

## **Thematic guide for in-depth interviews**

METAGORA PROJECT – JUNE 2004: THEMATIC GUIDE FOR VICTIMS AND INDICTED

### INTRODUCTION:

'Good morning, afternoon, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. We would like to thank you for accepting our invitation to come and talk to us. I represent Pearson, a Mexican firm dedicated to public opinion and research studies, and we are now carrying out a study funded by the European Union.

The aim of this study is to better understand and improve the work of the police force and of the various services offered by public authorities regarding the system of procurement of justice and execution of sentence. In particular, we are trying here to understand the experience of people who have undergone some kind of abuse, injustice, extortion, brutality, arbitrary decision, or any other kind of harm on behalf of the different police officers, agents/employees of the *Ministerio Público*, and in general of any authority related to the procurement of justice system.

The only way for us to access such information is to talk directly to people who, at one stage of their lives, have had contact with some police officers, any type of police, prison guards or agents of the *Ministerio Público*. It is very important to us that you tell us about all the experiences you have lived through, with as much openness and detail as possible. Any information you give us is absolutely confidential and will only be used internally to increase our knowledge and understanding of the relation between the population at large and forces of public security, without mentioning any names nor specific cases'.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER:

- Study the case in depth, according to the patterns of contact which apply. (Consult the 'Patterns of ill-treatment' document provided by Fundar 8/06/04).
- Go into detail with regard to the conceptualisation of ill-treatment in the following aspects: Emotional, Rational, Physical, Economical, Other
- Review the language used and study in depth the meaning of the words and terminology used by the interviewee.
- Make sure that the interviewee informs us about all possible acts of ill-treatment, including the smallest ones which the interviewee may not consider acts of ill-treatment (for ex. that he/she was pushed or insulted).

### THEMES:

- A very short life story: family and social context (only to establish confidence)
- Motive for which the interviewee came into contact with the police / forces of public security most recently (crime, robbery, infraction, etc.)
- Place where the events happened
- Description of the contact / interaction with the police or with the forces of public security (most recent and others –up to 2- the most severe or recent events)
- Description of the ill-treatment and what it consisted in

- Feelings and emotions experienced during the contact and its meaning in the context; attitudes and actions generated
- Violations to the law and to human rights
- Feelings and emotions following the experience
- General image of the police and forces of public security: acts of abuse and/or ill-treatment the interviewer is aware of (such as extortion or other)
- Knowledge of acts of corruption or collusion on behalf of the police (for ex. breaking of car windows).

Other specific points to cover:

- DECLARATION. If the person reported a crime: complete description of the experience in the MP including declaration, payment of copies, time spent in the agency of the MP, who the interviewer dealt with, suspected corruption, etc. If the person did not report the incident, ask why not.
- Awareness of their rights, knowledge of the police: there are various corporations, how they differ, whether their powers are limited (i.e. can only give people a ticket, etc.), what bodies have the faculty to investigate, etc.
- Use of force: how, to what limit, adequate, etc.
- Confrontation: pressure or coercion?
- When the case has been processed, ask whether the person was sent before a judge and if there was any kind of REPARATION.
- Reference made to the installations in the 'separos'/ prison as being intimidating? Concrete problems or suggestions.
- Access to information and advice (non erroneous).
- Need to pay or hire the police for it to fulfil its obligations, such as pursue someone accused of something (implement an arrest warrant).
- PRISONS: Extortion on behalf of the authority, inhuman conditions, how family members and visitors are treated.