

Gender-Based Violence

Welcome

To **'UNETE** and **EVOLUCIANA'** – campaigns to prevent gender-based violence in Cuba.



What is the Project about?

Background

The **UNETE campaign** was developed in Cuba from 2008 to 2012 and the EVOLUCIONA campaign from 2018, with other campaigns that preceded it.

For **EVOLUCIONA campaign**, it is important to note that the implementing organization, the **Center Oscar Arnulfo Romero OAR**, a Christian-based civil society organization in Cuba, already had deployed many actions since 2006, including the "Eres más" campaign, which between 2014 and 2017 focused on psychological violence as the most frequent and naturalized, and therefore, invisible form of violence.

Context

Violence against women and girls is a widespread phenomenon in Cuba, as it is in many other countries of the Caribbean and beyond. With the coronavirus crisis the number of cases of violence has even increased. The recently created observatory for gender equality refers that "According to the judicial processes resolved in the country's courts in 2022, 18 women were victims of intentional gender-based homicide..." "With respect to the relationship with the aggressor, the ex-partner prevails as the perpetrator of the act, for a total of 10 cases (62.5%). Victims at the hands of their current partner represent 37.5%, corresponding to 6 cases." This is the most extreme form of gender violence and it is known that it is only the tip of the iceberg as most cases go unreported.

During the last years, proposals for new regulations and actions to combat violence were approved. In 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the National Program for the Advancement of Women (PAM). The PAM articulates objectives, work axes and actions, from the economic empowerment of women to their representation in the media, legislation and law and combating gender violence. The Comprehensive Strategy for the Prevention of and Attention to Gender Violence and Violence in the Family context was approved in 2021 by the Council of Ministers. It includes a broad range of actions, from national to local community level. The elaboration and approval by referendum of the revised Family Code was another important step forward. The marriage is now defined as the union of two persons, offering the possibility of constituting diverse couples. It distinguishes between gender-based and domestic violence and highlights the economic value of domestic work. SDC has contributed to these developments since 2006.

Summary

Theory of change

Raising public awareness, particularly sensitizing young men will change their sexist and/or violent behavior and improve their attitudes towards women and gender equality.

Overall goal

Prevent gender-based violence in the programs of the different organizations that work with the PYE Participation and Equality Platform and in the general portfolio of the SDC in Cuba.

Specific objective(s)

Objective of UNETE 2008-2012: To influence the dismantling of sexist stereotypes that mark gender gaps in a country with important advances in equality between women and men,

Objective of EVOLUCIONA 2018-2022: to transform collective imagination, dismantle normalized beliefs and stereotypes that sustain expressions of violence against women and promote different attitudes and changes in hegemonic machismo discourses.

Expected results

- Young people recognize the existence of bias and sexist beliefs that support the control over women's bodies.
- Change in beliefs and behaviours that sustain the control over women's bodies.
- Training and sensitization on non-hegemonic and violence-free masculinities and femininities, linked to youth and their immediate environments.
- Positioning the campaign in the public and engaging more people and institutions, on the topic through mass outreach and communication.

Stakeholders

Project partners

For the **UNETE campaign**: UNDP, cooperating with a variety of national partners such as RIAM, the Tod@s contracorriente project, the Cuban group Red de Artistas.

For the **EVOLUCIONA Campaign**: Centro Oscar Arnulfo Romero OAR, a Civil Society Organization <https://romerocuba.org/>

Project primary stakeholders (priority target group(s))

- Young men and women
- Broader public

Project secondary and boundary stakeholders (system actors, duty bearers, service providers etc.)

- National associations and networks
- State authorities such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education



Some key challenges:

- Face-to-face meetings and systematic follow-up and monitoring became more and more difficult.
- The exchange rates and the increasingly difficult economic situation impacted the execution of the project budget.
- The economic context remains difficult, with a big impact on the living conditions of women and men in Cuba.
- The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba is in force since 1960, and it has even intensified during the last years. The economic limitations faced by the country can severely limit or delay the implementation of the planned actions, and contribute to a stagnation or regression of progress toward safe and more gender inclusive Cuban society

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

Key design and implementation features, included:

- As a general approach, the campaigns seek to counteract the forces of the normalization of the existing beliefs and to promote alternative beliefs and social norms, with a discourse and actions that invite young people to redesign their ways of relating to each other and of being a man or a woman.
- The campaign focused its communicative approach on the conceptualization, design and implementation of actions aimed at identifying, raising awareness and acting on the beliefs that support violence in the target group.
- In its educative approach, the campaign targeted opinion leaders, creative groups, youth organizations, religious organizations and student groups with its capacity building and awareness raising efforts. It also engaged with non-traditional leaders such as artists and athletes.

- A Cuban televised series 'Breaking the Silence'.
- A social experiment that explored the reactions to street harassment against men, with the results to raise awareness about harassment of women.
- Workshops with the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, focusing on "Gender and Creation" and the "the obligation to look".

Key Achievements and Good Practices

- The actions developed by both campaigns, together with other partners and supported by SDC, contributed to the approval of important national policies and laws, such as the Presidential Decree Plan for the Advancement of Women, the Comprehensive strategy for the prevention of and attention to gender violence and violence in the family setting and the new Family Code (see above for details)
- The UNETE campaign contributed to raising critical awareness about gender gaps and their role in sustaining gender-based violence. It helped strengthen the links between different institutions of society in order to make gender violence more visible and address it more comprehensively. The campaign provided training on gender issues and gender violence to different institutions and organizations in the country, effectively contributing to awareness and a more proactive stance in the attention to and prevention of this problem.
- The EVOLUCIONA campaign, under the slogan "harassment puts you behind", made visible more subtle or symbolic forms of violence including digital forms of violence, seeking to transform collective imaginaries on how young people learn and apprehend, from their social groups and environments of belonging, the beliefs about the control of the body and social relations of women.



Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- There is a lack of knowledge and awareness about the link between women's control over the body, women's social relations and violence against them.
- The resistance to change is very determined, and there is often very limited interest in challenging and changing beliefs.
- The youth is able to embrace ideals and new trends. There is a willingness to change beliefs related to body control and gender relations.
- A diversity of arenas where the different imaginaries and beliefs are manifested (such as work, schools, areas of origin, social groups) can be used to address and deconstruct the beliefs.
- Platform work has been very effective, as it favors the joint action of different institutions in the attention to gender violence.
- The use of different manifestations of arts and culture helps achieve better results.
- Training and awareness-raising activities are a necessary condition for effectively involving people in addressing gender-based violence.
- New socioeconomic and political contexts are favoring the empowerment of women.
- Understanding the starting conditions and the specific context of the targeted groups contributes to a better design of the actions and improved effectiveness.
- A long-term approach was able to build solid networks and confidence that helped to address sensitive issues in the society.

For more on the project, and SDC Gender in LAC experiences

- <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Gender/Pages/Toolbox/Knowledge%20sharing/Gender-experiences-from-Latin-America.aspx>

