



Embassy of the United States in Mexico

Fact Sheet

Culture of Lawfulness

Merida Initiative Culture of Lawfulness (COL) programs aim to instill a sense of individual responsibility to uphold the rule of law in Mexico, with the larger goal of reducing crime and corruption. COL projects promote civic participation, efficient public services, and government transparency. To that end, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section in Mexico (INL Mexico) works in the following areas, in partnership with civil society, public institutions, media, and the private sector.

Instilling a Culture of Lawfulness in Mexican Youth

- COL education is now part of the junior high school curricula in 31 states and federal entities, thanks to the program of civil society organization *México Unido Contra la Delincuencia A.C.* (MUCD). Since the program began, four million students have taken this curriculum in 9,369 schools with 14,642 trained teachers. Schools that have taught the COL course in previous school years report fewer fights, better communication between students, greater knowledge about the rule of law and bullying, and more respect for school regulations.
- The web portal of MUCD, <http://www.culturadelalegalidad.org.mx/>, provides information about COL programs to almost 14,000 visitors per month. Its programs are focused primarily on four sectors: schools, businesses, government, and social organizations. MUCD also promotes COL through social networks, with more than 31,406 Facebook followers, 9,667 Twitter followers, 69 infographics, 1,664 visits to its blog, and 41 videos on YouTube.
- The civil society organization *Centro de Estudios sobre la Enseñanza y el Aprendizaje del Derecho A.C.* (CEEAD), has developed a college-level COL course, complete with teaching materials. Such educational materials are suitable for use in all fields of academic study and are available to universities throughout Mexico. Currently, the course is offered at six Mexican universities, including the Autonomous University of Chihuahua (UACH), the University of Monterrey (UEM), the Monterrey Campus of the University of the Valley of Mexico, the Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH), the Intercultural University of Chiapas (UNICH), and the University of Sotavento in Tabasco.
- The non-profit Alliance for Border Collaboratives (ABC) developed a COL program for fifth and sixth-grade schoolchildren in at-risk communities in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, called *Pa' Que Te Cuides* ("Take Care of Yourself"). The program created teaching materials to be used by teachers and students, with the active participation of parents, with the goal of avoiding high-risk conduct and promoting a culture of lawfulness. This program, which achieved its intended objectives, concluded in December 2013.

Increasing Government Transparency and Accountability

- MUCD has placed citizens' watch booths in 73 local offices of the Mexico City district attorney. The booths are staffed with observers who provided information to people reporting crimes. Over a period of 18 months, the observers surveyed more than 17,137 people about the services received. The results showed that the services provided by the district attorney's offices had improved markedly and, in some locations, that corruption had decreased. In total, the program provided benefits to more than 163,000 informed citizens.
- The NGO *Plan Estratégico de Juárez A.C.* (PEJ) runs a number of programs aimed at monitoring governmental activities. For example, in one project citizen volunteers monitor 18 city councilpersons for compliance with their obligations under various laws. PEJ has developed a system of comparative performance indicators for various municipalities of the state of Chihuahua that have led to a wider appreciation of the quality of life in Ciudad Juárez and the need for changes in public policies.

Training Law Enforcement and Public Servants to Promote the Rule of Law

Through a grant to the non-profit organization National Strategy Information Center (NSIC), COL programming has reached thousands of Mexican public servants, including the Federal Police and members of the Mexican gendarmerie:

- The Federal Electric Company (CFE) has given COL training to over 8,500 employees, and the Secretariat of Public Administration (SFP) has taught 3,100 federal employees in 88 offices.
- At the state level, fifteen master COL trainers have prepared over 90 instructors to teach COL principles to police. Over 8,500 officers in Baja California, Nuevo León, Chihuahua, and Coahuila have received COL education. In addition, the Mexico City District Attorney's office has provided COL education to 2,800 prosecutors and investigators.
- The former Secretariat of Public Security (SSP) committed to creating an institutional culture providing incentives to employees who show integrity, respect for citizen rights, and support for the rule of law. A 40-hour COL course has been taught to over 12,000 patrolmen and officers.
- The Ministry of Public Education of Chihuahua includes an 80-hour COL course in its professionalization curriculum. Teachers who complete the course are eligible for higher wages.

MUCD also provides COL courses to public servants, principally those in federal and state comptroller-general offices. With 20 cooperation agreements signed, 933 citizens have benefitted directly from the course and, during 42 workshops in 31 public agencies, it is estimated that more than 17,961 persons have benefitted indirectly.

Coordinating Culture of Lawfulness Programs with the Private Sector, Civil Society, and Media

- In the city of Chihuahua, NSIC has worked to expand a "*Taxi Amigo*" program, in which taxi drivers take a one-day course teaching them to respect standards of customer service and to serve as role models of lawfulness for their customers. The program, which more than 80 taxi drivers have completed, also serves to promote tourism.
- MUCD is implementing a training program that teaches private sector employees to act as promoters of COL principles. These individuals promise to demonstrate commitment to lawful behavior both as individuals and within their organization. Employees have been certified in 24 companies, among them Grupo Altex, FEMSA, Kohler Co., COPARMEX NL, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nuevo León.
- MUCD has also taught courses at 28 civil society organizations in eight states, accrediting facilitators and benefitting 190,394 people through the use of a "Facilitator Manual." MUCD has also worked with religious organizations in five states, sponsoring 69 COL workshops for 4,622 people, including adolescents, youth, parents, church ministers and social pastoral agents.
- In October 2013, MUCD, NSIC and CEEAD, together with members of Monterrey's public and private sectors, signed a collaboration agreement for a campaign called "Let's do it right" (*Hagámoslo Bien*), which has the goal of promoting COL among city residents.