

THE JUSTICE INSTITUTE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Toluca, Mexico

From February 21-24, 2017, Vital Voices conducted its eleventh **Justice Institute on Gender-Based Violence** in Toluca, Mexico with the purpose of convening professionals across the criminal justice system to strengthen their ability to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV).

44.9% of Mexican women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime

The National Feminine Observatory (OCNF) identified Estado de Mexico and Mexico City as two of the ten entities in Mexico with the highest number of femicides and aggressions against the female population in all of Mexico



Feb. 21 | Faculty Training Day

Local Faculty Facilitators at the Institute represented various sectors of Mexican society working to address violence against women. The training included an introduction of the Justice Institute model and the methodology behind the training. Discussions regarding the structure and content of the curriculum – supplemented by Local Faculty Facilitators' practical experience – allowed the U.S. Delegation to slightly adjust its plans for discussing the design and use of legal tools.

Feb. 22 | Institute Day 1

Media Launch - the Institute launched with a media event that included a panel discussion focused on:

- Raising public awareness concerning different forms of violence
- Urging women to seek help and report their abusers
- Holding the judicial system accountable for protecting women

Module 1 Practical Exercises – introduced the regionally-tailored hypothetical cases on which the Institute is centered.

- *Practical Exercise A: Children Exposed to Violence*
- *Practical Exercise B: Charging Decisions*
- *Practical Exercise C: Collateral Consequences of Abuse*

This module identified systemic challenges in Mexico and allowed faculty to observe which participants might be leaders on the issues versus those who might hold attitudes that endanger or blame victims

Feb. 23 | Institute Day 2

Module 2 Evaluating and Investigating the Case

Dialogue surrounding **Module 2** included victim safety, abuser accountability, common strategies of control used by abusers, and the importance of cross-sector collaboration and communication to successfully combat cases of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Module 3 Prosecuting the Case

Module 3 led to productive discussions about conducting thorough investigations that lead to more informed charging decisions to help ensure stronger prosecutions and increase offender accountability.

What was your favorite part of the Institute?

"The discussions, opinions and contributions of colleagues from various institutions...I believe that this diversity enriches content and learning."

"Interacting and knowing more closely how the various operators work to address violence against women."

"The Practical Exercises and that each day you gave us information that changed the panorama of the case and always kept us interested to know its conclusion."

Feb. 24 | Institute Day 3

Module 4 Holding Offenders Accountable

The final day of training concluded activities in Module 3 and embarked on **Module 4**, which included dialogue on sentencing in which participants considered new methods for implementing coordinated community responses on their cases that allow for holistic sentencing. Participants also developed individualized Action Plans in which they identified steps they will take to improve the quality of justice as it relates to GBV cases. The day ended with presentation of certificates and a small celebration.

Closing thoughts

Utilizing Mexican laws and regionally relevant case scenarios, the Justice Institute strengthened participants' capacity to develop and use a process-oriented approach to evaluate, investigate, and litigate domestic and sexual violence cases utilizing a victim-centered, offender-focused approach.

Institute Results



43 Participants
3 Local Faculty Facilitators

Based on post-training surveys...

81%

Agreed or strongly agreed the training gave them a sense of empowerment to combat domestic violence and sexual assault

91%

Stated the Institute allowed them to exchange information with others

84%

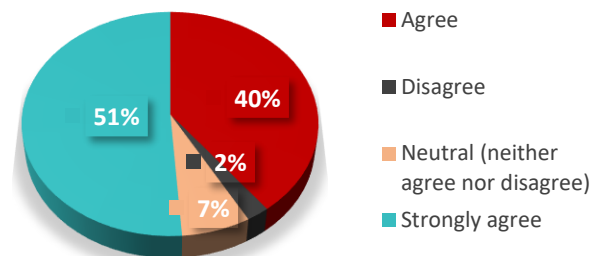
Agreed or strongly agreed their ability to partner with others to identify victims of domestic violence increased

Activities Participants Found Most Useful

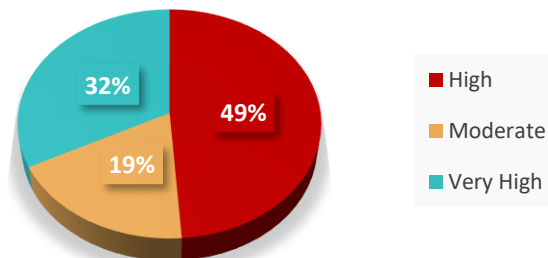
1. Practical Exercises
2. Collaborating with Agencies and Advocates
3. Securing the Uncooperative Victim

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

"The Institute deepened my understanding of domestic violence"



Participant responses to level of increase in knowledge and skills for coordinating with multidisciplinary actors



Acid attack survivor, Natalia Ponce de Leon, shares her story and discusses her activism with a local media outlet.

Josselyne Bejar, a Judge for the Sixth Criminal Court in Jalisco, facilitates a small group session.

