not well understood and therefore underutilized by prosecutors. Therefore, CJSSP prioritized more fully integrating ADR practices within the SDW DA Office, sparking transformational change that speeded up case resolution.

The rate of criminal complaints fully disposed prior to trial through conciliation, conditional suspension of the criminal process, or abbreviated criminal processes has increased from 13 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2021. With project support, the SDW DA Office has facilitated 44,831 ADR processes, leading to more cases that avoided reaching trial, a lengthier and costlier process. To replicate these gains at the Santo Domingo National DA Office, in 2020 the project assessed this office’s particularly high backlog of robbery cases. An earlier CJSSP assessment revealed that this office registered robbery cases as the most frequently reported crime in its jurisdiction. Of the 28,760 cases reported in 2019 in the office, approximately 30 percent (more than 8,500) were robberies. Moreover, 60 percent of those accused were between the ages of 18 to 35. Despite the fact a large proportion of these robberies were committed non-violently, prosecutors used pretrial detention for 97 percent, with only 4 percent channeled to ADR processes. As a result, the office was struggling to process a major backlog of pending case files. CJSSP contributed to the development of more efficient guidelines for expediting robbery case processing through ADR tools.



CJSSP delivered training to 5,330 justice providers:

- 2,048 persons were trained on subjects related to enhancing prosecutor effectiveness.
- 1,607 persons were trained on topics linked to human rights and access to justice.
- 828 persons were trained to improve prosecution of F/GBV cases and assistance to victims.
- 461 persons were trained on work ethic.
- 350 persons were trained on subject aiming at institutional strengthening.
- 36 persons were trained on other subjects than those mentioned above.

PHOTO: CJSSP TRAINING OF JUSTICE PRACTITIONERS, INCLUDING IN THE NEW CRIMINAL PROCEDURAL CODE, WAS ONE OF THE MOST REQUESTED FORMS OF ASSISTANCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FROM MAJOR PROJECT PARTNERS. TATIANA FERNANDEZ FOR CJSSP.

HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT. Drawing on a carefully selected cadre of subject-matter experts, both Dominican and international as appropriate, CJSSP delivered a range of training and capacity building to expand the number of justice professionals capable of criminal justice service delivery against higher standards of knowledge, skills, and functional abilities. As a result, 5,330 justice providers today have greater knowledge, skills, and functional abilities across a range of system needs, particularly in prosecution and victims’ assistance (see box, left). CJSSP’s partnerships with ENJ and ENMP allowed national and internationally recognized experts to design and deliver courses and workshops while embedding upgraded learning tools and modules within the formative structures of the criminal justice system. This will ensure future career justice professionals continue to benefit from project-supported specialized curriculums, guidelines, best practices, and manuals. The effort to upgrade professional development systems centered on justice provision with greater effectiveness, efficiency, and awareness of victim special needs. Detail on the CJSSP-developed diploma course Human Rights and Access to Justice for vulnerable populations is presented in Result Area 3.

In the Dominican Republic, the process of becoming a prosecutor requires qualifying through a rigorous selection process within the framework of the Public Ministry career system. Leading up to the selection process, prosecutor candidates must complete an induction training organized by ENMP. Despite this process, perceptions remained within the Public Ministry ranks that hiring and assignment decisions were relationship-based and anti-meritocratic. To counter this criticism, the project supported the Public Ministry and ENMP in taking an important step to strengthen the induction training processes for prosecutor candidates. With CJSSP’s efforts to revise and update ENMP’s prosecutor induction course, the Public Ministry ensured a transparent, merit-based placement system for prosecutor candidates based on performance

ALIGNING PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS WITH USERS' NEEDS.

The project worked closely with counterparts to complement organizational restructuring efforts with user-centered adjustments to facilities and physical work environments for staff. Specifically, to support integrating people-centered justice holistically to improve the customer service experience, CJSSP worked with the SDW DA Office to redesign the center's physical layout. The project gave particular attention to privacy and confidentiality issues. By combining a remodeling effort with organizational restructuring and reengineered workflows, the project and the DA Office reinforced a cultural shift away from a primarily institutionally centric paradigm for staff toward one that elevates the customer experience as the primary focus. As a result, the DA staff internalized a renewed sense of professional pride and commitment in carrying out their respective duties (see box, above), which in turn promoted strong user satisfaction. Afterwards, nearly 70 percent of the SDW DA Office's clients considered the service to be "very good".

CATALYZING CUSTOMER SERVICE

"There is now more privacy, less noise, and, in general, it is a greater work environment. It is not only the user who feels more comfortable, but also those who are providing the service work with a better attitude and outlook."

– SDW DA office

STRENGTHENING INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION. Efficient and effective justice relies on strong inter-institutional coordination among system operators. Nevertheless, like many others, the Dominican Republic's justice system is hampered by weaknesses in communication across institutions. In 2017, a CJSSP-supported study assessed the impacts of this weakness. The study found that although existing structures such as the justice sector's inter-institutional coordination mechanisms (ICM) operated at the local and national levels, several gaps and deficiencies impede its full potential, sustainability, and effectiveness. These include low ICM member participation, lack of leadership, lack of documented procedures or rules, and inconsistent or lack of follow-up on accountability. Further, the study highlighted the importance of multisector and inter-institutional coordination to improve operators' abilities to achieve shared elements of their respective missions in a timely and resource-efficient manner. To enhance multisectoral and inter-institutional capacity in the key technical areas and beyond, CJSSP prepared a final report consolidating a number of lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations oriented at ICM leadership.

Alongside the study, CJSSP concentrated on enhancing inter-institutional communications via technology. The project worked with key system operators to create the Inter-institutional Committee for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including representatives from the country's 10 leading criminal justice agencies, including the Public Ministry, the Ministry of Interior and the Police, the Judiciary, Customs, and Immigration. With CJSSP support, this committee established an organizational governance structure and pursued practical solutions to criminal justice system data sharing, including improved access to criminal case-related or background check-related information. For example, to encourage efficient information exchange, CJSSP worked with the committee to design and operationalize a virtual communications platform, the Plataforma de Intercambio de Información de Justicia Criminal, which allows for online information exchange. This exchange led to streamlining several inter-institutional processes that previously required multiple bureaucratic steps. For example, justice operators such as the judiciary or a prosecutor could more easily issue alerts to inform the Migration Control Office to prevent an individual with a court-appearance date from leaving the country. Previously, these types of routine and important administrative procedures would require multiple steps, inefficiently expending time and resources of both user and justice

provider. Also, beyond improving efficiency, this intervention initiated dialogues across justice providers, mapping out common intersections of information and resource needs that did not exist prior to CJSSP support and identifying opportunities to improve information sharing.

The project's support to foster inter-institutional coordination also made significant inroads in protecting GBV victims more effectively as their cases advance. For example, CJSSP worked with counterparts to improve police execution of arrest warrants issued by a judge at the request of the SDW DA's VAU. In 2019, only 13 percent of arrest warrants (86 out of a total 645 arrest warrants over a nine-month period) were actually executed, according to VAU records. Because these warrants are only issued when there is an imminent risk of retaliation against the victims, this low percentage meant that F/GBV victims faced serious risk of re-victimization. To change this situation, the project worked to bridge communications and resources from the Public Ministry and the Police to improve their working relationships. Thanks to a three-month pilot initiative (September-November 2019), the SDW DA Office VAU and the Police increased the execution of arrest warrants in F/GBV cases to 59 percent in the following 10 months.

SUPPORTING CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT. From the onset, CJSSP understood that introducing, integrating, and working with key stakeholders on initiatives to strengthen the justice system would be sustainable only through structural and systemic reforms. Therefore, CJSSP worked intentionally and deliberately with key justice leadership to form the necessary national and institutional policies that serve to update operational and organizational principles, values, and guidelines.

- **JUDICIAL REFORM INITIATIVE.** In 2016, an extensive CJSSP-supported consultation process convening the Dominican Republic's judiciary culminated in a national judicial summit held in October. The participatory process included 1,800 stakeholders (1,079 judicial officials and employees, 343 other regional stakeholders, and 378 civil society leaders and members) captured individual and collective reflections among key justice leadership to re-vision and jump-start a new road map toward national judicial reform. The summit established intra- and inter-institutional commitments among key judiciary institutions such as the Supreme Court of Justice, the Council of the Judiciary, and judicial departments of the country. Gains included renewed investments to revise career and disciplinary systems and initiatives dedicated to promoting and implementing case decongestion mechanisms, emphasizing ADR processes. The summit not only created spaces for critical insight and reflection on systemic challenges across the judiciary, but cultivated entry points and relationships for CJSSP to subsequently deliver necessary support to turn commitments into action. For example, the national judicial summit laid the groundwork for a later push by the Dominican Judiciary for several changes, consolidated in a publication titled "Advances in Fulfilling the National Judicial Summit Agreements" that called for 1) interview centers for vulnerable victims or witnesses to crime; 2) training in new areas of law, including GBV; 3) expanding the use of ADR methods; 4) updating the performance evaluation system; 5) developing a strategic communications plan; 6) institutional strengthening of the Judiciary's Inspector General's Office (IGO); and 7) more interview centers for increased protection of especially vulnerable victims. This revitalized interest and investment enhanced and complemented CJSSP objectives to modernize and systematize innovative models strengthening the Dominican Republic's justice system.

- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY.** CJSPP guided the national criminal justice reform policy development process in partnership with key international and local experts and high-ranking officials from the AG Office, among others. The project supported assessments on the current judicial system and organizational culture, carefully examining the system's processes, procedures, bottlenecks, and other weaknesses or missed opportunities. Noteworthy, CJSPP's support to FINJUS was instrumental in presenting a 20-year study on justice sector reform, advances, and key areas for improvement, including decongestion of case files and delays and poor productivity levels within the criminal justice system impacting all key justice sector institutions. In partnership with the AG's Office, the National Criminal Justice Policy began to take shape, building on this solid, data-driven foundation during 2018 to 2021. CJSPP maintained its participatory, multisectoral approach by engaging key justice sector actors to discuss the scope, structure, capacity building, and anticipated rollout of the policy. The policy focuses largely on making the PM's response to crime more timely and efficient while ensuring the rights of all parties involved in the penal process.
- **CITIZEN SECURITY POLICY.** Following several major CJSPP-supported assessments on citizen security, CJSPP reached an agreement to advance the development of a national Citizen Security Policy in 2018. The Citizen Security Policy development process led by the Ministry of the Interior and the Police (MIP) would complement the Criminal Justice Policy development process led by the AG's office. The key findings of the CJSPP-commissioned citizen security survey carried out in 2019 further underscored the urgency and gains in developing an updated citizen security policy to effectively harness and advance the modernization improvements made by the justice sector. Guided by two technical experts, dialogue forums engaging regional experts from Mexico, Central America, and Colombia, as well as other technical assistance, helped to shape the policy. CJSPP became a member of the working group — which included the MIP and the Ministry of the President, the US Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Program (ICITAP), and FINJUS — assigned to draft the Citizen Security Policy. In March 2021, the President approved a 100-day pilot plan to test the draft Citizen Security Policy. The project subsequently worked closely with the President and MIP to facilitate a successful rollout of the policy.

STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING. CJSPP spearheaded analytical studies and evaluations to support strategic decision-making on technical aspects, selected in concert with counterparts and USAID. Using the resulting data and analysis, the project pinpointed and shared with key stakeholders priority problem areas to tailor initiatives that addressed a number of institutional capacity and performance challenges. The series of evaluations and studies on justice institutional processes and systems examined a broad range of elements, including training needs, citizen security, inter-institutional coordination, prosecution management models, information management, and workload challenges. These insightful studies included management model analysis of the Santo Domingo Province DA Office, a comprehensive review of interagency coordination schemes to map out coordination opportunities among key actors, and an investigation and diagnostic to identify ADR training needs for prosecutors and others. See Annex I for a selected list of information products.

One project-led assessment, a quantitative study on perceptions of citizen security, crime, and violence in five high-crime communities, provided a deep look at the current context. The data-driven analysis both validated and challenged assumptions and informed consideration of programming changes for CJSSP. More importantly, for justice institutions, the analysis made compelling observations linking public perception and levels of trust in justice institutions with the effectiveness of the Dominican Republic's justice system (see box below).

CITIZEN SECURITY LENS: PROSECUTOR EFFECTIVENESS AND PUBLIC TRUST

In 2019, CJSSP worked with a local Dominican data and analytics firm to gauge public trust of justice system operators' abilities to respond to crime, violence, and citizen security concerns in five high-crime communities. The purpose was to collect data on crime prevalence in both rural and urban areas by measuring variables related to criminal acts, including F/GBV, experienced by the respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey. In addition, data was collected on trust in justice institutions, the perception of the institutional response to crime and violence, citizen participation, TIP awareness, and violence in schools. Public trust is an important element to ensure access to justice, and this study provided a valuable snapshot. It revealed areas of concern regarding the impact on public trust when justice systems are inefficient, hard to access and fail to meet citizen and victim needs. The CJSSP study found that, overall, there are more crime victims who do not report the crime than those who do report. This study reconfirmed how essential information-based decision-making is for the development of cost-effective strategies, policies, and programming. Findings include the following:

DA offices: 6 percent of respondents expressed that they greatly trusted the DA's offices, 23 percent that they somewhat trusted the DA's office, 31 percent that they hardly trusted the DA's office, and 37 percent that they do not trust the DA's office at all.

Justice system: 39 percent of respondents indicated that they believe the justice system will punish the perpetrator, while 59 percent indicated that they do not believe that the justice system will punish the perpetrator.

Prosecutors: 16 percent believe prosecutors always or almost always file charges in court once a crime is committed, 38 percent believe that it happens sometimes, and 32 percent believe that it almost never happens.

Court system: 29 percent somewhat believe the courts guarantee a fair trial, 34 percent hardly believe the courts guarantee a fair trial, and 35 percent believe the courts do not guarantee a fair trial at all.

Judges: 29 percent somewhat trust the judges, 29 percent hardly trust them, and 40 percent do not trust them at all.

Police. 22 percent somewhat trust the police, 29 percent hardly trust them, and 48 percent do not trust them at all.

Victimization. 20 percent have been a victim of crime in the past 12 months. The most common crimes in the CJSSP study were armed robbery (8 percent), robbery without use of force or threat (5 percent) and burglary (3 percent). Only one-third of victims reported these crimes, except in cases of armed robbery (47 percent reporting).

Satisfaction with case handling. Respondents expressed low satisfaction with the Police and/or DA's office to handle reported cases regarding the top three crimes in the Dominican Republic: armed robbery, unarmed robbery, and burglary. Between 47 and 67 percent of the victims were dissatisfied with the way their case was handled by the authorities.



PHOTO: YOUTH LEADERS ENGAGED IN CJSSP F/GBV AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGN "CONOCE CON QUIÉN TE JUNTAS" (KNOW WHO YOU KNOW) IN 2019 DISTRIBUTED 600 POSTERS, 600 STICKERS, AND 76,000 FLIERS AROUND SDW. 276,000 WOMEN WERE REACHED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS. GABRIEL TAMAYO FOR CJSSP

Result Area 2 **COMMUNITY JUSTICE**

STRATEGY

To bridge gaps in services and break down barriers in access to justice, CJSSP emphasized decentralizing and strengthening justice systems in areas of the country traditionally more distant from authorities. In doing so, CJSSP emphasized operationalizing a vision of people-centered justice to build out and expand the community justice architecture that positions the Dominican justice system to respond to the pressing needs of vulnerable populations and citizens who often face geographic, economic, and knowledge barriers that inhibit their capacity to navigate the intricacies of the legal system. Properly implemented, community justice mechanisms not only provide legal orientation and support services at the local level, but also serve to engage and empower citizen stakeholders as agents of change through innovative mechanisms, such as ADR via the CJHs, to more efficiently resolve their own issues to the extent possible, without intervention from the formal justice system.

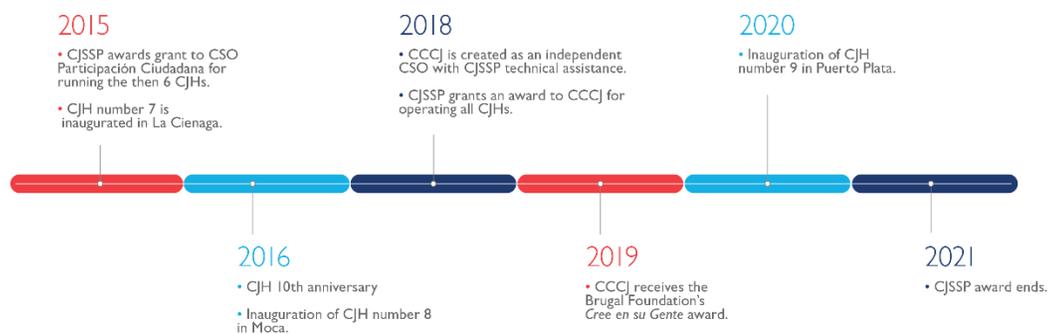
The premise behind the Dominican Republic's CJH model, designed and implemented with USAID support, is to expand access to justice beyond the courtroom and into neighborhoods. During the last two decades, this local justice service model has expanded from an initial six sites to the present nine located in high-crime or high-need areas. The CJHs represent safe spaces for all citizens seeking swift, certain, and fair justice and legal assistance, irrespective of social or economic status. They provide citizens with resources and tools to navigate and resolve local conflicts, whether inter-neighbor disputes regarding property or debts or

intrafamily disputes regarding inheritance and child support, for example. Alongside their physical expansion and expanded service portfolio, the CJHs also have progressively expanded citizens’ understanding of what they may expect of the justice system, moving beyond traditional formal roles of prosecutors, police, and judges and into non-traditional spaces for dispute resolution. Non-traditional spaces for conciliation and mediation via ADR help alleviate the caseloads of overstretched and under-resourced institutional justice operators. Because CJHs house both their own staff and officials from key justice sector institutions, such as the Public Ministry and the Judiciary, they are a de facto part of the justice apparatus in the public mind.

CJSSP prioritized strengthening CJHs, recognizing their pivotal role in community justice reduce violence and crime, alleviate burdens on traditional formal justice institutions, and build community cohesion and coexistence (see timeline for CJH expansion and CJSSP support below in “Expanding Access to Community Justice”).

EXPANDING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY JUSTICE

(2015 - 2021)



The following achievements reflect impacts of the project’s work to transform the CJHs to a more sustainable, effective, and responsive service entity focused on efficiently meeting community justice needs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

STRENGTHENING CJHS’ OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY. CJSSP concentrated efforts on three overlapping yet distinct elements key to long-term operational viability: 1) institutional sustainability; 2) technical sustainability; and 3) financial sustainability. Initially, the project provided core support to CJHs’ operations via a grant to CSO Participación Ciudadana. To better position the CJHs to pursue their distinct collective mission and foster an independent, long-term future, CJSSP, the CJHs and Participación Ciudadana agreed in 2018 to establish the Center for Community Justice Houses (CCCJ), which thereafter served as a separate CSO focused solely on CJH management and operations.

Once the CCCJ was formed, the project concentrated on mentoring the CCCJ management team to strengthen its capacity to continue the CJHs’ mission post-CJSSP. Through tailored



With CJSSP support, the CJHs reached more than 237,000 men and women in nine high-crime communities.

Most requested services

1. Conciliation (47 percent)
2. Mediation (39 percent)
3. Legal orientation (12 percent)
4. Psychological counselling (2 percent)
5. Municipal services (<0.5 percent)

Top disputes resolved

1. Rental disputes
2. Debts
3. Child custody and child support
4. Division of property
5. Defamation and insult

PHOTO: MEDIATION SESSION AT CJH LAS CAOBAS. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE MECHANISMS, LIKE MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION, PROVED IMPORTANT TO ALLEVIATE TENSIONS AND DISPUTES AT COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL. GRABANDO RD FOR CJSSP.

workshops, the team gained knowledge and skills on operational systems and tools for administrative, financial, and logistical management. The project’s support was instrumental in developing organizational tools such as work plans, budgets, communications strategies, and standard operational procedures covering human resources, administration, and financial management supporting nine CJHs. In addition, CJSSP provided technical support to CJH staff on priority issues such as GBV and TIP, as well as communications media management, finance, and administration.

CJSSP worked closely with the CCCJ to gauge its present needs and tailor systems accordingly. To expand services, CCCJ worked with CJSSP support and several public and private sector contributions to open three new CJH locations: Moca, Cienaga, and Puerto Plata. To better position CCCJ as the management entity responsible for nine separate CJHs, the project also invested in helping to set up and launch a central CCCJ office in Santo Domingo. With CCCJ, the project also carried out three client satisfaction surveys, in 2016, 2019, and 2020-21, providing feedback to inform CJH strategies on how to evolve and continuously strengthen service delivery (see box, left). CJSSP also worked with CCCJ to design a new data management system to remedy its present nonstandard data collection mechanisms that heretofore have inhibited its ability to conduct real-time analysis or monitor the quality of user services. As of 2020, more than 90 percent of CJH staff responded that the CJHs were “much stronger” than five years ago, thanks to the partnership with CJSSP.

BUILDING CJH FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY. The risk inherent in the CJHs’ historic reliance on USAID funding as a core financial base for their work was self-evident in initial assessments. Therefore, diversifying the CCCJ’s financial resource base and seeking additional operational efficiencies were important. To this end, the project worked with CCCJ to develop a robust financial sustainability plan that led to cost-saving measures, including a change of venue for the San Francisco de Macoris CJH and a reduction of staff in several of the CJHs. Further, CJSSP contracted a national fundraising expert to support the development of a financial sustainability plan, to include innovative strategies such as public-private partnerships (PPP), crowd-funding, and new service areas.

Branching out in these new directions yielded positive results and increased CJH visibility as a key community stakeholder. The CCCJ has since forged agreements with

three private banks, including Banreservas (a leading Dominican financial institution) and local state actors, that secured funds to refurbish and strengthen communications plans for several CJHs. This level of private sector engagement has cemented CCCJ's and the CJHs' reputations as important community institutions and led to public recognition, for example, the Brugal Foundation's Cree en su Gente award in 2019. Similarly, in support of the most recently established CJH Puerto Plata, a vested group comprising local authorities and private sector representatives organized themselves as the Friends of the CJH Puerto Plata. The CJH's networking efforts with this group have since resulted in its commitment to monthly financial contributions to CJH Puerto Plata.

INCREASING CJH VISIBILITY. CJSSP supported the development of a communications plan to increase CJHs' visibility and raise public awareness of their portfolio of justice services. With project support, CJHs developed more polished, standardized branding elements for external use, including CJH contact information material for social media dissemination on platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Drawing on this communications refresh, the CJHs have substantially increased their community profile and engagement. They have formed part of national information campaigns on issues of access to justice and GBV prevention and response (also see Result Area 3, below) and publicly launched a pandemic business continuity plan, Protegiéndonos desde la Casa (Protecting Ourselves from Home). The campaigns emphasized the utility of virtual tools such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to reach and serve CJH clients, particularly important for at-risk children and women impacted by risks of increased F/GBV due to stay-at-home orders or other pandemic-related restrictions on movement.

CJH EXPANSIONS AND REMODELING. The user experience - so central to the CJHs' ability to deliver quality service and maintain public confidence - depends considerably on the facilities that users visit. To this end, the project invested resources in assessing priority CJHs in need of remodeling or rehabilitation. As part of this process, CJSSP ensured that facility renovations would meet clients' specific needs, particularly those of vulnerable populations (see box, right, on client satisfaction feedback). In turn, these modifications aimed to reduce barriers of access to justice and encourage increased use of justice services.

Because Las Caobas is the CJH with the greatest local demand for services, the project prioritized its remodeling in 2020. The project initiated facility upgrades to expand the CJH's response capacity, improve the working environment for staff, and make services more user-friendly. Similarly, in an effort to expand geographic reach of justice services, the project supported the opening of a new CJH in Puerto Plata in 2020. This latest CJH is the Dominican Republic's ninth CJH and third launched with CJSSP support. CJSSP carried out a feasibility study, carefully surveying community justice needs, target population, and local funding sources. During the planning phase, the project aided in galvanizing local support including from local authorities, the

BY THE NUMBERS: CJH CLIENT SATISFACTION

In 2019, CJSSP conducted a client satisfaction survey including respondents accessing services throughout all nine project-supported CJHs. The following are key insights from this survey:

- 45 percent consider that the quality of services provided are "very good," 47 percent consider it to be "good," and 6 percent consider it to be "regular."
- 57 percent consider staff service quality in the CJHs to be "very good," 39 percent consider it to be "good," and 3 percent consider it to be "regular."
- 98 percent would recommend CJH services to other people.

Judiciary, and potential private sector partners. The project supported the refurbishment of the CJH and outfitting the facility using a people-centered approach.

CJHS INCREASE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS. The intent of CJSSP's work with the CCCJ and CJHs is to increase access to justice for vulnerable populations, particularly: 1) GBV victims; 2) PWDs; 3) LGBTI persons; 4) underage mothers; and 5) migrants and their descendants. CJSSP developed a pilot project initially out of the Las Caobas CJH, to enhance its service delivery suitable for each group's special needs and interests. To this end, the Las Caobas CJH employed a project-supported evaluation tool to assess the accessibility of operational and logistical systems and identify needed improvements to meet established minimum standards for physical and service-oriented access. This included reviewing and revising intake procedures for examining privacy and case sensitivity considerations for F/GBV victims, as well as identifying structural or feature adjustments to better accommodate PWD needs in accessing CJH facilities, such as expanded doorways, ramps, or accessible lavatory facilities.

CJSSP also coordinated with representatives of vulnerable population organizations to hold training and dialogues with CJH staff to expand their knowledge and empathy for vulnerable populations' needs and contexts to improve service delivery and quality. Beyond this, the CJHs reached an agreement with the representatives to formalize closer coordination in referring cases to the CJHs to receive priority support for identified members of vulnerable populations. CJSSP aided in systematizing these productive experiences and organizing workshops to share lessons learned with other CJHs for replicability. Additional notable efforts to increase access to community justice with vulnerable groups is further detailed in Result Area 3.



PHOTO: A LOCAL MEMBER OF CJSSP GRANTEE (AVJ) WORKING TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THROUGH CAPACITY-BUILDING OF JUDGES AND OTHER JUDICIAL STAFF IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. CREDIT: CJSSP

Result Area 3

INCREASED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

STRATEGY

The Dominican justice system is by its nature complex, with responsibilities diffused among many different stakeholders. As such, CJSSP applied a layered approach to designing and implementing interventions, using integrated, multisectoral strategies to target and engage vulnerable populations. Across institutions and the CJHs, CJSSP wove together activities that reinforced one another to eventually deliver a combined impact greater than the sum of the individual parts. Prominent interventions focused on capacity building and enhancing coordination among public and civil society justice institutions to strengthen their collective capacity to deliver wrap-around protection and response services that address the different needs of targeted groups. These interventions countered historically weak coordination and communication among service providers, whether institutional or from civil society, that have historically led to ineffective and inefficient responses that marginalize the user, or victim, perspective. Therefore, CJSSP emphasized creating opportunities and tailoring models to adapt and upgrade service provider systems with firsthand knowledge and input from marginalized, vulnerable populations. CJSSP also ensured the integration and institutionalization of these advancements by, for example, developing training curriculums adopted by the Public Ministry's training school or supporting CJHs to develop close partnerships with CSOs representing vulnerable populations.

Three pillars (see box below) guided the project’s role as a facilitator across key stakeholders to support an inclusive and comprehensive approach to ensuring responsive adaptations in justice service delivery by both institutions and CJHs. Throughout, CJSSP’s priority remained positioning victims, particularly of F/GBV, to see their cases through to resolution despite systemic obstacles. By using a victim-centered approach, the project responded to this multilayered challenge. CJSSP provided technical assistance to equip service providers with the necessary skills, resources, and assistance models, particularly psychological counseling, to reduce re-victimization and provide victims with the support and knowledge to foster trust and commitment in the legal system to bring justice to their cases. The transformation from victim to an empowered survivor is a powerful first step forward in breaking cycles of violence for women, their families, and communities.

PILLARS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- 1. Encourage evidenced-informed action.** With key counterparts, project efforts aimed to strengthen their data information systems to enhance case-management and data on justice needs among vulnerable populations. Further, leaning on key findings and lessons learned from project-led studies, CJSSP was able to hone and inform activity design with an enriched knowledge and context base to better respond to specific needs and interests of vulnerable people.
- 2. Diversify participation.** Collaborating with diverse partner CSOs working on the rights of vulnerable populations, CJSSP designed and implemented project activities that empowered these CSOs and their members while guaranteeing that their needs and interests are included in systemic change efforts to expand access.
- 3. Mainstream capacity building within existing structures.** CJSSP training developed institutional justice operators with an emphasis on increasing access to justice for vulnerable populations and integrated this training into the formal career training curriculum.

The key achievements and highlights below illustrate CJSSP’s efforts to engage, learn from, and integrate vulnerable populations needs to drive design and implementation of activities to improve access to justice (see “Access to Justice for Vulnerable People” below for illustrative impact in Result Area 3).

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE



1/5 of all vulnerable people accessing justice were minors.



At least 155* people with disabilities accessed justice through CJSSP support.

* Some PWD suffer double vulnerability by being GBV victims with disabilities



15,196 GBV victims accessing legal services in criminal proceedings at the SDW VAU.



2,798 GBV victims and their dependents accessing psychological counseling.

ACHIEVEMENTS

EMPHASIZING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO PROVIDE HOLISTIC F/GBV VICTIM SUPPORT. Recognizing the barriers F/GBV victims face and their reticence to report crimes committed against them, CJSSP took a comprehensive approach to strengthen knowledge and capacity in managing F/GBV cases. Importantly, the project focused on providing F/GBV victims the necessary support to heal and seek justice. When F/GBV victims decide to come forward and report their crimes, the lack of specialized F/GBV response capacity by justice operators (e.g., prosecutors, police officers, and health service personnel) and inadequate processes often lead to re-victimization. Additionally, F/GBV victims face serious safety concerns because of their perpetrators, who may be their spouses or intimate partners. Inefficient processes unintentionally create hurdles for victims, even in executing arrest warrants or enforcing protection measures, and place victims at great risk. As a result, the rate of victims continuing their reported cases through to resolution is low.

Considering these factors, CJSSP emphasized expanding psychological counseling for F/GBV victims to promote trauma recovery while equipping them with the skills and knowledge to better advocate for themselves as they navigate the justice system and break the cycle of violence (see box). Psychological support to victims can prove to be a game-changing force for them in finding their voice and agency to endure lengthy legal processes often inherent with risk of re-victimization provoking traumatic triggers.

EASING THE BURDENS OF VICTIMS

“I can affirm that from the very first sessions, I felt a very positive change in my life.”

– GBV victim receiving psychological counseling via PACAM

CJSSP teamed with Patronato de Ayuda a Casos de Mujeres (PACAM), the leading provider from the civil society of psychological counseling to F/GBV victims in the Dominican Republic, to expand these services. In tandem with the CJHs, PACAM played a critical role constructing a more sustainable delivery mechanism for providing psychological counseling, eventually serving more than 2,798 F/GBV victims and their dependents (children and adolescents) during CJSSP. To sustain these services after CJSSP ends, PACAM also trained 349 CJH personnel, prosecutors and justice staff working at the PM’s hotline for F/GBV and at the SDW VAU on topics including psychological counseling, how to detect violence, and crisis management in F/GBV cases. They also worked with GBV victims and the community at large to increase awareness of GBV and equip community members with tools to better identify and support at-risk women. CCCJ’s and the CJHs’ reputation for psychological assistance and legal orientation for F/GBV victims grew substantially, leading to a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to use the CJH model as a platform for these services nationwide.

ENHANCED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR F/GBV VICTIMS. While the CJHs are increasingly an essential support for F/GBV victims, they are not sufficient on their own. Traditional justice institutions also must be prepared to meet the specific needs of F/GBV victims with quality standards of service. In part for this reason, CJSSP prioritized the SDW VAU, due to its high number of F/GBV cases. Grounded in a 2018 CJSSP assessment of the VAU, the project’s work with the VAU focused on the need to strengthen its management model to better comply with national and international standards and more efficient and

effective service provision. Initially, the partnership provided both technical capacity building for VAU staff and revised management, administration, and assistance processes that encouraged more efficient and victim-centered handling of cases. As part of this effort, CJSSP designed and tested new standard operating protocols aligned with international and national guiding principles, including improvements to the data management system and internal workflows. The new standard operating protocols provided efficient office hours, revised processes for case assignments, and adjusted guidelines on the use of judicial tools to increase protection for F/GBV victims. The VAU's improvement plan also included a new queue system and three new offices for forensic psychologists. For an example of how these changes impacted the victims' experience with the SDW VAU, see the "First Encounter" graphic on next page. At least 15,196 F/GBV victims benefited from the legal services in criminal proceedings at the SDW VAU since then.

To further improve the user experience of victims in the VAU, CJSSP worked to revise and upgrade the physical layout of the VAU office facilities, specifically to address physical and procedural barriers faced by vulnerable populations. As a result, the VAU now has a Gesell Chamber to conduct interviews while protecting the most vulnerable victims from re-victimization, particularly children and adolescents, F/GBV victims at risk of retaliation, and TIP victims; and other remodeling work and equipment to provide optimal conditions and settings to work with and support victims. Building modifications were made complying with PWD access standards, including wheelchair-accessible ramps, accessible doorway dimensions, easily accessible door handles, and other related fixtures.

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION TO RESPOND TO F/GBV. While both public institutional and civil society justice service providers in the Dominican Republic have long been committed to supporting F/GBV victims, they have too often focused on their own respective silos. This lack of a coordinated approach has left victim concerns sidelined and under-emphasized important psychosocial and health concerns in F/GBV cases. Guided by international and national experiences, CJSSP worked with the SDW VAU, the Ministry of Women, the local Health Service, CJHs, and the AG's Office to develop a blueprint for a stronger referral system of F/GBV victims as an initial pilot in SDW. Officially launched in March 2020 as the Modelo Coordinado de Atención Integral, or MCAI, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the model's rollout has been limited by pandemic restrictions on movement. Nevertheless, once fully operational, MCAI will serve to consolidate a network of justice, health, and psychological service providers that each offer distinct and important value to F/GBV victims and are each necessary to provide an appropriate and holistic justice response.

FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM:

SDW Victims Assistance Unit

1

Maria and her child, victims of F/GBV, arrives at the SDW VAU to file a complaint.

2

Reception: Maria explains the reason for her visit to confirm she is at the right place.

3

Presenting the complaint: A clerk receives Maria's complaint.

6

Case review: Maria meets with the prosecutor assigned to the case to review and discuss the course of action.

5

Immediate actions: Forensic medical evaluation AND/OR forensic psychological evaluation.

4

First case review: The prosecutor assigned to the case makes a first risk-assessment and establishes immediate actions needed.

With a stronger referral system and services available in SDW, Maria does not have to travel as far as before to access legal and psychological counseling, but is referred to the CJH Las Caobas if needed.

As per CJSSP recommendation, the VAU has increased its capacity from 3 to 6 forensic psychologists assisting Maria and other F/GBV victims.

As per CJSSP recommended workflow, Maria does not have to repeat her story to the prosecutor, but can proceed directly to step 5 as per the prosecutor's recommendation.

7

Course of action: Maria can leave. The prosecutor puts in motion the recommended course of action agreed upon (arrest warrants and /or protective measures) and initiates the investigation.

Thanks to CJSSP, the average time Maria spends at the SDW VAU has been reduced from an average of 5.4 hours to 2.75 hours.

MAINSTREAMING VICTIM-CENTERED RESPONSE CAPACITY WITHIN JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS. CJSSP responded to relatively weak individual technical understanding within justice institutions of victims and vulnerable groups' specific needs by designing and delivering robust human rights training within justice operators, including prosecutors, forensics specialists, public defenders, and judges. Prior to CJSSP, the protection of rights and victims of violence and crime relied heavily on a litigious response without fully embracing the broader contextual dynamics of victims' needs, particularly from the various sub-groups of vulnerable populations, due to low levels of knowledge and awareness.

Hence, the project developed and delivered a number of training and diploma courses focused on key conceptual and legal frameworks for vulnerable groups' human rights concerns (see box, right, for examples). This effort drew on representatives from vulnerable populations to both design and facilitate sessions. This firsthand participation and open experiential exchanges allowed dialogues to move toward an improved mode of management for victims' cases in the future. CJSSP worked with ENMP and ENJ to review their curricula, revise and update course materials, and embed CJSSP-designed training for future use.

ACCESS TO LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE. To further support F/GBV victims needing legal representation but who may lack the financial resources, the project worked with the CCCJ to build a unique partnership with a special unit within the Public Ministry mandated to provide legal assistance to victims of crime, known as the National Service for Legal Representation for Victims' Rights (RELEVIC). The partnership will facilitate RELEVIC's efforts to expand its coverage through the CJH platform in several of the communities served by the CJHs. In preparation, CJSSP provided two training events to 37 RELEVIC lawyers. The first training focused on ensuring the rights of the victims within the penal process and the second on the rights to justice and legal assistance for TIP victims. According to a CJSSP rapid needs assessment, 59 percent of RELEVIC lawyers had not received any TIP training previously. In fact, only one lawyer had assisted a TIP victim in person and less than one in five lawyers responding had more than a basic understanding of TIP. Training topics included knowledge and skills for the lawyers to understand the rights of the victims within the penal process and the

TRAINING TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO VULNERABLE POPULATION NEEDS

Human rights and access to justice diploma course. With CJSSP support, this 10-week course for justice operators trained 48 PM staff on topics such as the international human rights system, Dominican Republic's human rights obligations, crimes linked to severe human rights violations, access to justice for vulnerable people and gender issues.

F/GBV training for prosecutors. Bolstering prosecutor case management and F/GBV assistance skills, the project hired an international expert on F/GBV cases to deliver trainings, including mentoring and on-the-job training, on handling particularly complex F/GBV cases. 72 prosecutors participated.

F/GBV training for the judiciary. CJSSP awarded a grant to IAWJ to assess the training needs on GBV within the Judiciary and to assist ENJ in developing and delivering training-of-trainers on GBV.

rights to justice and legal assistance for TIP victims. As in other training, CJSSP introduced leading subject matter experts to lead the training.

ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING YOUTH. Youth in the Dominican Republic, particularly those in high-crime areas, comprise another important vulnerable population for CJSSP. For example, as the project worked with the Santo Domingo National District's DA Office on case management issues, it became evident that the highest number of cases reported (i.e., robbery) were largely committed by young adults. The CJSSP-supported citizen security survey also indicated two important facts: 1) youth considered unemployment and crime as a more serious problem than did any other age group; and 2) young adults ages 18 to 34 participate comparatively less often in solving community issues. Therefore, the project mainstreamed youth concerns into activities, collaborating with both its core partners and other USAID projects. CJSSP partnered with Alerta Joven, another USAID project that works in high-crime communities, and the CCCJ to devise a joint youth empowerment strategy that leveraged Alerta Joven's youth networks to expand the reach of CJHs' programs. This collaboration trained 127 youth community justice advocates, increasing their knowledge and activism skills on issues such as human rights, F/GBV, TIP, and community justice. With this preparation, youth volunteered and engaged with their peers, communities, networks, and organizations increasing awareness on human rights and access to justice services.

Additionally, CSJPP worked with the Santo Domingo National District's citizen security and gender issues task force to support youth in conflict with the law by considering the integration of ADR mechanisms, alternative sanctions, and restorative justice options to reduce incarceration of youth offenders. A CJSSP-led assessment explored these avenues, and the project participated in regional webinars with justice and violence prevention USAID projects in Colombia and Mexico. This learning later led to a pilot pre-trial diversion program in 2020 for youth in conflict with the law, an integrated effort involving organizations including the Santo Domingo National District's DA Office, the Judiciary and the Municipality. CJSSP facilitated these discussions and provided an international expert on restorative justice to guide partners in design and implementation of this pilot initiative.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. PWDs remain one of the most invisible vulnerable groups for whom institutions have made little progress in increasing access to justice and other basic services. As mentioned above, CJSSP revised and integrated human rights and justice training curriculums and courses provided by ENMP, which included the perspectives and participation of PWDs. Beyond this, CJSSP built key partnerships with public entities and CSOs dedicated to increasing access to justice for PWDs, such as *Círculo de Mujeres con Discapacidad (CIMUDIS)* and the National Council on Disability (*CONADIS* by its Spanish acronym). The project's support was instrumental in aligning and bolstering their efforts with justice institutions including the AG's Office, the SDW DA offices, CCCJ and the CJHs to promote access to justice for PWDs. Results from these efforts included: 1) the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the AG and CIMUDIS in March 2019 for the promotion of access to justice of PWDs, especially women with disabilities who are victims of F/GBV; 2) the signature of a letter of intent between CCCJ and organizations representing PWDs to also increase access to community justice for PWDs, among other vulnerable people; 3) improvement of the physical facilities of the VAU in SDW and the Las

Caobas CJH aimed at increasing the accessibility for women with disabilities victims of F/GBV; and 4) the development of minimum standards for assisting F/GBV victims with disabilities at the VAU in SDW. Due to these efforts, the F/GBV Victims Assistance Unit (VAU) in SDW has become the first among all VAU in the country able to provide disaggregated information on F/GBV victims and PWDs who are victims of F/GBV. Since July 2019, the VAU reports that 72 PWDs have reported F/GBV crimes committed against them and received assistance from this specialized unit to resolve cases.

RAISING AWARENESS OF LGBTI RIGHTS AND ISSUES AMONG JUSTICE PROVIDERS.

The heavy sociocultural stigmatization, discrimination, and marginalization faced by LGBTI persons discourage many from reporting crimes. Abusive treatment of LGBTI persons by authorities is pervasive and seeking assistance or recourse is particularly challenging. With only limited knowledge on LGBTI challenges and special needs, justice operators (judges, prosecutors, forensics experts, police, and public defenders) lack the tools and techniques to appropriately and effectively protect and address LGBTI rights and issues. To raise institutional awareness of this issue, CJSSP grantee COIN, trained and sensitized justice system actors on providing attention and due process with a human rights perspective for cases involving LGBTI persons. Through these efforts, COIN delivered 8 training events for 194 persons from INACIF, the PM, the PDO, and the CJHs and other CSOs.

IMPROVING JUSTICE SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

The Dominican Republic has been part of a long history of migration and cross-migration flows. Haitians and other irregular migrants in the Dominican Republic are subject to high levels of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and other human rights abuses. Also, as highly invisible groups in society, their vulnerability to violence and crime is particularly high. Another major challenge to the Dominican Republic's criminal justice system has been to keep up the pace in identifying and prosecuting TIP cases and protecting victims. The Dominican Republic was downgraded to the Tier 2 watch list in the 2020 U.S. State Department's Annual Trafficking in Persons Report, an indication the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts to combat trafficking in comparison with previous reporting periods.

To this end, the project supported opportunities to expand the justice sector's and the public's knowledge on often misunderstood vulnerabilities. CJSSP worked with the National Institute on Migration to facilitate workshops targeting migrants and grassroots organizations working with migrants on rights and access to justice for immigrants, their descendants, stateless persons, and refugee populations. Other targeted initiatives included CJSSP's work with Participación Ciudadana in 2019 to develop a guide on human rights and TIP consistent with the most recent international and local policy developments. This guide aims to raise awareness for justice sector operators on this issue. CJSSP also harnessed opportunities to engage other CSOs and the ENJ to formalize training resources for the judiciary on processing TIP criminal cases. With the ENJ, the IAWJ, the International Justice Mission, CJSSP initiated the development of a self-paced online training for judges and other judicial staff on TIPs in the Dominican Republic. CJSSP also recognized the unique potential of CJHs within their communities to respond to the needs of TIP victims; however, only 38 percent of CJH staff reported having received TIP training previously. Therefore, CJSSP organized a training of 41 CJH staff on identification and referral of potential TIP cases in partnership with the IAWJ, Free the Slaves, United Nations Office on

Drugs and Crime, and Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano Haitianas, a local NGO working with Haitian immigrants and descendants.

STRENGTHENING THE PUBLIC DEFENDER’S OFFICE (PDO) TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE LEGAL REPRESENTATION. For Dominicans, the right of access to effective legal counsel is the responsibility of the PDO. Public defenders, therefore, play an important role in guaranteeing the right to an adequate, no-cost legal defense, for either a complainant or defendant with limited financial resources. To this end, the project sought to strengthen the PDO’s capacity to secure access to justice and legal counsel for vulnerable populations. To inform intervention design with the PDO, CJSSP carried out two comprehensive assessments to pinpoint organizational and operational weaknesses and areas for improvement within the PDO’s existing systems. As a result, CJSSP designed a multipart work plan with the PDO covering technical capacity, management, and administration. To build technical capacity, curriculum design and training delivery addressed both functional and criminal procedures. To address operations, the initiative also focused on improving intersectoral public defender, investigator, and social worker communication and coordination. The plan included recommendations for a partial restructuring, including the development of two new dedicated special units: an investigations unit and a social work unit. In addition, to support the quality of this office’s services, CJSSP worked with the PDO to develop a Litigation Manual for Public Defenders, a tool optimizing the availability of quality and timely free legal services to socioeconomic disadvantaged groups. Key results include 200 public defenders across the country better prepared to ensure the right to due process.



PHOTO: IMPROVED JUSTICE PRACTITIONER TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND INTEGRITY. TATIANA FERNANDEZ FOR CJSSP.

Result Area 4 **TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND INTEGRITY**

STRATEGY

A robust and responsive justice system relies on individuals' and institutions' collective capacity to carry out their responsibilities in a fair, transparent, and impartial manner based on core values of integrity, accountability, and honesty. In the Dominican Republic, weak transparency and oversight systems within the country's justice institutions have, to a degree, rendered organizational and societal cultures more vulnerable to and permissive of corrupt behaviors. CJSSP primarily focused its efforts on engaging three institutional oversight offices: the Public Ministry's Inspector General's Office (IGO), its Specialized Unit for Prosecution of Administrative Corruption (PEPCA by its Spanish acronym), and the Judiciary's IGO. The project worked with each to identify opportunities for improvement across a range of areas, from staff capacity building to operational policies. Certain lines of intervention grew out of the national multistakeholder consultations held 2016 to 2017 on comprehensive judicial reform, which highlighted the urgent need to address gaps in combating high levels of corruption throughout the ranks of the justice sector as well as public and private sectors. Building on the momentum from this effort, CJSSP aimed to support revising policies, procedures, and organizational culture to strengthen oversight and sanction mechanisms for judges and prosecutors. The result of this work included increases in number of inspections and investigations covering alleged corruption by IGOs, coupled with increases in sanctions issued for judges and judicial staff (see box, next page).



CJSSP partnered with key institutional oversight and control offices to strengthen their capacity to lead investigations and pursue litigious recourse, when necessary to reduce impunity and corruption. With project support:

- The Judiciary IG undertook more than 1800 investigations, leading to disciplinary actions for 24 judges and 238 Judiciary staff through 2018.
- 198 staff from the Judiciary and the Public Ministry received training on topics related to transparency, accountability, and integrity.
- 88 percent of the participants in all CJSSP-supported anti-corruption training activities acknowledged that they have improved their investigative skills through this effort.
- 64 percent of participants acknowledged an improvement in their performance in presenting evidence in court, and 68 percent recognized an improvement in their effectiveness in arguing a motion.

PHOTO: OPENING-CEREMONY TRAINING OF JUDICIARY'S IGO ON THE NEW REGULATION FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS TO JUDGES DEVELOPED WITH CJSSP SUPPORT. LINDA ERIKSSON FOR CJSSP.

ACHIEVEMENTS

PRIORITIZING CAPACITY BUILDING OF SPECIALIZED OVERSIGHT OFFICES IN THE PUBLIC MINISTRY AND JUDICIARY. Commitments initially forged at the 2016 National Judicial Summit generated momentum to combat justice sector corruption and impunity, with an emphasis on strengthening the capacity of judges, prosecutors, and IG officers. With CJSSP support, both the Public Ministry and the Judiciary held a series of technical training and learning opportunities for staff and leadership of their accountability or integrity units. As a result, CJSSP has provided training to 198 Judiciary and PEPCA staff on methodologies for investigating and preparing cases of judicial discipline, ethics, and criminal malfeasance, with a sharp focus on cases involving allegations of corruption of judges and key judicial staff.

The project also invested in providing key judicial leadership figures with international learning experiences to gain and exchange global perspectives and understandings of anti-corruption initiatives to be modeled in the Dominican Republic. With CJSSP support, for example, the head of the AG's PEPCA, the Public Prosecutor for PEPCA, and the Judiciary's IGO were able to participate at events such as the 17th and 18th annual International Anti-Corruption Conference held, respectively, in Panama City, Panama, and Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference advances the anti-corruption agenda globally by raising awareness and stimulating debate, to enable participants to learn from one another and prepare them to apply their experiences within their institutions.

STRENGTHENING THE JUDICIARY'S IGO AND PUBLIC MINISTRY'S PEPCA. The project also worked with the Judiciary's IGO to restructure its operations, prompting an expansion of its trained inspector staff and aligning operational resources with performance goals to provide, for example, additional inspector coverage across geographic areas. Building on this effort, the project worked with ENJ to design and carry out training on methodologies and analytical tools to better position staff to detect potential misconduct within the Judiciary, with a focus on investigation of financial statements, affidavits, and other financial products. Beyond this, the project also supported training for 37 IG staff on new regulations for disciplinary procedures and sanctions for judges. This advancement provides greater efficiency for the judiciary, given that under this regulation they do not have to depend on the AG to investigate, prosecute, and sanction judges in cases on

disciplinary matters (misconducts, corruption, and GBV labor offenses). For the first time, the judicial inspectors will investigate, prosecute, and litigate these cases in courts, in collaboration with the human resources department of the Judiciary. In addition, the project also worked to review and recommend adjustments to PEPCA's protocol for investigation and litigation of public corruption cases.

INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

GENDER AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT. Approximately 50 percent of Dominicans, or 5.3 million citizens, are women, who are disproportionately impacted by crime. As CJSSP and others have found, under-reporting of crimes against women is common, particularly crimes involving F/GBV. Even if they do choose to report, there is a higher probability that women ultimately decide to drop their cases, often due to procedural issues that lead to re-victimization during the process itself or fear of retaliation by the perpetrator. Without the proper access to tools, resources, and systems in place for women to seek adequate assistance and protection, the process of seeking justice becomes too costly and complex, ultimately appearing to pose more burden than benefit.

The project worked to mainstream a gender perspective into activities and promote female empowerment across result areas. Further, in the design and implementation of initiatives, the project took into account specific needs of different groups, including LGBTI persons. CJSP emphasized strengthening justice operator capacity to investigate, prosecute, and resolve F/GBV crimes, including femicide. Applying a people-centered approach, the project also worked with justice operators to revise or design new case management models, protocols, and other tools alongside the remodeling of justice centers, such as the SDW VAU's office and the CJHs. This effort better positioned physical structures to allow staff to properly respond to the specific needs of women victims of crime. In addition, the project worked with the Ministry of Women to advocate for greater resources for women's access to justice beyond traditional legal and law enforcement-focused institutions and partners. The Ministry of Women is bolstering CJH response capacity by locating lawyers and psychologists specialized on F/GBV cases in CJHs. The project's grant support to PACAM also played a significant role in ensuring the availability of psychological counseling to F/GBV victims provided at CJHs. Based on PACAM's training to transfer knowledge to CJH psychologist staff, today all CJHs independently offer psychological support to F/GBV victims.

In addition, partnerships with CSOs such as CIMUDIS and CCCJ targeted women victims of F/GBV, including women with disabilities. In particular, the initiatives supported by the CCCJ and CJH Las Caobas increased access to community justice service for vulnerable populations by targeting girls under age 18 who are pregnant or already mothers. Every year on commemorative days, namely, International Women's Day (IWD) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, CJSP capitalized on work with key counterparts, such as the AG's Office, the Public Ministry, and the CCCJ, to jointly raise awareness of F/GBV. In this way, the project supported activities or amplified important messages via information campaigns on female inclusion, empowerment, and gaps that still needed to be addressed. From these efforts, several inspirational slogans have uplifted the momentum to empower women, such as: "I Choose to Challenge" celebrating IWD 2021; "Know Who You Know"; and "We cannot ensure the rights of women and girls if we do not promote equity, respect and justice." For IWD 2021, CJSSP partnered with the SDW DA Office to kick off an innovative dialogue that engaged 45 men, recognizing the essential role men play in transforming the culture of violence against women. Under the slogan "Hombre a Hombre" (Man to Man), the first event covered topics linked to gender roles, F/GBV, and parenting, inviting the participants to challenge their views on traditional gender roles.

LGBTI INCLUSION. CJSSP also strategically cultivated broader understanding and recognition of the importance of LGBTI rights, needs, and issues within justice system actors by embedding these concerns into public training curricula (e.g. with the ENMP). For example, through the

CJSP developed diploma courses on human rights and access to justice for vulnerable people, LGBTI representatives offered firsthand insight on their experiences and special needs as victims of crimes. The project's partner, COIN, also led workshops to provide knowledge and understanding on how to deliver assistance and due process with a human rights perspective in cases involving LGBTI persons.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD). CJSP also prioritized the rights of PWDs and their access to justice via existing partnerships and related training. For example, PWD representatives participated in the human rights and access to justice diploma course hosted by ENMP and coordinated by CJSP, specifically for sessions on PWD access to justice concerns and the obligations of the justice system. In addition, project partnerships with CIMUDIS and CONADIS strengthened the capacity of the AG Office, DA offices in SDW, CCCJ, and the CJHs to promote access to justice for PWDs, particularly for women with disabilities who were victims of F/GBV.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND PARTNERSHIP (STIP). CJSP incorporated STIP across activities to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and modernization of justice actor roles and provision of justice services. The project's support of the inter-institutional ICT committee, for example, reinvigorated critical communications and coordination of data and information across key justice actors. The committee member entities not only improved their working relationships and streamlined information sharing, but also developed a new interagency criminal justice data-sharing software with greater functionality. By working through the ICT committee, the project leveraged the justice sector's existing structures and entry points to catalyze the collective pursuit of shared objectives across system actors.

Promoting STIP also extended to supporting more efficient and effective operations of the CJHs. Prior to CJSP, CJHs operated with only basic data collection instruments, leading to a major gap in organizational visibility into their resource management and, as a result, less-than-optimal quality of services for users of the CJHs. CJSP also worked with CCCJ to design a new data management system to remedy its present nonstandard data collection mechanisms that heretofore have inhibited its ability to conduct real-time analysis or monitor the quality of user services.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, CJSP embedded STIP concerns into everyday project activities with counterparts. The project encouraged and positioned justice system partners to provide service continuity despite public health restrictions on movement and social distancing requirements. STIP also played a critical role in making resources, including training and support services, more readily available through virtual platforms. For example, the project worked with the CJHs to increase their use of social media platforms to continue communications with and provide service to users. Similarly, CJSP tapped into new technologies for continued human capital development during the pandemic and maintaining performance monitoring and provision of technical assistance to justice institutions.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCES. A core element of the CJH financial sustainability plan was developing and promoting PPPs. CJSP worked with the CJHs to map out potential key private companies to foster strategic partnerships that promote joint initiatives benefiting all parties involved. At the same time, it developed a strong foundation for continued, more sophisticated PPP strategies in the future. By leveraging corporate social responsibility within the Dominican private sector, CJHs established relationships that led to alternative funding and in-support assistance from several private

entities and commitments from local and national government institutions. For example, BHD León, Banreservas, and Scotiabank, as well as other commercial sources such as the Bananos Ecológicos de la Línea Noroeste and the Alimentos Balanceados Maeño, have provided financial support to the CJHs. Government actors supporting these innovative partnerships include several local municipal administrations, the Ministry of the President, and Customs. Also noteworthy, in 2019, CJSPP-supported CCCJ was selected the winner of the Brugal Foundation's Cree en su Gente award in the Community Development category. CCCJ won this multicategory, annual award of 1,000,000 DOP (approximately \$18,000 at current exchange rates) in a public recognition award ceremony for its ongoing contributions leading improvements to access to justice for vulnerable populations. It was a proud, inspiring moment for CCCJ and the project to continue providing innovative quality services and advance collaborative work through PPPs.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Table 2 below (see next page) presents CJSSP's seven performance indicators, comprised of three USAID standard indicators and four project custom indicators, and outlines quantitative results on:

- Baseline data values
- Results by fiscal year (FY)
- Accumulated life of project (LOP) results
- LOP target value
- Percentage accomplished over the course of the past six years, FY 2016 to FY 2021

Guided by its USAID-approved activity monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan, CJSSP operated under the guidelines for MEL as dictated by USAID within the Dominican Republic mission's overall MEL framework. As part of this process, CJSSP periodically applied the USAID recommended tool to measure the quality of the indicator data, which was introduced for the first time to the project in March 2017. CJSSP also periodically performed exercises of internal evaluations of data quality, providing insightful metrics to inform strategy development and adjustments. The activity monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan was employed as a living document and adapted, as necessary, in accordance with USAID recommendations, guidelines, and approval.

By the end of the project timeline, CJSSP was successfully carrying out a combination of performance monitoring and context monitoring in an ongoing and robust analysis of the project's progress. This meant that in addition to monitoring its standard core indicators, CJSSP tracked complementary data related to F/GBV, key policy developments, crime and violence in priority jurisdictions, trust in justice actors, and access to justice. In this sense, the project expanded data sources to include the National Statistics Office, the Public Ministry, the Ministry of Women Affairs, the Citizen Security Observatory, the World Justice Project, the Latin American Public Opinion Project, and Transparency International.

As indicated earlier, CJSSP made a few modifications based on its mid-term performance evaluation in 2018. At this juncture, the project shifted to a more targeted geographic and impact focus, working with selected justice institutions in more high-demand areas of need (e.g. moving from 3 DA offices to just 1, the SDW DA Office). In addition, the strategic realignments enabled CJSSP to more deeply focus on bridging the gaps and breaking down the barriers of access to justice for vulnerable populations. This impacted not only the project activities, but also the project targets and indicators as detailed in the results table on the next page. Beyond this, the project's flexibility and adaptability proved invaluable when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted not only activity implementation but also the implementation of the activity MEL plan. CJSSP utilized its human and technical resources to quickly make necessary changes, reorient, and develop innovative and often technological-based solutions to overcome logistical and operational challenges. The project's and key partners' rapid response safely secured the continuation of the activity MEL plan.

TABLE 2: CJSSP RESULTS

INDICATORS	BASELINE DATA (2015)	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	LOP RESULTS UP TO FY 2021 Q2	LOP TARGET	% ACHIEVED
RESULTS AREA 1										
% of persons subject to criminal complaints in cases entered in the SDW DA whose case is fully disposed prior to trial. (custom indicator)	13.6%	NA	NA	NA	17%	25%	23%	23%	20%	115%
Number of ADR conciliation and mediation processes undertaken. (custom indicator)	9240	35,479	29,495	20,372	27,410	18,097	12,968	143,821	140,756	102%
RESULTS AREA 2										
Number of CJH case and community program beneficiaries (custom indicator)	8636	46,174	41,015	44,173	48,000	34,775	23,305	237,442	231,362	103%
RESULTS AREA 3										
Number of vulnerable people benefiting from USG-supported social services. (custom indicator)	0	NA	36,802	672	6,629	4,892	3,265	52,260	51,668	101%
Number of people reached by a USG-funded GBV services	5717	32,898	7,512	2,389	6,646	5,801	3,799	59,045	56,945	104%
RESULTS AREA 4										
Number of government officials receiving USG-supported anti-corruption training	0	NA	NA	91	37	32	38	198	188	105%
CROSS-CUTTING OVER RESULTS AREAS 1 TO 3										
Number of judicial personnel trained with USG assistance	802	2,458	1,686	925	87	99	75	5,330	5,385	99%

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations reflect proposed initiatives or ideas to advance CJSSP's impact, based on lessons learned and key findings through FY 2021.

- **BUILD ON EFFORTS TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ACROSS JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS.** With CJSSP support, systems to share information and strengthen coordination across institutions have shown marked improvements. The Public Ministry, Police, and the Judiciary, and others should channel the resources to harness this momentum, including dedicated staff to provide timely and continuous updating of information. Ensuring strong interconnectivity across these systems is crucial to the success of reliable and accurate data analysis to better inform decision-making and position the system as a whole to adapt strategies to more effectively respond to challenges or obstacles.
- **REINFORCE AND PRIORITIZE MEL IN PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES FOR JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS AND CJHS.** MEL plays a central role in providing project implementers and decision-makers readily available perspectives that impact resource management, strategy planning, and service quality. CJSSP made significant inroads in proving the relevance and utility of solid MEL tools and methods to the Public Ministry and the CJHs over the past six years to ensure data-driven and evidence-based decision-making and interventions. Building and expanding MEL capacity in the targeted justice institutions and CJHs contributes to securing and enhancing gains made, while also institutionalizing a data-driven culture increasing transparency and accountability.
- **INSTITUTE A VISIBLE, COORDINATED, SYSTEM-WIDE ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAM. CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE REQUIRE SUSTAINED ATTENTION.** To counter corruption, whether perceived or real, all staff across the entire justice system – from leadership on down – need to see how and why certain practices damage their collective mission. To make this happen, CJSSP would encourage the Judiciary, Public Ministry, Office of the Public Defense, and National Police, as well as civil society, to join forces to build broad awareness on the project's momentum established through the institutional capacity building on ethics, transparency, and accountability. Eliminating corruption requires a comprehensive and multisectoral approach to shift operational and cultural dynamics while also directly addressing the systems and incentives that allow corruption to pervade bureaucratic practices and behaviors.
- **DEVELOP AND MAINSTREAM INCLUSION POLICIES.** Mainstreaming inclusion throughout key justice service institutions, including the Public Ministry, Judiciary, the PDO, and CJHs, is necessary to further raise awareness of and sanction prejudice-based violations inherent in current regulations or frameworks and reduce access to justice barriers. The policies should provide a framework for consolidating and advancing best practices in designing, expanding, and delivering inclusive services to vulnerable populations initiated through CJSSP.

- **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A TECHNOLOGY-BASED STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN INTERINSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY.** The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the power of virtual media to facilitate service continuity and coordination despite sustained distancing, breaking down the traditional siloes that often defined physical in-person institutional structures. To build on this learning, CJSSP encourages an explicit justice system technology strategy to promote the exchange and access of data, communications, training content/resources among key justice operators, and other resources regarding justice service provision. This will maximize resource sharing and streamline justice services and procedures for users. Increased efforts should be taken to digitalize data in more sophisticated software platforms moving beyond Excel-based databases toward a true digital case-management system.
- **IMPLEMENT AN ADR CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM.** Within the Public Ministry, CJSSP has supported considerable increases in the percentage of cases solved through ADR mechanisms as a tool in the decongestion of cases handled by the justice sector. Because ADR also provides a bridge between traditional justice structures and civil, non-public structures, the project would encourage a civilian-focused ADR certification program to foster the latest tools, resources, techniques, and promotion strategies that engage civil society actors in advancing and prioritizing ADR mechanisms to address and resolve local-level disputes and issues. This could be housed within a CJH, for example, and serve as a complementary resource hub strengthening community justice efforts in coordination with justice institutions and CJHs. To build on this momentum, the project encourages an ADR certification pilot program to further aid in sustaining, systematizing, and otherwise underscoring the importance of prioritizing ADR as a time- and cost-savings mechanism that benefits both the justice system and user.
- **STRENGTHEN STRATEGIES TO FURTHER EMPOWER CJHS AS INDEPENDENT, SELF-SUSTAINING ENTITIES.** CJHs are an essential vehicle for citizens to access justice. And as such, they are also a critical mechanism for the public justice system at large to reinforce citizen confidence in the rule of law. Their success long-term is naturally therefore in the interest of a broad spectrum of actors, from donors to the private sector to public justice system actors. To encourage their financial sustainability, they will require sustained attention to their abilities to develop and pursue funds via different avenues, and the proposals that are required for these. In this way, CJHs can become better able to solicit funds from public funding sources as well as other bilateral and multilateral donors. Further technical support is needed to foster and sustain burgeoning PPPs and agreements reached during the project's period. Aligning resources and improving coordination with justice-driven initiatives across the private and public sector can assist CJHs to develop strategic partnerships amplifying and reaching common goals in a more cost-efficient manner for all stakeholders involved.
- **BOLSTER REFERRAL AND COUNTER-REFERRAL EFFORTS OF GBV CASES.** To appropriately respond to the many different service needs of victims, strong referral systems are essential. Future efforts by system institutions and donors should prioritize

concrete actions to better link and connect referrals among different service providers for comprehensive care, particularly for GBV victims.

- **SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT BUILD ON GBV BEHAVIORAL CHANGE STRATEGIES TO CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS, PREJUDICES, AND STEREOTYPES THAT ENGAGE WOMEN, MEN, AND YOUTH, SPARKING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE.** Initiatives and information shared would focus on challenging norms around gender relations, masculinity, and femininity as a means to explore in-depth drivers of change at the societal level in eliminating F/GBV.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CJSSP was obligated \$22,207,554 over the course of six years of implementation. Within this total, the project implemented \$3,329,000 through grants. The main objective of CJSSP's grants program was to expand the availability of community dispute mediations and related criminal justice guidance and referral services.

ANNEX I. LIST OF SELECTED CJSSP REPORTS AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

INFORMATION PRODUCTS		
NO	SUBJECT	DATE
1.	Assessment and Evaluation of the Community Justice House Program (Diagnóstico y Evaluación de las CCJ)	June 2016
2.	Citizen Security in DR: Conceptual Analysis and Strategies for Prevention of Violence (Seguridad Ciudadana en RD: Análisis Conceptual & Estrategias de Prevención de Violencia)	Nov. 2016
3.	Evaluation of DR Justice Sector Reforms (Evaluación de Reformas en Sector Justicia RD)	Oct. 2017
4.	Analysis of Workload in the Justice Sector (Análisis Carga de Trabajo en el Sector Justicia)	Oct. 2017
5.	Defining a National Strategy for ADR (Definición de una Estrategia Nacional de Resolución Alternativa de Conflictos)	Oct. 2017
6.	Litigation Manual for Public Defenders (Manual de Litigación de la Defensa Pública)	Dec. 2018
7.	Survey on Citizen Security, Crime and Violence in Five High-Crime Communities in the Dominican Republic	Nov. 2019
8.	Study on Barriers for Accessing Justice for F/GBV Victims (Barreras de Acceso a Justicia Mujeres Víctimas de Violencia)	Oct. 2020
9.	Study on Men Accused of F/GBV (Estudio sobre Hombres Denunciados por VBG en SDO)	March 2021
10.	Lessons Learned on Interinstitutional Coordination Mechanisms (Lecciones Aprendidas y Buenas Prácticas para Aplicación Efectiva en el Sector Justicia: Mecanismos de Coordinación Interinstitucional (MCI)	March 2021
11.	Guidelines for Litigation in F/GBV Cases (Instrucciones para la Litigación con Perspectiva de Género en Casos de VBG, Intrafamiliar y Delitos Sexuales)	April 2021
12.	Standard Operational Procedures for the SDW VAU (Instrucciones para los Procedimientos Operativos en la Unidad de Atención Integral a Víctimas de Violencia de Género, Intrafamiliar y Delitos Sexuales)	April 2021
13.	Citizen Security Policy (Política de Seguridad Ciudadana)	April 2021
PERIODIC REPORTS		
14.	CJSSP annual, FY 2016 (July 2015 – September 2016)	Oct. 2016
15.	CJSSP annual report, FY 2017	Oct. 2017
16.	CJSSP annual report, FY 2018	Oct. 2018
17.	CJSSP annual report, FY 2019	Oct. 2019
18.	CJSSP annual report, FY 2020	Oct. 2020
19.	CJSSP final report	April 2021



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