



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

BEM-ME-QUER

Secretariat of Health

Government of the State of São Paulo, Brazil

WINNER – Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

The initiative Bem-me-Quer started in 2001 and since then it has provided psycho-social, medical and legal services to victims of sexual violence, mainly to women and children. It aims to cover the existing gap in public services, which did not have effective care services available for victims. Until August 2014, more than 29,900 consultations were carried out: 12,800 children (43%), 8,990 adolescents (30%), and 8,150 adult women (27%).

Problem

Several papers and articles criticize the difficulties encountered by victims of sexual violence regarding medical care, legal services and police response. Historically in Brazil, effective care services for the victims did not exist; and victims faced, in addition to the experience of sexual violence, discrimination and barriers to adequate medical care, untrained police, and inappropriate legal and social advice. These difficulties lead to the underreporting of sexual crimes and the impunity of perpetrators, allowing the continuation of the vicious cycle of sexual violence, and the violation of the rights of victims.

Initiative's approach

This initiative, unprecedented in the state of São Paulo, in Brazil and even in Latin America, aims to provide integrated care services to those who have suffered crimes related to sexual violence by offering police and expert assistance, medical care, psychological and legal support. The program attempts to break the vicious cycle of sexual violence that leads to the increase and underreporting of sexually transmitted

diseases (STDs) and unsafe abortion as a consequence of rape.

In addition to the service center, staffed with a high quality, intensively trained medical team, the initiative promotes a decent and humane treatment to the victims, which is subject to continuous evaluation. The program employs special vehicles to transport victims; a social worker who accompanies them during the whole process; access to psychological and legal services after filing legal complaints; and information campaigns to increase awareness of the program.

Challenges and lessons learned

- Integration of different government departments, multidisciplinary teams and complementary services: Although this was considered one of the innovative aspects of the program, the integration of different services and sectors represented a major challenge to the implementation of the project. This challenge was overcome through strategic planning, the establishment of a joint program with the Public Security Bureau, and a victim-focused approach.

The São Paulo State Secretariat of Health is responsible for formulating the State Health Policy and its guidelines, led by the principles of the Unified Health System (SUS), which has the purpose to promote health, prioritizing preventive actions, democratizing relevant information for the population to know their rights and the risks to their health.



GOVERNO DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO

www.saopauloglobal.com





Impressions from evaluators and partner organizations

"The initiative Bem-Me-Quer plays an essential role in promoting gender equality, by providing special and integrated services to the victims of sexual violence in the State of São Paulo".

"For the first time in our country, there is an interdisciplinary program to encounter intra and extra family sexual violence for children, adolescents and women."

"The integration of public policies in this program and its positive results since it was created make it worthy of a special recognition and a model to be replicated."

- Care services training for staff: Another important challenge was to provide adequate training to the institutions and the professionals involved in the initiative. Given the diversity of sectors and profiles involved in assisting the victims, the task of raising awareness and training each of them in this area proved to be a major challenge.

- **Dissemination of the initiative:** According to the objective of reaching out an increasing number of patients and early assistances, the Pearl Byington Hospital (responsible for providing with expertise and medical care) and the Women's Police Stations disseminated the program's information and sought strategic partners (mainly NGOs) who work on this area to raise awareness of the service.

- **Promoting the respect and the protection of human, sexual and reproductive rights of victims of sexual violence, through integration services to address the health needs of the victims and the legal procedures for the identification of the perpetrator:** The inclusion of police services, the Legal Medical Institute and the emergency medical care center significantly reduced the time between the incident of violence and the provision of care, by identifying forensic evidence of sexual crime and providing effective medical interventions in pregnancy prevention and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

- **The need to expand the program to other locations:** The Program currently is being implemented in the city of Sao Paulo; however it also provides medical and social care to victims coming from other places. As transportation is not guaranteed, attending these victims is often difficult.

Results

Early medical attention creates better results regarding the identification of sexual violence. Not only does it provide critical legal proof if legal justice is pursued, it also minimizes the likelihood of unwanted pregnancy and rates of STD infection, important for individual and public health. A key indicator of the program's success is the increase of the number of visits registered over the past years. In 2013, over 6,000 consultations were carried out, nearly double of the first year of implementation, where almost 3250 patients were attended. This increase shows that the victims have started to report this crime and that the presence of the state government of Sao Paulo has contributed to the care provision of the victims.

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GENDER VIOLENCE

EQUITY: RESPECT IS THE WAY TO GO

Cauce Ciudadano A.C., Mexico

HONOURABLE MENTION – Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

Equity: Respect is the Way to Go began in 2008 with the purpose of preventing gender violence in public high schools in Mexico. The school-based initiative encourages and models relationships based on respect and gender equality through education of adolescents as promoters of gender equality and the training of educators to identify risk and appropriately deal with gender violence in their educational and social spheres of influence.

The Problem

Gender-based violence has become a common phenomenon among adolescents. In the context of dating relationships, many adolescents experience or perpetrate gender based violence for the first time. Behavioral patterns developed during adolescence are often normalized and perpetuated into adult life. Working with adolescents to raise awareness on gender equality and to promote respectful, healthy behaviors can create strategic, multi-generational cultural change and the construction of a more inclusive, equitable society.

Approach of the Initiative

Cauce Ciudadano A.C. uses the a gender-sensitive methodology of Skills for Life (SfL), which enables adolescents to develop key psychosocial skills, to question gender roles and stereotypes that legitimize and reproduce violent behavior, and to foster gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors in society. "Juvenile Social Action" allows adolescents to visualize themselves as agents

of change and provides them tools to become active protagonists and juvenile leaders that contribute critical and creative thinking to respond to gender violence. In 2008, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) awarded the "Imprints" award (Huellas, in Spanish) to Cauce Ciudadano A.C. for the best campaign with an integrated approach.

The strategy of the Equity: Respect is the Way to Go initiative contains the following components:

- **Recreational and educational workshops to sensitize and train public high school students:** to expand the capacity of adolescents to act as agents of change through four themes: sex-gender system; gender roles and stereotypes; violence; and participation and peaceful settings. Once the workshops are finalized, a "Gender Equity Day" is carried out in each high school, where proposals generated by adolescents are exhibited to raise awareness in their communities on the issue of gender equity and dating violence prevention.

The mission of the Cauce Ciudadano organization is to train youths as agents of social change by developing protective factors among peers through educational, training services, and the generation of economic opportunities implemented by a community of young facilitators with a high sense of ethics and social commitment.



Cauce Ciudadano
A.C.

www.cauceciudadano.org.mx





Observations of evaluators and collaborating agencies

“This is an initiative that besides facilitating the empowerment of women, also works with men; on the premise that the working with both sexes allows the generation of significant changes in the construction of an equitable society.”

“Cauce Ciudadano has broad experience working with the adolescent population, and is one of the referents for peacebuilding in numerous communities and neighborhoods of Mexico.”

“This initiative has been recognized at the federal level as a successful and scalable experience within the framework of mainstreaming the gender perspective in the educational area, among other reasons, because it has managed to forge effective partnerships with the education sector, the OCS, and governmental agencies.”

- **Workshops on gender equity sensitization and nonviolence:** To provide high school principals and teachers with tools to understand the importance of creating violence-free environments and to develop new strategies with their students to favor gender equality in education practices.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Lack of prioritization of gender-related work and the adolescent population by certain educational authorities:** The proposal was included as part of the framework of the General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence, that guides the mainstreaming and compulsory nature of the gender perspective in educational policies.

- **Difficulty in implementing the initiative in entities where Cauce Ciudadano does not have offices:** Partnerships were forged with various Civil Society Organizations in 8 entities, in addition to opening new operational offices in San Luis Potosí, Tlaxcala, and Jalisco, that expanded the operating capacity of the organization.

- **Difficulty in implementing the initiative in areas with presence of organized crime groups:** A dialogue process was carried out and an institutional shield was provided by the educational entities, along with security measures for the implementation of the initiative.

- **Difficulty in preserving continuity of the initiative in states in which the initiative was implemented:** Partnerships were established with federal government and municipal institutions, international organizations, companies, and academic institutions to monitor the process, in addition to permanent contact with the directors of the educational institutions served.

Results

According to the evaluations made to date, the beneficiary adolescents showed statistically significant changes with respect to their perceptions on gender stereotypes and roles. Currently, a strategy is being designed to provide continuity to school promoters, monitoring the way the workshop has impacted their lives through the performance of a longitudinal study.

 www.facebook.com/CauceAC
www.facebook.com/equidad.elrespetoeslaruta

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www.cauceciudadano.org.mx

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

STITCHES FOR THE FUTURE

Haug S.A., Peru

FINALIST – Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

The “Stitches for the Future” initiative was launched in 2013, and provides personal, economic, and social opportunities to adult women. Through social and economic empowerment, female participants are better positioned to educate their communities on gender-based violence and confront systems of violence.

The Problem

Low participation of women in the work area is due, to a great extent, to gender norms relegating women to domestic and care work. Limited access to money, credit, employment, education, and training increases their economic dependency on their partners and limits their opportunities for personal, educational, and employment development, and generates greater vulnerability to gender violence. This situation is critical in regions with high indices of violence, such as Callao, where a socioeconomic and employment diagnostic prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion (MINTRA) in 2012 indicates that 78% of men in this district perform some work in contrast to 52% of women.

Approach of the Initiative

HAUG S.A. launched “Casa Haug” as a part of its corporate social responsibility program in order to serve local mothers in communities where HAUG S.A. has manufacturing plants. Initially, the program focused on offering local mothers training in enterprise development and handicraft skills. In 2013, as a result of conversations with women and increased

awareness of problems affecting local families, Casa Haug adjusted its programming in personal development and empowerment of the beneficiaries.

The project managed by the Social Responsibility team and financed by the HAUG S.A. comprises the following three phases:

Phase 1. Development of productive abilities. Women were trained in handicrafts techniques to develop their marketable, productive skills.

Phase 2. Capacity building in entrepreneurship, business management training, and access to markets. Training and advisory services were provided in subjects related to entrepreneurship and business management by associates from HAUG S.A.

Phase 3. Training of female leaders on empowerment of women and fight against gender violence. Workshops on soft-skills and empowerment of women were accompanied by local sensitization on gender-based violence through information campaigns and community festivals.

HAUG S.A. is a private company in metal construction, assembly and installations in Peru with more than 65 years of experience. The company has social responsibility initiative, “Casa Haug,” that promotes development and educational, economic and social improvement in the areas of influence of the company, in which it also promotes gender equity and empowerment of women.



www.haug.com.pe





Observations of evaluators and collaborating agencies

“It is an initiative with an innovative approach that combines important aspects such as economic empowerment, self-esteem of women, and the sensitization of the community on the subject of equality, in particular to gender violence.”

“It is an interesting example of how gender violence problems can be satisfactorily addressed at the local level in association with several actors.”

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Low participation in violence prevention meetings: Casa Haug built a day care center in order to accommodate the target population of women with small children. The provision of child care increased the numbers of mothers participating in the programming.

High number of women with low self-esteem, acceptance of their economic dependency situation, and passivity in the face of psychological violence: Women received counseling sessions, psychological guidance, and training on women’s empowerment and rights. Furthermore, talks and campaigns were carried out on gender violence to help them recognize different types of violence and identify protective measures.

Indifference and limited initiative of grassroots organizations on matters related to gender violence: Partnerships were forged with the governing Board of the Castilla and Dulanto area with the aim to facilitate greater awareness of gender-based violence and to strengthen community initiatives against gender violence. Furthermore, expertise from institutions specializing in gender violence contributed to participant-designed interventions.

Results

The impact results with regard to the project’s strategic planning objectives will be evaluated in two specific areas: improvement of women’s productivity and their access to the labor market under better conditions to increase their family income.

Until now, 100% of the beneficiaries of the initiative have earned their own income as a result of their participation in this initiative. Some women have been incorporated into the labor market as dependent workers and others as micro-entrepreneurs. Sixty-five percent of beneficiaries promoted activities linked to the defense of women’s rights in their community, through sensitization talks on prevention of violence against women, campaigns, festivals, and artistic competitions.

 www.facebook.com/HaugSA

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

FIGHT AGAINST THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF BOYS, GIRLS AND ADOLESCENTS

Terre des Hommes-Lausanne Foundation, Colombia

FINALIST – Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Terre des Hommes-Lausanne Foundation launched its initiative “Fight against the sexual exploitation of Children, Girls, and Adolescents” in Colombia in 2008. Its objective is to fight child sexual violence, to end impunity in the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, to guarantee their protection and access to justice, and to strengthen compliance with current public policies.

The Problem

Sixty-three percent of reported violence against children involves a girl; and eighty percent of sexual abuses of children are committed against girls aged between 10 and 14.

This initiative promotes the adoption of a “protective culture” of minors who are victims of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in Colombia, seeking a reduction of impunity and the application of justice.

Approach of the Initiative

The program has a rights-based approach as established in the Colombian Constitution, the Code for Children and Adolescents, and other international laws. The project focuses mainly on three core issues:

Promotion of reporting: Various stakeholders – children, community leaders, governmental and nongovernmental entities - are trained so that they can recognize sexual exploitation of boys and girls as a crime and develop adequate reporting mechanisms.

Legal and psychological care for victims:
In addition to attending and monitoring legal

cases, sensitization activities and training are carried out for civil servants responsible for the care of the victims.

Political and institutional advocacy: Local and national public institutions and international organizations are encouraged to adopt measures that improve their interventions with regard to sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Tdh organizes legal roundtables and inter-institutional meetings, and presents reports to district councils and other government ministries.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

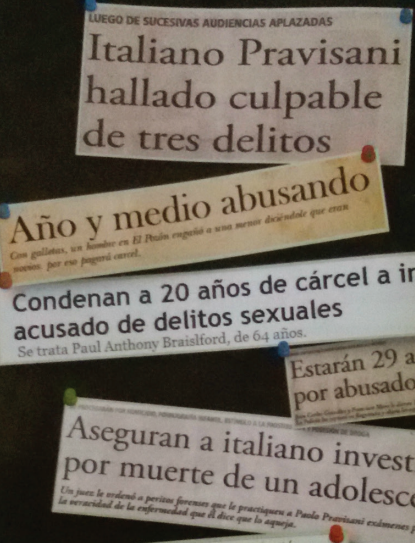
Slowness of the proceedings: Tdh often encounters significant delays in the legal processes. Certain justice personnel appear insensitive and unmotivated in prioritizing the proceedings related to child and adolescent victims. Legal hearings continue to be postponed often due to the absence of the defense lawyer, the prosecutor or the judge, leading to the re-victimization of the children and adolescents who have to face their assailants, the news media, and the authorities of the judicial system on several

The Terre des Hommes-Lausanne (Tdh) Foundation is a Swiss nonprofit humanitarian entity that provides assistance to children in 37 countries. In Colombia, Tdh implements a child protection strategy in Cartagena de Indias to combat sexual exploitation of boys and girl, which prosecutes the exploiters of boys and girls and provides comprehensive care to child victims through a comprehensive healing program.



www.tdh.ch





Observations of evaluators and collaborating agencies

“TDH was the first organization to provide legal representation to children victims of sexual exploitation in Cartagena. It is a leader, thus it is broadly recognized by civil society and the local government.”

“I do not know any other initiative that has such a comprehensive approach. This foundation is involved in all the dimensions of the problem on the ground in a unique manner.”

“The continuing support, the psychological care, and the legal representation to the victims of violence or sexual exploitation are aspects that without a doubt have contributed to the success of this initiative.”

occasions. Given the sporadic and inconsistent nature of public services, Tdh provides victims with psycho-legal support at all the stages of the criminal proceedings in addition to intense clinical treatment.

Lack of public policies that address the problem: Implementation of international, national, and local laws is weak. The lack of public resources does not allow for the effective protection of children’s rights, so the project aimed to provide high quality, child-centered staff that can serve victims and campaign for the transformation of laws and standards that could legitimize well-resourced public action.

Manipulation of victims’ families: Attempts to manipulate or bribe the families of the victims were observed in several proceedings. In these cases, Tdh supports victims and members of their families to reject corrupt practices. Corruption charges are often met with demands of irrefutable evidence in order to bring perpetrators within the criminal system to justice.

Results

During project implementation, two external evaluations and additional research has been carried out. The project not only promotes the reporting and empowerment of victims, but also files legal complaints and provides support until effective judicial protection is obtained. Of more than 100 accompanied cases and 29 sentences achieved, among them were the prosecution of three criminal cases related to foreign nationals from the United Kingdom, Italy and Ecuador who victimized Colombian children. The project has performed expert and forensic psychology reports that have supported legal proceedings and other research. Child and adolescent victims have proven to be better informed about their rights and know the vocabulary to describe crimes related to sex exploitation. Additionally, they know about the available institutional mechanisms, which makes it more possible for them to access legal justice.



www.facebook.com/tdh.ch



twitter.com/tdh_ch



www.youtube.com/user/TdhInfoCenter

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GRUPO BANCO MUNDIAL





GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

VICTIMS AGAINST VIOLENT ACTS

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Argentina

FINALIST – Initiatives to Promote Gender Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

The “Victims Against Violent Acts” initiative, launched in 2006, provides care and support to victims of abuse and mistreatment caused by different types of violent acts (family, sexual and commercial sexual exploitation of children) through interdisciplinary intervention teams who work in Buenos Aires, Misiones, and Chaco, Argentina.

The Problem

Evidence suggests that, historically, female victims of domestic or sexual violence in Argentina often faced a broken response system. Instead of receiving treatment or justice, many were blamed for their situation and oftentimes instructed to return home to situations of violence. Many victims were not aware of their rights and did not know how to escape situations of violence. Providers tasked with caring for female survivors did not understand correct protocols, and some even perpetuated paternalistic, violent behaviors against women.

Approach of the Initiative

The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights employed 210 professionals (psychologists, social workers and lawyers) who provide support and aid to female victims of violence. The operators of a toll-free number (137) are trained in a non-discriminatory approach, and listen to callers without distinction of their gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and ethnic origin, etc. Once a case has been evaluated, the deployment of the interdisciplinary mobile teams is authorized:

Brigade against Domestic Violence; Brigade against Sexual Violence, and Brigade against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children seek to aid victims in emergency situations. The Interdisciplinary Body of Protection against Domestic Violence is responsible for supervision of the cases through interviews with the victims and the aggressors (separately), reports on risk and on family interactions at the request of the judge. The program also conducts training and sensitization sessions for policemen, health and education professionals, and judicial branch staff. It has created a course, Introduction to Gender Violence, at three Federal Police Academies, and an official course of study in Gender Violence in the National University of Misiones.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Creation and adaptation of the work of the call center and the mobile teams: In the absence of background information or systematizations in this practice, intervention proved a challenge; however, it was overcome through comprehensive training of professionals to care for victims of violent acts from a

The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights advises the President of the Argentina and the Chief of the Cabinet of Ministers on issues pertinent to the Judicial Branch. It also provides care to victims of abuse and mistreatment through several programs and services, and provides up-to-date information on the situation of these problems in the country.



www.jus.gob.ar



80

EL 80% DE LAS VÍCTIMAS
SON MUJERES.
Los números hablan.



Observations of evaluators and collaborating agencies

“This program should be a model to be followed with regard to care for women victims of violence, and not only in our province and in our country but also as an intervention model; adapt it to the social and cultural situations of each country in the world.”

“The care provided in situ and the care at the hospital or health service, as well as reporting to the police or judicial area, surpasses any existing public policy in our country to solve this problem.”

“For the first time, through the statistics and the information the Program analyzes and disseminates, we have been able to really become aware of the enormous consequences that these violent acts generate on the women.”

gender-sensitive human rights approach.

The interdisciplinary work has been a suitable strategy, since these problems require creative interventions and from different disciplines.

Paternalistic culture and empowerment of victims to demand assistance: The lack of knowledge of the victims about the available assistance from the State, together with the discriminatory, patriarchal values perpetuated through family and social organizations, communications media, and various institutions, often results in victim blaming and impunity for aggressors.

Growing number of calls to the Children's Brigade: The brigade was alerted about the growing number of pedophiles who use the Internet as a means to commit crimes against the sexual integrity of children and adolescents. A special program was adapted to assist not only the victims of child commercial sexual exploitation, but also included actions to prevent and raise awareness among families, children, adolescents and institutions on the dangers that may exist when using internet and communications technologies.

Results

From October 2006 to July 2014, 86,255 calls were answered in the City of Buenos Aires. Support was provided to 21,269 victims of domestic violence and to 7,340 victims of sexual violence, and led to the arrest of several serial violators. Since 2009, 21,102 officers of the Argentine Federal Police have been trained through the incorporation of a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the three Police Academies.

Furthermore, a comparative investigation of the program's interventions has been conducted and monthly, quarterly, and annual statistical reports have been produced. This program has contributed to the drafting of a Human Trafficking Law, unprecedented until now in the country; the presentation to the Congress of the Argentine Nation of a new Draft Legislation on "Protection against Domestic Violence" and the publication of books such as "Practices to care for and defend girls, boys, and adolescents" and "Second Comprehensive Sex Education Notebook for Secondary Education," of the Ministry of Education of the Nation. It should be highlighted that in 2013, the program coordinator was invited by the United Nations to attend ECOSOC's 57th Session of the Legal and Social Commission for Women to report on the experience and the achievements of this initiative.

 www.facebook.com/pages/Programa-LAS-VÍCTIMAS-CONTRA-LAS-VIOLENCIAS

 [@vicontravio](https://twitter.com/vicontravio)

 www.youtube.com/vicontravio

www.lasvictimascontralasviolencias.blogspot.com

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