

**SINCE 2003**, Conectas has been working with criminal justice and the prison system to combat human rights violations in Brazilian prisons, particularly in relation to access to justice and guaranteeing the rights of prisoners. The effectiveness, transparency and strengthening of democratic institutions like the São Paulo State Public Defender's Office (DPSP) is key to guaranteeing rights and access to justice for the marginalized population.



Since its creation in 2006, the DPSP has entered into agreements with institutions such as the São Paulo chapter of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB-SP) and the Professor Manoel Pedro Pimentel Foundation (FUNAP), due to a lack of sufficient resources and to share the responsibility for providing free legal counsel to the population. As a result of this situation and on account of the lack of mechanisms to control and monitor the services provided by the DPSP, in 2013 Conectas conducted a pioneer research on the quality of the free services provided by the Office.

The research project concluded that, besides lacking transparency, the agreements also lack a standard of control in relation to the quality and services rendered by the institutions that celebrate agreements with the DPSP. These results are a first step and they will inform future dialogue with the DPSP on concrete proposals to influence the institutional policy of quality control in the provision of free legal counsel in the state.

In 2014, Conectas will continue to strengthen and foster the policy of free legal counsel provided by the DPSP, particularly for the prison population.



## GENERAL LINKS ON THE WORK OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE:



*Right to a Defense* (+)



*Inquiries and indictments: whose interests are served by this justice system?* (+)



*São Paulo government denies education to prisoners* (+)



*In São Paulo, World Cup ushers in state of emergency-like situation* (+)

