



## **International Association of Women Judges**

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### **JURISPRUDENCE OF EQUALITY PROGRAM**

**Background:** In 1997, the International Association of Women Judges launched a 3-year, pioneering human rights training program for judges in 5 South American nations. That program, “*Towards A Jurisprudence of Equality: Women, Judges and Human Rights Law,*” (JEP) provided training to more than 600 judges and allied professionals on the application of international and regional human rights conventions to cases arising in domestic courts that involved discrimination or violence against women. Since 2000, JEP training has expanded to reach more than 200 judges in Central America and more than 400 in East Africa, with new programs now being delivered in four Southern African nations. All in all, more than 1,300 judges, male and female, have taken part in JEP training in 12 countries – and counting. In 2003, the *Jurisprudence of Equality Program* was honored at the United Nations by UNIFEM, a funding partner in Africa, for its impact to end violence against women through the judicial system.

**Purpose:** The Program's ultimate goal is to build a true "jurisprudence of equality" - one based on universal principles of human rights. JEP training workshops and seminars bring judges together to focus on the concrete meaning of abstract guarantees of equal protection and nondiscrimination. Through case studies, problem solving exercises and other adult learning techniques, judges have opportunities to share insights with colleagues and deepen their understanding of international law as applied to domestic contexts.

#### **Impact:**

- **Created training teams** prepared to lead human rights seminars for judicial officers.
- **Conducted 63 seminars** for groups of 20 to 30 judges and allied professionals in 12 countries.
- **Disseminated information about human rights decisions on its website and through its newsletter.** The IAWJ posts case summaries of selected decisions by JEP participants on its website, at <http://www.iawj.org/jep/jep.asp>. Its Brazilian national chapter houses information about JEP decisions from that country at <http://www.jep.org.br/>
- **Developed an international human rights judicial community.** JEP has trained hundreds of men and women judges in South and Central America, East and Southern Africa, who are actively applying human rights principles to cases involving discrimination and violence against women. These jurists now form the nucleus of regional networks that can support one another and encourage their colleagues to follow suit.
- **Changed points of view and practices.** Many JEP-trained judges credit the program with alerting them to the nature and scope of domestic violence and gender discrimination; to hidden biases – their own and others' – and stereotypes that sustain these biases; and to more effective and sensitive ways to question witnesses.
- **Adapted the JEP curriculum to non-judicial contexts.** JEP participants have incorporated JEP materials in curricula they use for teaching students from middle school to university and law school levels, as well as for training programs for police, lawyers, social workers, physicians and other professionals.
- **Garnered support from courts, government agencies and private organizations.** Government agencies and the judiciary have demonstrated strong interest in and tangible support for the JEP. For example, four seminars in Uruguay ran 25 percent under budget due to local contributions from the judiciary and others. In Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the Chief Justices publicly announced support for the JEP and adopted the program as an official offering of their judicial training institutes. A governor in Panama sponsored JEP workshops for men and women judges throughout his state; and the Gender Directorate of the South African Ministry of Justice underwrote the costs of the Train-the-Trainers program for judge and magistrate trainers in participating Southern Africa countries.