

Project Updates Colombia Access to Justice Program (AJP)

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Community Leaders in Montes de Maria Receive Training in Equity Conciliation



Community leaders from Montes de Maria receive training in equity conciliation

Since December 2010, AJP has carried out training programs in equity conciliation with local NGOs, ethnic groups, and community action council leaders from the four priority municipalities in the Montes de María CSDI region (San Jacinto, Ovejas, Carmen de Bolívar, and San Onofre). Through conferences and courses, the participants have been trained on this community justice mechanism that facilitates rapid and legally-binding resolutions of everyday disputes by a neutral third party. Special attention has been given to include the participation of rural leaders in order to increase access to justice services in remote rural communities.

In 2012, one hundred community leaders from throughout the Montes de María region are slated to become equity conciliators. Once the leaders complete their training, they will be able to contribute to the resolution of everyday conflicts in their communities: disputes between neighbors, debts, and landlord issues, among others.

AJP Trains Law Students to Participate in University Mock Oral Trial Competition

Throughout 2011, AJP trained more than 1,000 students from 82 universities in oral accusatory techniques as part of the National University Mock Oral Trial Competition, which took place in December of 2011. Six finalist teams from the competition will participate in a study tour to U.S. courts in 2012. Deans, prosecutors and defense attorneys have participated as trainers and evaluators in this process.

The purpose of the University Mock Oral Trial Competition is to strengthen the oral trial skills of law school faculty and students through simulated trials, and promote consolidation of the new penal system in the curricula of Colombian law schools. The mock trial competition is co-sponsored by USAID's Access to Justice Program and the U.S. Department of Justice.



Winning team from Universidad de Cartagena at the National University Mock Oral Trial Competition, December 2011