



# SUCCESS STORY

## From Violence Victim to Empowered Businesswoman

**There are currently 25 Women's Justice Centers in 17 Mexican States where women receive legal assistance for victim support, psychological counseling and job training.**



[Photo: Gabriela Capol]

*"I am so thankful to the WJC and feel fortunate to be part of their efforts because it's empowered me to leave the violence of the past and build a new life."*

*-Patricia*

Patricia arrived at the Women's Justice Center (WJC) in Torreón, Coahuila in March 2015. She had fled a situation where her partner had become violent towards her and her family. The WJC helped Patricia with her divorce, and found her legal counsel and a support group. At the same time she was able to attend vocational education classes in jewelry making and baking.

There are currently 25 WJCs in 17 Mexican states where women like Patricia receive legal assistance and victim support. The services help victims heal, provide a safe space, and include psychological counseling and job training. The WJCs work to both improve access to justice for victims of gender-based violence and raise awareness of violence towards women and girls. The WJCs are unique spaces that integrate the efforts of government crime enforcement agencies and civil service organizations to provide a holistic and coordinated governmental approach to gender based violence.

USAID's Promoting Justice (PROJUST) Program, in coordination with the Government of Mexico's National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women, provides technical assistance to strengthen the institutional capacity of the WJCs, having a significant impact on the ability of the centers to provide sustained public support. During its first year, the project helped to strengthen WJCs by supporting the development and implementation of strategic plans and macro and micro-process mapping, building organizational structure models, and creating a monitoring and evaluation system. The project also delivered two diploma courses on assisting victims of domestic violence under the New Criminal Justice System in the states of Campeche and Coahuila.

Today, Patricia is well on her way to establishing her own business thanks to the vocational training she received as part of the program. "I am so thankful to the WJC and feel fortunate to be part of their efforts because it empowered me to leave the violence of the past and build a new life."

### Telling Our Story

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