Identifying suitable indicators to measure compliance in Colombia with economic, social and cultural rights - DRAFT

Project Partner: Consejeria Presidencial para los Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Commissioner in Colombia) and OHCHR (Colombia office)

Project Overview:

The Human Rights Commissioner in Colombia is the Presidential entity responsible for the strategic design of human rights policy in the State. As such it has the challenge to lead the State in the implementation of the National Strategy to Ensure Human Rights 2014-2030 (ENGDH).

To ensure the implementation of this Strategy it is crucial for the office to identify suitable indicators to measure compliance with rights broadly speaking, and in particular with economic, social and cultural rights bearing in mind, as a special focus of attention, the situation of vulnerable populations in the country. The Human Rights Clinic at the University of Essex has been and will continue to be a key partner in helping to identify such indicators. Students at the Clinic already provided some relevant advice to the Colombian Government in 2016, and this project aims to advance even more our joint work on indicators to measure satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights.

Indicators constitute a key tool to generate and collect data. This data provides the prevailing circumstances in a given place or for a particular group at a given time, or to make comparisons over time, or between places or groups. Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative. By providing useful tools for monitoring the implementation of human rights treaties by states, indicators reinforce the accountability of states towards meeting their human rights obligations. Indicators also enable rights holders to articulate and advance claims against the state. For states, indicators help identify areas of progress as well as discrepancies, and thus can be used as a guide to formulating requisite public policies and programmes to facilitate the realization of human rights accordingly.
Human Rights Centre Clinic

Project Output:

To produce a 30 page report on the conceptual and methodological framework that the State of Colombia should use to measure the satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights based on discussions between partners and bearing in mind the prioritisation strategy of the ENGDH in Colombia. The working language of the project will be English.

Project Outline:

The team will have weekly meetings to discuss progress and work plan during both phases. With Judith Bueno de Mesquita as Project Coordinator and Clara Sandoval as commentator of the work.

Phase 1: (November 2016 –December 2016)

1. Guided by background research conducted by the Clinic during summer 2016, the students will develop expertise in the field of human rights indicators, with a particular emphasis on indicators for ESC rights
2. Building on the research undertaken by the Clinic during summer 2016, the students will research projects that have used indicators to monitor human rights in a particular country in order to learn from best practice. This will include a desk review of existing literature as well as key stakeholder interviews. The students will produce a review of 8 pages that identifies key projects, conceptual frameworks, the scope of projects, and methodologies for developing indicator sets as well as implementation of reviews using indicators (e.g. data sources, collection methods, human resource implications).
3. The students will produce a short document (2-3 pages) that maps the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in the National Strategy to Ensure Human Rights 2014-2030.
4. The documents in bullets 3-4 will be submitted to the OHCHR Colombia at the end of term for review and comment by the OHCHR Colombia. The OHCHR Colombia will submit comments to arrive no later than 10 January 2017.

Phase 2: (January-March 2017)

- At the start of term, a meeting will be organised via skype with the OHCHR Colombia to discuss the review documents submitted above, as well as implications for Phase 2 of the project.
- The students will conduct any further targeted and in depth research into the areas identified as central during discussion with project partners.
- The students will review key data sources in Colombia relating to economic, social and cultural rights.
- Develop writing skills through regular supervisory and peer review work.
o The students will draft a final report including: a proposed set of indicators; methodology for data collection and review addressing questions including sources of data for key indicators (if possible it will also address quality and coverage of data); and validation. The first draft will be sent to project coordinator by 24 March 2017 and comments will be provided by 14 April 2017.

o The Coordinator will gather comments from his office, as well as other key relevant departments on economic, social and cultural rights (e.g. Ministry of Health, Education) and comments will be synthesised and send back to Essex by 14 April 2017.

Phase 3 (April-June 2017)

- A pilot will be undertaken based on the review. It is suggested that the right to health is piloted, although the precise parameters will be revised at the time based on the scope of the indicators instrument. The pilot will be a collaborative engagement between Essex and colleagues in Colombia. Colleagues in Colombia will assist with data collection where required.

- April-June 2017 – incorporate the feedback from the Clinic and partners and pilot and finalize the report by the end of June.