



Latin America Regional Programme

Programme Results

Total Budget	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
USD 6,094,421	USD 5,000,000	USD 1,094,421	2019 – 2023

Recipient UN Organizations: UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA

Other partners: From the United Nations System: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and World Health Organization (WHO); Regional, Inter-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); Academia; and Private Sector.

Context

In Latin America, violence against women and girls, including femicide/feminicide (VAWG+FF), persist at alarming levels, with 10 of the 25 countries with the highest FF rates in the world. During the four years of implementation, the Spotlight Initiative went through different contextual challenges. Part of the implementation was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified and exacerbated the already alarming situation of VAWG+FF in the region. The increase in mobility restrictions generated greater risks of VAWG+FF and created additional barriers for women and girls to access essential services. The region also went through the rise of anti-rights movements, including anti-feminist groups, shrinking space for civil society, a backlash against women’s rights organizations, and an increase in attacks against women human rights defenders. However, the Spotlight Initiative has been able to adapt and face the multiple challenges encountered throughout its implementation, and continued to generate knowledge and innovation with the aim of advancing in the prevention and elimination of VAWG+FF.

Spotlight Initiative’s Response

In face of such a complex reality, the Spotlight Initiative generated evidence on preventing and eliminating VAWG+FF with an interseccional approach and through the use of innovative tools. In the spirit of UN Reform, the implementing partners took stock of successful experiences of inter-institutional coordination in strategic alliances, which allowed joint efforts to prosper, processes to be optimized and partners to pool resources and thus achieve more strategic results. Through multi-stakeholder coordination, the Spotlight Initiative promoted the socialization, appropriation and institutionalization of the resources, tools, evidence, and recommendations generated for their sustainability and long-term impact. The Spotlight Initiative identified a great need to improve the participation of government authorities in a broader conversation for a holistic and coordinated approach to ending VAWG+FF, including with the different United Nations Agencies.

1 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/femicide-rates-by-country> (Accessed on 9th Aug 2023)

Key Results from Across the Years

- **The use of innovative tools and approaches to prevent and eliminate VAWG+FF:** VAWG+FF is a very complex phenomenon that intersects with many others that currently exist in Latin America. In order to build knowledge and data on the issue and propose evidence-based actions, eight multidimensional studies were carried out on the interrelationship of VAWF+FF, with contexts such as: structural poverty, human mobility, trafficking and human trafficking, disappearances of women and girls, and organized crime. These studies provided guidelines and public policy recommendations to comprehensively rethink violence and generate new actions that respond to the complexity of the phenomenon.
- **Addressing VAWG+FF without leaving no woman or girl behind:** The work of the Spotlight Initiative had intersectionality as one of its transversal axes, in order to address specific vulnerabilities. Research was carried out, promising practices were surveyed, and care models were built aimed at women with disabilities, indigenous and Afro-descendant women, and girls, the LGBTIQ+ population, and women and girls of different ages. With the leadership of indigenous women, a repository of initiatives called Tsipekua was developed to prevent and respond to violence based on the analysis of more than 50 experiences in 13 countries in the region. In addition, a study was promoted on the intersections between gender-based violence and violence against girls and boys.
- **Institutionalizing results for long-term and sustainable change:** The institutionalization of the Spotlight Initiative's efforts in Latin America were essential for its long-term sustainability. For this reason, the Spotlight Initiative also worked to generate more effective responses from States to respond to and prevent FF in a systematic manner, based on the strengthening of regulatory frameworks, the enactment of laws and public policies to guarantee and better access to Justice for victims and survivors. With the aim of improving regulatory frameworks, various tools were developed, including the Guide for the application of the Inter-American Model Law to prevent, punish and eradicate the violent death of women for reasons of gender, femicide/femicide and "The Route Towards the Eradication of Femicide/Feminicide", which provide comprehensive guidance towards the prevention, care, investigation and punishment, and reparation of this form of violence. Training for justice officials from the entire region was promoted, along with the development and adoption of action protocols in line with international and regional standards.

One Story of Impact: Felicidad Martínez, an agent of change

In the hope of finding a space to dedicate time to herself and where she could connect with other women, Felicidad Martínez approached Fundación Calicanto, one of the twelve CSOs that received small grants from the Regional Programme to pursue opportunities for her own growth. She discovered that her strength and ability could make a remarkable difference in her community, positively impacting the lives of many people. Felicidad was a key person in achieving the objectives of the Agents of Change Programme in 2022. Together with her colleagues, she managed to directly train 839 women in the prevention of gender-based violence. In the training provided, 90% of the participants stated that they felt safer and more informed to face a potential situation of violence, both their own and that of others. So, through her commitment and dedication, she became an example to other women who may feel discouraged or out of options in their lives.

In their own words... "Ask for help, don't stay silent, it is not normal for women to be mistreated or outraged," she comments during an interview on the International Day for the Prevention of Violence Against the Woman. "It is important that Agents of Change exist in these times, people who make a difference in our communities. Women who can speak and accompany other women in whatever problem they are going through."

Innovative, Promising, or Good Practices

The Regional Programme worked with the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT) to apply behavioral sciences in reducing the abandonment of survivors of gender-based violence in the complaint processes in Family Police Stations in Colombia. In order to design an intervention based on evidence and that responds to the needs of the users of services for GBV survivors, qualitative information was collected in the 22 municipalities on the barriers and facilitators to continue and complete the complaint processes in said police stations, in order to extend this experience to the region. Also together with BIT, the Regional Programme developed a qualitative study to identify opportunities to apply behavioral science to engage men from Latin America and the Caribbean in the prevention of VAWG. In an online randomized controlled trial with 5,077 men in Bolivia and Guatemala, messages were tested informed by behavioral sciences to encouraged men to intervene before the occurrence of cyberviolence violence against women and girls. Three of the four messages increased the intention to intervene to stop the perpetrators. The "Golden Rules" message, which told men what to do against cyberviolence violence, was the one that best performed consistently in various subgroups, both in Bolivia and Guatemala.

