## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Background.................................................................................................................. 5

Accomplishments.......................................................................................................................... 5

Program Areas: OASIS, Justiciabarómetro, Memoria, and Testigo..................................... 6

- Oral Adversarial Skill Building Immersion Seminar (OASIS)........................................ 6
- Justiciabarómetro..................................................................................................................... 7
- Memoria .................................................................................................................................. 8
- Testigo ..................................................................................................................................... 8

Activities: Monitoring, Public Outreach, and Policy Engagement.......................................... 9

Evaluating the Dissemination and Impact of Justice in Mexico’s Work............................... 13

Looking Ahead ........................................................................................................................... 20

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 22

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES IN SCHOLARLY & POLICY ARTICLES......................... 23

APPENDIX B: PAST VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS:......................................................... 24
JUSTICE IN MEXICO

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- *Janice Deaton, OASIS*
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  Programmer/Data Analyst

**2015 Interns and Volunteers**
A full list of past volunteers and interns is found in Appendix B.

- **Adrianna Lagorio**
- **Harper Otawka**
- **Sophia Ramírez**
- Fernando Rodriguez
- **Alison Shoffner**
- **Alison Shoffner**

* University of San Diego alumnus
** University of San Diego student
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Justice in Mexico (www.justiceinmexico.org) is a research and policy initiative based at the University of San Diego has worked for over a decade to promote security, the rule of law, and human rights in Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico border region through sustained monitoring and research, dialogue and consensus building on critical policy issues, and civic engagement and public outreach.

Justice in Mexico is well known for developing cutting edge studies and analysis on diverse and complex issues related to security, rule of law, and human rights in Mexico. In 2015, as part of our policy research and monitoring efforts, Justice in Mexico continued to compile widely consulted datasets, published two special reports (one on arraigo and one on drug violence in Mexico), and disseminated a monthly 20-page briefing on security, rule of law, and human rights issues to over 3,000 regular subscribers, including many U.S. and Mexican scholars and government officials.

In 2014 Justice in Mexico was awarded a one-year $1.1 million grant by the International Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to work on the Oral Adversarial Skill-Building Immersion Seminar (OASIS), and in September 2015 this grant was renewed for an additional $2.35 million over the next two years. OASIS advocacy training program provides skill building and exchange opportunities for legal professionals and students. The current INL-sponsored partnership helped law faculty and students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM), Mexico’s largest public university to improve the long-term functioning of the Mexican justice system in anticipation of major criminal procedural reforms to be implemented by June 18, 2016.

Justice in Mexico also seeks to influence policy formation and implementation by fostering and participating in public policy deliberations, direct engagement with policy makers, and direct involvement in the application and evaluation of public policy. In 2015, Justice in Mexico participated in briefings for U.S. diplomatic and intelligence services to help inform U.S. government policy toward Mexico, and conducted the first comprehensive independent survey of the Tijuana police department as part of the Justiciabarómetro series of studies focus on judicial sector operatives in Mexico. Justice in Mexico also provided pro bono expert witness testimony in cases for individuals seeking asylum from violence and torture in Mexico, using the project’s research to directly influence the lives of people in need of our assistance.
Program Background

Justice in Mexico (www.justiceinmexico.org) is a research and policy initiative based at the University of San Diego has worked for over a decade to promote security, the rule of law, and human rights in Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico border region through sustained monitoring and research, dialogue and consensus building on critical policy issues, and civic engagement and public outreach. Over the last several years, there has been no other policy area of more vital concern to both U.S. and Mexican authorities, and our program has had a substantial positive impact in addressing these issues. Justice in Mexico began to work on security and judicial sector reform issues in the aftermath of the 2000 election that helped consolidate Mexico’s transition to a more democratic political system. At the time, the program was based at the University of California-San Diego, and was focused on analyzing the relationship between Mexico’s democratic transition and the building of basic rule of law.

Whereas government repression was once a widespread threat to human rights, in Mexico’s new politics the greatest peril for individual security and basic human rights was the dysfunction of the criminal justice system. Over time, as Mexico’s security situation became more dire, the project became more specifically focused on helping to identify policy measures to address the problems of rampant violence, organized crime, corruption, and serious human rights violations. For example, Justice in Mexico became closely involved in the national debate on judicial reform initiated in 2004 as President Vicente Fox introduced a series of proposals to transform the Mexican criminal justice system. Now relocated to the University of San Diego, Justice in Mexico’s efforts helped bring that debate to the state level, by conducting research and hosting forums to examine the merits of judicial reform in several states moving toward the use of oral, adversarial trial procedures.

Through these efforts, Justice in Mexico helped to build support for sweeping changes approved by the Mexican Congress in 2008, including the introduction of oral trials, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and new police reforms. Since then, Justice in Mexico has also been instrumental in the implementation process, working with U.S. and Mexican policy makers to evaluate programs and to prepare judicial sector professionals for the task of reforming the administration of justice in Mexico. Over the years, Justice in Mexico has been highly collaborative, coordinating its research agenda and activities with many of the leading scholars, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations from both Mexico and the United States that are focused on promoting security, human rights, and criminal justice reform.

Accomplishments

It is worth noting that this project began in 2001, long before Mexico began to experience many of the rule of law, security, and human rights challenges that it currently faces. Justice
in Mexico has helped to document the country’s struggles, it has provided critical policy analysis and recommendations, and it has been a trusted source of information in Mexico and internationally. Among the program’s accomplishments since then:

- Over the last fifteen years Justice in Mexico has raised more than $6 million in grant money, including current funding from the U.S. State Department and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and previous funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation.
- Justice in Mexico published three books, two edited volumes with the Woodrow Wilson Center, and one edited volume with the Universidad de Guadalajara, helping to disseminate cutting edge research on rule of law and security issues in Mexico.
- Justice in Mexico has published fifteen special reports documenting citizen security, rule of law, and human rights in Mexico, addressing pressing challenges related to crime and violence, police and judicial reform, and the basic rights of citizens under the law.
- Justice in Mexico’s commentary and analysis have been featured in over 547 news articles in prestigious publications such as, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Milenio*, *El Economista*, and *USA Today*.
- Justice in Mexico has been invited to present its work in seven countries including U.S., Mexico, Czech Republic, U.K., Germany, Netherlands, and Puerto Rico.
- Fifty-five University of San Diego student and alumni have contributed to Justice in Mexico projects.

This report summarizes the various accomplishments of Justice in Mexico during the 2015 calendar year. Below we provide a description of our four main program areas. Subsequently, we provide more detailed information on our 2015 program activities, dissemination efforts, and impacts.

**Program Areas: OASIS, Justiciabarómetro, Memoria, and Testigo**

**Oral Adversarial Skill Building Immersion Seminar (OASIS)**
Another project that has taken shape over the last year is the Oral Adversarial Skill-building and Immersion Seminar (OASIS) that was funded in late 2014 by the U.S. State Department. This project provides significantly greater resources and requires a much greater organizational capacity to successfully train Mexican attorneys and law professors to help implement the new criminal justice system. Under OASIS, Justice in Mexico was able to hire new personnel and expand our reach and influence in ways that greatly benefited the overall mission of the organization. In September 2015, we received notification that this program will receive continued U.S. State Department funding over the next two years, thereby helping us to sustain our impact.

OASIS has three specific objectives that will continue to guide Justice in Mexico’s efforts during years two and three of its partnership with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM): 1) provide three 40-hour litigation workshops to law professors and
students of UNAM’s Law School, 2) provide three training/study tours to the United States; and 3) provide one international symposium on oral, adversarial, accusatory criminal justice systems, Mexico’s criminal justice reforms, and the role law schools will play in the transition to this new criminal justice system.

Highlights from this past year include training 240 UNAM law school professors and students who practiced use and teach oral litigation techniques (e.g., interrogatories, cross examination) necessary to practice criminal law after the 2008 judicial reform that instituted oral adversarial trials in Mexico. The 40-hour course offered in each of the trainings covered oral trial skills and techniques and “train the trainer” techniques, focused on ensuring that participants would be able to replicate aspects of the course, especially important for law professors at UNAM, one of the premier law schools in the country.

In addition, of the 240 participant pool, 37 of UNAM’s top law school professors and students were able to visit the United States and gain first hand knowledge about the U.S. criminal justice system through attending live court proceedings and talking directly with relevant justice system actors, both federal and local, including judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and criminal trial and appeals attorneys. From understanding the processes of pretrial and trial, to the role of the jury, to preparing the witnesses, to providing an effective cross-examination, to examining the plea agreement and the process of discovery, study trip participants explored all aspects of the U.S. adversary system, which has common aspects with the new criminal justice system in Mexico. The first study tour was completed in Washington D.C. at American University in June, the second in Boston, MA at Harvard University in July, and the final took place in late July at the University of San Diego.

Finally, on September 24-25, Justice in Mexico’s OASIS co-hosted the International Symposium on Oral Adversarial Justice Systems with UNAM’s Law School in Mexico City. In an impressive turnout, over 700 students, faculty, and local community members and officials attended the two-day symposium on the progress and goals of Mexico’s comprehensive justice reform. The symposium served as the conclusion to OASIS’s yearlong training and education program. The symposium at UNAM evaluated the success of OASIS’s activities and the justice reform in general while also identifying future training and infrastructure needs in order to maintain the reform’s growing momentum in Mexico.

Justiciabarómetro

The “Justiciabarómetro” research initiative is a systematic attempt to gauge the current levels of professional development and attitudes among actors currently operating throughout the Mexican justice system, including police, prosecutors, public defenders, and judges. Working with U.S. and Mexican academics and experts, this initiative seeks to help evaluate the professional development of actors operating within the justice sector, the functioning of the judicial system, and their general perceptions and opinions on related topics. The intention of this effort is to help provide useful baseline measures for the purpose of future benchmarking and evaluation of the Mexican judicial system.
In 2015 MacArthur funding allowed Justice in Mexico to do the second iteration of our judicial survey in approximately a dozen Mexican states. Justice in Mexico spent the Summer and Fall planning and preparing for launch of the survey in Spring 2016, in order to be able to release the results in anticipation of the June 18, 2016 deadline for judicial reform implementation at the national and state level throughout Mexico.

**Memoria**

Memoria is a highly innovative and versatile initiative that comprises social empowerment, crime reporting and dialogue amongst experts. It is also a strategy to centralize data, as well as identify and report victims of organized crime. Through anonymous reports, the project seeks to engage civic society and increase transparency of information in Mexico.

The goal of this data gathering tool is to provide policy-makers an alternative solution to access reliable information, giving a solution for gaps in current government reports on Mexico’s crime situation. Memoria will also provide for informed reports and risk assessments, as well as give a realistic perspective of Mexico’s violence and crime situation. Through modern technologies, Memoria will be able to gather information from independent and official reports as well as receiving outside contributions ensuring the protection of identities and complete anonymity throughout the process.

In 2015 Memoria interns and volunteers continued the collection of data on organized crime related deaths in Mexico. The project seeks to identify, report and geolocate crimes as well as to memorialize all victims of violence and organized crime who often become just statistics and most of the time their cases are not even investigated. Currently, there is no project like this either in Mexico or the U.S. and Justice in Mexico is looking to create a tool that is significant for both governments in order to remove the smokescreen that leaves the world uncertain about the real situation in México.

**Testigo**

Justice in Mexico has been in a process of scaling up our organizational capacity to take on additional projects. As noted, over the past several years, Justice in Mexico has provided pro bono expert witness testimony. We have begun to formulate this as one of the designated “project areas” in which we plan to continue our work under the label of the “Testigo” project. In relation to this project, Justice in Mexico began work with a USD law student to draft a report on LGBT rights in Mexico, though this remains a work in progress.

Over the past year, Justice in Mexico’s Testigo project has provided pro bono services in the form of written and oral expert testimony for eight cases In part due to these efforts, several cases have resulted in immigration relief for the applicants—persons who are often fleeing violence and persecution in their country of origin and seeking relief in the United States. For instance, in the project’s most recent case, a woman fleeing extortion, torture, and death threats was granted asylum in the United States. The judge issuing the decision specifically
Justice in Mexico cited the expert testimony in his opinion. Results such as these demonstrate the tangible impact of this pro bono testimony as well as the general success of the project.

Activities: Monitoring, Public Outreach, and Policy Engagement

Justice in Mexico has been instrumental in addressing the need for sustained monitoring, research, and analysis on crime and violence, police and judicial reforms, and human rights issues in order to counter-balance the lack of reliable official government data and limited transparency in the justice sector. The project has helped to promote greater public education and outreach to help practitioners, non-governmental organizations, and ordinary citizens understand and address Mexico’s public security and rule of law challenges through more effective policy advocacy and reform efforts. The project has also been essential in helping to promote policy engagement with U.S. and Mexican government officials, military and law enforcement professionals, subject matter experts, and private sector and civil society representatives to identify priorities and strategies to improve the rule of law in Mexico.

1) Monitoring, Research, and Analysis: Justice in Mexico is well known for developing cutting edge studies and analysis on diverse and complex issues related to security, rule of law, and human rights in Mexico. In 2015, specifically, as part of our policy research and monitoring efforts, Justice in Mexico continued to compile widely consulted datasets, published three special reports (one on arraigo, one on drug violence in Mexico, and one on judicial sector reform in the municipalities that comprise judicial districts), and disseminated a monthly 20-page briefing on security, rule of law, and human rights issues to over 3,000 regular subscribers, including many U.S. and Mexican scholars and government officials.

a) Data gathering and news monitoring: The project’s team of researchers and volunteers engaged in constant research and information gathering efforts to inform their work. However, in January 2015, the program staff abandoned the monthly report format because of the high cost of producing this deliverable for a relatively small audience. Using available staff and internship resources, Justice in Mexico continues to post occasional stories to the program website, but this became much more sporadic because the program does not have the resources to provide proper vetting and editing. From January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, Justice in Mexico’s website was visited by over 18,000 users, with roughly 57% coming from the United States, 18% from Mexico, and the remainder from other locations (such as Canada, Great Britain, and Germany).

b) Original research and analysis: The project generated new research to evaluate crime and violence, criminal justice sector reform, and human rights issues. With MacArthur support, in 2015 the project published four reports, which helped to inform both technically specialized audiences (e.g., government agencies in both the United States and Mexico) and the broader public. The studies have been widely referenced by the media, policy makers, and other experts working in these areas. In addition, MacArthur’s support has enabled the project’s researchers to contribute their original research and analysis to other publications and outlets.
i. **Detained Without Charge**: Justice in Mexico published a detailed special report on the use of *arraigo* as a prosecutorial mechanism in Mexico. Evidence collected for this report suggests that detention without charge is a poor substitute for due process protections that help to ensure the integrity and legitimacy of police and prosecutorial investigations. *Arraigo* is a form of preventive detention that allows for imprisonment without formal charges for up to 80 days. This investigative tool is presently authorized under Article 16 of the Mexican Constitution as amended in the 2008 reforms that underpin Mexico’s ongoing transition to adversarial criminal justice. Among the key findings of this report, the authors find that the percentage of *arraigos* denied by the judicial authority was just 7%. The authors recommend that the use of *arraigo* be eliminated and prohibited by the constitution, or at a minimum that major modifications be made to provide some measure of protection of the fundamental rights of individuals detained without charge.

ii. **Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2014**: Among study’s most important findings is the apparent decline between 9-15% in homicides in 2014. The authors also found that between one third and half of all homicides in Mexico in 2014 were attributed to organized crime groups, which may signal a slight reduction in the proportion of such homicides. Meanwhile, even as the states of Jalisco and Mexico have emerged as new trouble spots in Mexico’s battle against organized crime there were dramatic reductions of violence in key cities, like Acapulco, Chihuahua, and Ciudad Juárez. “Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2014” was co-authored by Kimberly Heinle, Cory Molzahn, and David A. Shirk.

iii. **Diagnóstico integral de la policía municipal de Tijuana** (in Spanish): This survey and report was developed in collaboration with the Institute for Security and Democracy (Instituto para la Seguridad y Democracia, INSYDE), the Law School of the Autonomous University of Baja California (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, UABC) in Mexicali, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the University of Guadalajara (Universidad de Guadalajara, UdeG), with funding from the MacArthur Foundation and the Open Society Foundation. The Tijuana survey builds on the findings of two similar studies conducted in Guadalajara in 2009 and Ciudad Juárez in 2011, and was implemented for Justice in Mexico by the Mexican polling firm Data Opinión Pública y Mercados (DATA-OPM). Like these previous studies, this one constitutes one of the largest independent studies of municipal police ever published anywhere in the world. Focusing on the border city of Tijuana, adjacent to San Diego, California, this is the largest survey conducted by an independent group of institutions with 1,917 participants with a minimum margin of error (± .87%) and a confidence interval of about 99%.

iv. **Criminal Procedure Reform in Mexico, 2008-2016: The Final Countdown for Implementation**: This report examines Mexico’s progress toward implementation of the country’s “new” criminal justice system, which introduces the use of oral, adversarial proceedings and other measures to
improve the handling of criminal cases in terms of efficiency, transparency, and fairness to the parties involved. This report is based on several months of research and data analysis, field observation, and active participation by the authors in the process of training law professors, law students, and attorneys in preparation for the implementation of the reforms. The report provides a general background on the 2008 judicial reform initiative, and examines Mexican government efforts to implement the reforms at the federal, state, and judicial district level, relying on unique dataset and maps generated by Justice in Mexico. As an additional resource, this report also contains a translation of the 2008 constitutional changes underlying the reforms. Ultimately, the authors find that there has been significant progress toward the implementation of the new criminal justice system, and offer recommendations to assist the Mexican government and international aid organizations to help Mexico sustain this progress in the years to come.

2) Policy Dialogue and Engagement: In addition to its strong research emphasis, Justice in Mexico also seeks to influence policy formation and implementation by fostering and participating in public policy deliberations, direct engagement with policy makers, and direct involvement in the application and evaluation of public policy. To this end, Justice in Mexico has developed close working relationships with U.S. and Mexican government and non-governmental organizations working to address Mexico’s security, rule of law, and human rights challenges. The project serves as an important facilitator for dialogue and exchange across both countries and across areas of specialization. Over the last year, the project continued to meet regularly with government officials and partner organizations, host policy roundtables and workshops, and provide briefings on the project’s findings. Specifically, in 2015, Justice in Mexico produced the following:

a) Outreach to government officials: Project personnel engaged in direct outreach to U.S. and Mexican government officials to learn more about the challenges that they face with regard to security, rule of law, and human rights. Project staff engaged in research trips and field interviews in Mexico to gain a better understanding of developments on the ground. During the past year, the principal investigator made numerous trips to disseminate the project’s research to government officials, private sector firms, non-governmental organizations, and scholarly audiences, typically by invitation. For example:

i. January 2015: Shirk was invited to provide a “Continental Threat Assessment” briefing for over thirty high level U.S. and Latin American military and intelligence officers hosted by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency.

ii. Spring and Summer 2015: Justice in Mexico conducted research for a forthcoming report on judicial sector reform. In the course of this research, Shirk and Rodríguez contacted and met with representatives from the Mexican Ministry of the Interior and Attorney General’s Office to learn about the implementation process for the new criminal justice system.
b) **Policy roundtables and workshops:** The project staff participated in roundtables and workshops to involve researchers, officials, and non-governmental actors to promote dialogue and develop more effective strategies to confront Mexico’s public security, judicial sector reform, and human rights challenges. In 2014 and 2015, Justice in Mexico personnel participated in the following policy roundtables, workshops, and conferences:

i. **January 2015:** Justice in Mexico sponsored a keynote speech by Mexican Supreme Court Justice José Ramón Cossío at the University of San Diego, along with a private roundtable discussion that included approximately 35 law faculty, academics, and experts to discuss current challenges facing Mexico’s process of judicial reform.


c) **Policy Recommendations, Briefings, and Technical Assistance:** The project staff worked directly with U.S. and Mexican government officials, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies to provide policy recommendations, briefings, and technical assistance (e.g., survey development and studies) in their efforts to understand and respond to Mexico’s rule of law challenges. Also, for the past few years, Justice in Mexico has been providing pro bono expert testimony for individuals seeking asylum or other protection in the United States as a result of human rights violations or other serious threats to their lives.

i. **October 2014-September 2015:** Justice in Mexico Project Director David Shirk and Project Coordinator Octavio Rodríguez worked with support from the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement to implement a legal training and international visitors program on oral adversarial criminal trial procedures for 280 faculty, students, and administrators from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). This Oral Adversarial Skill-building and Immersion Seminar (OASIS) initiative was arguably the most significant effort by our program to provide technical assistance to help implement Mexico’s new criminal justice system, and it provided opportunities to both learn about judicial reform efforts in Mexico and disseminate information on the program’s research on this topic.

ii. **January 2015:** Dr. Shirk provided pro bono expert witness testimony in an asylum case involving a former-police officer that fled to the United States as a result of physical attacks and threats from superiors, co-workers, and organized crime groups that targeted him for retaliation because of his witnessing of criminal acts. This case resulted in asylum for the individual in question in the Spring of 2015.

iii. **February 2015:** Dr. Shirk provided pro bono expert witness testimony in a case involving a Mexican national seeking protection from extradition after being falsely accused of corruption. This case remains pending.

iv. **May 2015:** Dr. Shirk provided pro bono expert witness testimony in an asylum case involving a trans-gendered person that fled to the United States as a result of threats from government officials and organized crime groups that targeted her for forced prostitution, police abuse, torture, and
physical abuse. This case was denied in 2013 and was won on appeal in May 2015.

3) Public Education and Outreach: As noted above, in disseminating its work, the project maintained a widely consulted project website, provided daily updates on current events, hosted several public forums, and distributed its findings to interested audiences. More specifically, the principal investigator presented the research of Justice in Mexico. Also, the project hosted workshops and events to disseminate research and public education about rule of law, security, and human rights issues in Mexico. Among the notable examples of public commentary and dissemination by the project from 2015 were the following:

i. Dr. Shirk served as presenter on “Citizen Security in Michoacán,” panel discussion on Building Resilient Communities in Mexico: Civic Responses to Organized Crime, January 20, 2015.

ii. Dr. Shirk served as presenter on “The Drug War in Mexico,” Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, Middlebury College, March 5, 2015.

iii. Dr. Shirk served as discussant on documentary film screening of “El Poeta” for KPBS at Barrio Logan Community Library, April 28, 2015.

iv. Dr. Shirk served as presenter on “Justiciabarómetro: 2014 Encuesta de la policía municipal de Tijuana Police Survey,” at conference hosted by Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Tijuana, Baja California, August 28, 2015.

v. Dr. Shirk served as co-organizer and presenter for the international symposium on “Sistemas de justicia orales” hosted by the Law School of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, September 24-25, 2015.

These activities typically involved close collaboration with partner organizations in Mexico and the United States. Ultimately, the program envisions all such efforts as part of its mission to educate, monitor developments in Mexico, inform policy dialogue, and help inform the public on issues related to security, rule of law, and human rights in Mexico.

Evaluating the Dissemination and Impact of Justice in Mexico’s Work

Our project’s larger objective is to make a contribution to understanding and addressing enormous and complex challenges: improving citizen security, bolstering the rule of law, and protecting human rights in Mexico. While our ambitions are bold, we try to be modest in our claims about our contributions and impacts. The Justice in Mexico team is but a handful of people—among many organizations and individuals—working to provide the monitoring and evaluation, public education and outreach, and policy input and engagement needed to improve governmental and societal responses to these problems. We do our best to contribute to the collective effort to promote justice in Mexico, and to assist others working to do the same. Often, though, our ability to track and document our impact is limited, since much of the work and impact of our program is “qualitative” rather than “quantitative.”

That said, as an organization dedicated to rigorous analysis we make our best effort to carefully evaluate our own impact, critically assess our own weaknesses and limitations, and identify ways to make the strongest possible contribution to our cause. Specifically, as an academically-based policy research initiative, we feel it is important for our organization to
regularly monitor three main types of impacts which essentially provide a gauge of the overall relevance of our work to informing key decision makers and the public at large:

1) What Is Our Reach? For an initiative that focuses on promoting greater understanding and knowledge, dissemination of information is essential. In recent years, Justice in Mexico has been fortunate to achieve substantial visibility for its work through mass media promotion, significant publications, and on-line promotional efforts. Tracking the project’s accomplishments in these areas provides a critical measure of impact in achieving its mission.

Justice in Mexico regularly monitors the extent to which our work brings an informed perspective to a substantial audience and thereby helps to inform public discourse and debate (e.g., the number of people who follow our work online, the number and placement of news coverage featuring our data and analysis, the number of public forums we present our work at, etc.).

Media coverage featuring commentary and analysis by the project and its staff has increased considerably in recent years. Moreover, the profile of media outlets covering the work of Justice in Mexico has included prominent national sources, as well as respected local and regional media: The Associated Press, San Diego Union-Tribune, Christian Science Monitor, Daily Journal, Reuters, NBC San Diego, Global Post, ABC 10, NBC 7, San Diego 6, Huffington Post, National Catholic Reporter, CBC, KPBS (San Diego public radio), and National Public Radio, among others.

There was a significant amount of news coverage featuring the project’s commentary and analysis during 2015. In total, the project’s commentary and analysis was mentioned in at least 24 national news stories (including outlets outside of San Diego, such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, and Forbes), 18 local news stories (including the San Diego Union Tribune), and 32 international news stories (including Frontera). This is significantly higher than last year, when the project resulted in 22 national news stories, 8 local news stories, and 10 international news stories.

In addition, we track our web distribution both in terms of the overall number of visitors to our website and in terms of the geographic distribution of our audience. Typically, we have between 100-200 visitors to our site each day, and around 1-2 page views per visitor, which translates into approximately 7,000 to 8,000 views per month. We are also able to identify the fact that our primary demographic is younger (25-34) and more male (55.4%) than female (44.6%), a core of about 19% of total traffic coming from regular visitors (and about 81% from first time visitors).

In terms of geographic distribution, about 57% of these visitors come from the United States, followed by Mexico (about 18%), Canada (2.21%), and the United Kingdom (1.96%). The program’s reach in primarily Anglo countries naturally reflects Justice in Mexico’s long-standing emphasis on informing English-speaking audiences that may have limited ability to monitor Spanish language material. Aside from our homepage, our published reports, maps, and crime data, were among the most visited areas of our site from January 1 to December 31, 2015, with over 3,000 views for our April 2015 report on Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2014.
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<td>209 (0.92%)</td>
<td>97.13%</td>
<td>203 (1.11%)</td>
<td>86.12%</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>197 (0.87%)</td>
<td>57.36%</td>
<td>113 (0.62%)</td>
<td>90.36%</td>
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<td>192 (0.85%)</td>
<td>71.35%</td>
<td>137 (0.75%)</td>
<td>82.29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>85.34%</td>
<td>163 (0.99%)</td>
<td>75.39%</td>
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<td>6. Washington</td>
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<td>7. Houston</td>
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<td>8. Chicago</td>
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<td>9. Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. San Francisco</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
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</table>
2) How Often Are We Cited by Other Experts? Any fool can get people’s attention, but a wise person gets respect. Whether our work and, especially, our findings are used by respected experts in our field is therefore an important metric of whether our work has value and impact. As scholars, especially, one of the greatest complements to our work is to be cited by others as a reliable source of information by other scholars and analysts, and/or to have our findings inform the research and analysis of scholars.

Thus, in addition to monitoring the breadth of our dissemination through popular media formats, Justice in Mexico also examines whether our research and analysis is considered to be sufficiently authoritative to be cited by other respected scholars, analysts, and research organizations.

Specifically, we attempt to track the number and the type of citations of our work in various scholarly and policy publications, such as relevant academic journals (e.g., Latin American Research Review, Latin American Politics & Society) and by U.S. and Mexican policy organizations (e.g., México Evalua, the Council on Foreign Relations, Congressional Research Service, etc.). In 2015, the project’s work was cited by at least 13 academic and policy publications, as indicated in Appendix A: References in Scholarly and Policy Articles. By far, our most cited publication during the past year was our Drug Violence in Mexico report, which was cited by at least 300 publications since 2010. What is particularly exciting is to see how broadly Justice in Mexico’s publications have been utilized across different disciplines, including political science, geography, public health, law enforcement, etc.

It would be a fair critique to say that one might be cited precisely because one is wrong. Thus, we make an effort to identify any citations that are “positive” in so far as they take our findings as granted, and those that are “negative” in so far as they cast critique or attempt to debunk our findings. Still, whether cited positively or negatively, the key question is whether our work merits consideration by other experts.
3) Who Directly Solicits Our Input?  The extent to which our information and analysis directly informs the decisions of policy makers and implementers (e.g., the use of our work in court decisions on human rights cases, etc.). This does not necessarily mean that our findings and recommendations will necessarily result in some quantifiable number of legislative initiatives or policy measures: the information and analysis that we provide may be just as important to prevent poor decisions as it is to promoting good ones. In other words, an important aspect of what we do is to paint a picture for government officials, key stakeholders, and the public at large. We try to advance justice in Mexico by bringing clarity and an objective view to matters that are exceedingly complex and often polemical.

Naturally, we strive to be as influential as possible in prevailing upon policy makers to heed our advice and recommendations. This is very difficult to measure concretely, as there are many other voices and influences working toward the same goal. Often it is impossible to know whether it was our study, commentary, or direct advice that influenced a particular decision. Indeed, there are sometimes subtle effects from Justice in Mexico’s direct engagement with government agencies. Until recently, for example, there was little information available on the implementation of criminal justice sector reform at the judicial district level, as this information was reported only at the state level. However, the Mexican federal government’s Technical Secretariat for Judicial Reform Implementation within the Interior Ministry began to report these figures publicly in mid-2015 after direct requests were made by the authors for this information.

It is also important to note that decision makers who solicit our advice do not always follow it—and those who do don’t always do it well. Moreover, we can also, in some cases, identify situations where policy makers failed to follow our advice, failed spectacularly, and then decided that the approach we recommended would have been the better course. For example, early in President Felipe Calderón’s administration (2006–12), Justice in Mexico was fairly vocal in criticizing the Mexican government’s policy of trying to “break cartels into smaller, more manageable pieces,” and pointed out that “smaller” criminal organizations are not necessarily more manageable and that a militarized response to violence often leads to more rampant societal violence. Indeed, ultimately the Calderón administration—and subsequently the Peña Nieto administration—opted for some of the measures that Justice in Mexico has long advocated, including greater emphasis on the economic and societal roots of crime and violence. Unfortunately, both administrations continued to make some of the same mistakes.

Ultimately, what we try to assess is whether our work is considered and taken seriously. To do so, we regularly keep track of the officials and key decision-makers who directly solicit our input and advice. It is fair to say that the most significant solicitation of our input and research findings in 2015 was in the application of the results of our survey of the Tijuana police force. The Justiciabarómetro-Tijuana police survey was the third application of our 120 question survey for a local police department in Mexico. This survey resulted in roughly 2,000 responses (over 90% of the entire police force), and covered a wide range of issues related to the officers’ professional background, workplace conditions, and opinions about various security issues. To our knowledge, this and other Justiciabarómetro surveys constitute a completely unprecedented effort to try to gauge the profile, experiences, and opinions of judicial sector operatives. Our police surveys are almost certainly the world’s largest and most comprehensive surveys of police that have been conducted by independent,
academically based researchers, and therefore offer an enormous contribution to the study of law enforcement well beyond Mexico. For the public officials, police commanders and individual officers that made our Tijuana study possible, the survey provided a valuable snapshot of the human capital and internal culture of the department. Public officials learned of the strengths and weaknesses of the department with regard to professional development, equipment, and corruption. The research team provided multiple briefings for municipal officials, law enforcement personnel, and the public at large to help communicate the findings of the report. Ultimately, there were several key policy recommendations, including the need to provide stronger civil service protections, offer better salary and benefits to police and their families, provide proper uniforms and equipment for police, and promote greater gender diversity on the force.

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In short, the Justice in Mexico team seeks to ensure that our work is relevant: widely disseminated, well-respected, and directly solicited by those who have the power to make the changes that we would like to see. We try to provide a clear picture, honest assessments, and useful recommendations to inform policy makers and the public. Over the past year, Justice in Mexico’s participation and input was solicited by the U.S. State Department, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, National Geographic, and other prestigious organizations, creating vital connections and opportunities for impact.

Finally, in discussing the impact of Justice in Mexico it is worth underscoring that our program is based at a liberal arts college, not a Research Level 1 university. This means that our program has a particular emphasis on involving students in our work. Over the past year, Justice in Mexico has worked closely with graduate and undergraduate students who contribute to both the research and administration of our program. Students help with the process of monitoring events in Mexico, with collecting and analyzing data, with planning and organizing events, and with direct engagement with officials and professionals working in related fields. This provides students with deep subject matter knowledge and valuable experiences that they will take with them into their professional careers for years to come. In this sense, we hope, Justice in Mexico serves as an incubator for future scholars and experts who will continue the work of our program well beyond its existence.

Looking Ahead

October of 2016 will mark the fifteen-year anniversary of Justice in Mexico’s inception as an organization. In order to reflect on the program’s numerous achievements over the past fifteen years and to strategize for the organization’s future, Justice in Mexico staff gathered at the Degheri Alumni Center at the University of San Diego on December 15, 2015, along with several contributors to Justice in Mexico’s research and initiatives, in order to participate in an all-day strategic planning session regarding the program’s accomplishments, goals, and future vision. Former Justice in Mexico staff member Vivien Francis facilitated the event, which was divided into five separate sessions with distinct goals and discussion points.
Our team opened the session by focusing on Justice in Mexico’s mission and vision as well as the program’s various project areas and corresponding objectives. During this time, our staff reviewed Justice in Mexico’s organizational history and evolving program activities, which currently include research production and analysis, policy engagement, and dialoguing with the public on these topics.

Staff members then participated in a group reflection in which they were encouraged to identify the program’s major strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats related to further development. Our staff agreed that the program’s primary obstacles are those relating to physical resources and labor capacity; while we produce high-quality research and project initiatives on diverse issues relating to rule of law, human rights, and judicial reform in Mexico, our relatively small staff size poses a challenge to the further development of these project areas. On the other hand, our team also praised the organization’s creativity and adaptability—especially considering the aforementioned limitations. Furthermore, our staff attributed much of Justice in Mexico’s consistent success to each team member’s passionate commitment to the program and its vision, especially that of the program’s leaders. We also reflected on the program’s external strengths; specifically, we discussed the impressive depth and breadth of our organization’s professional network. Over the years, the Justice in Mexico team has formed lasting relationships with numerous students, scholars, journalists, legal professionals, and foreign government officials that have contributed significantly to the development of the program. In order to maximize such networking opportunities, the staff also identified potential program collaborators within the USD campus community for future projects.

After examining the program’s primary strengths and limitations, the group initiated a comprehensive discussion of each staff member’s role at Justice in Mexico. We identified six separate staffing areas that included finance, outreach, clerical work, research, training, and logistical planning and proceeded to define each staff member’s set of responsibilities based on these broad program areas. The team also took time to create specific contingency plans in the case of each staff member’s absence in order to ensure Justice in Mexico’s continued operation following unforeseen staff emergencies or changes.

The session then transitioned into an analysis of Justice in Mexico’s outreach methods. In an effort to extend our organization’s professional network, we first examined our current efforts and also considered new outreach strategies such as promoting our organization to students and professors at USD and utilizing social media platforms to broadcast program updates and activities. We focused primarily on the strategic management of our existing electronic media tools such as MailChimp, Twitter, and the Justice in Mexico website and also discussed the potential use of new online tools such as Periscope and Instagram. Prior to the day’s closing session, our team also identified upcoming opportunities for development such as the expansion of our grant writing initiatives and the recruitment of student interns to support specific Justice in Mexico initiatives.

The planning session concluded with a group dialogue in which staff members reflected on Justice in Mexico’s future, especially in light of the program’s upcoming fifteen-year anniversary, and shared many insightful individual reflections on our broad purpose and current trajectory.
Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the main activities of Justice in Mexico from January to December 2015. Behind these activities and accomplishments is an enormous amount of time and effort, and this project could not be successful without the hard work and support of the project staff and numerous volunteers who have contributed to its endeavors.

Justice in Mexico remains the premier source of information in the United States on the topic of rule of law, security, and human rights in Mexico, and a vital partner to other organizations working on these topics in both countries. In 2016, Justice in Mexico will work toward the following:

- Implementing the project’s Justiciabarómetro survey of judges in at least 12 states to gauge the course of judicial reform in Mexico, thanks to continued MacArthur support.
- Conducting original research and publishing new reports on security, rule of law, and human rights related topics in Mexico, including reinvigorating our news monitoring efforts.
- Hosting a research workshop on judicial reform in Mexico in Spring 2016, to invite researchers to collaborate and develop papers for presentation in early September 2016.
- Hosting a U.S. State Department funded training program in Spring 2016 to help lawyers and university professors learn trial skills to operate under Mexico’s new model of criminal procedure.
- Hosting a training program in January 2016 to test the possibility of revenue generating educational programs as a means of sustaining the programmatic activities of Justice in Mexico in the future.
- Hosting three U.S. State Department funded study trips in Summer 2016 for UNAM law students and university professors to learn about the U.S. court system, criminal justice procedures, and international law more generally.
- Co-hosting with UNAM Law School a U.S. State Department funded two-day international symposium on the progress and goals of Mexico’s comprehensive justice reform.
## APPENDIX A: REFERENCES IN SCHOLARLY & POLICY ARTICLES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AUTHOR(S)</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>O García-Ponce, L Wantchekon, T Zeitzoff</td>
<td>Are Voters too Afraid to Tackle Corruption? Survey and Experimental Evidence from Mexico</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Gema Santamaría</td>
<td>Drugs, gangs and vigilantes: how to tackle the new breeds of Mexican armed violence</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>R Gutiérrez</td>
<td>Mexican drug violence endangers development by increasing poverty and disrupting economic activity</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>J Miles, C Justice</td>
<td>On the Importance of Having a Positive Attitude</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>K O’Neill, B Fogarty-Valenzuela</td>
<td>Fear and Spectacular Drug Violence in Monterrey</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Ana Villarreal</td>
<td>Cross-border homicide impacts on economic activity in El Paso</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>I Chort, M de la Rupelle</td>
<td>Determinants of Mexico-US outwards and return migration flows: A state-level panel data analysis</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>A Padilla, G Roberts</td>
<td>Vigilantes: The Mexican Watchmen</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>CM Kruger, MS Gerber</td>
<td>Identifying Correlates of Homicide Rates in Michoacán, Mexico</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>F Ernst</td>
<td>Legitimacy matters: Los Caballeros Templarios and the mutation of Mexican organized crime</td>
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<td>A Garcia</td>
<td>Serenity: Violence, Inequality, and Recovery on the Edge of Mexico City</td>
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<td>RD Wise</td>
<td>Unravelling Highly Skilled Migration from Mexico in the Context of Neoliberal Globalization</td>
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APPENDIX B: PAST VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS:

Justice in Mexico regularly draws on the support of volunteers and interns to assist in its research, programs, and activities. For example, volunteers and interns assist Justice in Mexico in its regular efforts to monitor developments in the U.S.-Mexico relationship by serving as authors for its blogs on cross-border relations and Mexican security issues. Students are trained to search online news sources, code relevant information, and help construct a database that is used by researchers in Mexico and the United States.

Partial list of other USD alumni and currently enrolled students who have worked with Justice in Mexico in the past, in no particular order:

- Maya Arrieta-Walden
- Gladys Avalos
- Stephanie Lauren Borrowdale
- Madison Browning
- Ricardo Carmona
- Glenn Ehrenberg
- Peter Ferrari
- Vivien Francis
- Marcus Fujita
- Gloria Gaona
- Diana Garcia
- Natalie Gomez
- Ruth Gomez
- Mary Harmer
- Dylan Hayden
- Gayle Hazard
- Yajaira Hernández
- Christopher Issel
- Chelsea Jensen
- Morayma Jimenez
- Alexandra Keirns
- Adrianna Lagorio
- Emily Lawrence
- Lorie López
- Veronica López Arellano
- Armando Maldonado
- Marisol Martinez
- Anastasia McDonald
- Carla Meyers
- Gordi Nash
- Sara Nettleton
• Ruben Orosco
• Dominic Pera
• Katherine Petrich
• Alicia Piña
• Nicole Ramos
• Marissa Rangel
• Jamie Robb-Lenio
• Diana Rodríguez-Ajiss
• Maritza Rodríguez-Díaz
• Carmelita Salazar-Dodge
• Alisson Shoffner
• Ruth Soberanes
• Kalea Wiseman
• Daniel Zuzuarregui

Volunteers from other institutions
• Alexis Alvarez (UC Berkeley)
• Tiana Carriedo (University of Southern California)
• Jesus Cisneros (High Tech High/UC San Diego)
• Vanessa Falcon (San Diego State University)
• Erin Garcia
• Joseph Germano
• Alma Minera (Cal State San Marcos University)
• Nahielly Nava (National Autonomous University of Mexico)
• Grant Oliveira (UC San Diego)
• Michelle Luna Reynoso
• Fernando Rodríguez (Boston College)
• Margaret Serrano
• Mauricio Villaseñor (UC San Diego)