

Women, Peace and Security

Welcome

To **'MIRE+** – gender sensitive intersectoral emergency response.



What is the Project about?

Background

MIRE+ is an intersectoral (protection, WASH and livelihoods, and health) emergency response mechanism formed by a consortium of three humanitarian organizations that are ready to promote the early recovery of communities affected by the armed conflict in Colombia, in a gender-sensitive and comprehensive way. The MIRE+ consortium began its work in the post-peace agreement context in Colombia. The National Government, the Civil Society and the International Community have joined forces with the purpose of guaranteeing a successful implementation of the peace agreement of 2016. The MIRE+ consortium is already in its second phase, providing humanitarian assistance and protection to communities that have been displaced or are in a situation of confinement due to the violence generated by the armed conflict in Colombia.

Context

Since the signing of the agreement, Colombia has faced new challenges, particularly with the emergence of armed groups that have occupied territories previously controlled by the former FARC guerrillas. These groups compete for territorial control to carry out illicit economic activities, such as smuggling, coca cultivation and the control of strategic routes for the commercialization of these products. In addition, persistent structural poverty hinders communities' access to basic services such as health and education, and there is a general lack of state presence in many areas of the country. Regarding gender issues, studies and analyses have revealed that, in the context of the year-long armed conflict, women have been victims of sexual violence, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Women are also more likely to suffer acts of involuntary domestic servitude or to be confined and relegated to roles traditionally considered female. Single mothers face a higher risk of having their children forcibly recruited by armed groups or threatened. All these circumstances highlight the need to adopt a gendered approach specifically in peacebuilding and in the humanitarian aid implementation, thus strengthening the triple nexus approach.

Summary

Theory of change

Once the emergency stage is overcome, IF safety conditions improve, and both the population affected by the conflict, the authorities and public officials work in coordination with the support of international organizations on comprehensive and inclusive actions that, in the medium term, help to improve access to public services, food security, protection of communities, and strengthen the mechanisms of governance, THEN it will be possible to overcome the effects of humanitarian emergencies and promote early recovery alternatives that contribute to lasting solutions, increase the resilience of communities, and contribute to a stable and lasting peace. BECAUSE conflict is fueled by poverty, inequality, insecurity, and a lack of economic and social opportunities for the population, as well as by the limited presence of the state in the territory; situations that can be overcome with the help of cooperation and the work of humanitarian organizations.

Overall goal

Contribute to the early recovery, protection, peace building and access to services and livelihoods of vulnerable people and communities that are victims of humanitarian emergencies associated with the armed conflict in the Colombian Pacific coast and Amazonas.

Specific objective(s)

- Vulnerable communities have the appropriate knowledge and instruments to guarantee a protective environment for and the effective enjoyment of their fundamental rights, regardless of gender, with priority to the most disadvantaged social sectors, in coordination with responsible authorities.
- Communities affected by the armed conflict, particularly the most vulnerable or excluded sectors, improve their quality of life through equitable access to basic services and sustainable productive and socioeconomic recovery based on their specific needs.
- Public institutions and other actors increase their presence and capacity for intervention in communities affected by the armed conflict with emergency and development projects and programs contributing to early recovery and sustainable development.

Stakeholders

Project partners

The MIRE+ consortium is made up of the [Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#), [Action Against Hunger](#), and [ActionAid](#) Spain. The consortium is funded in its first phase by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); co-financed by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), ; and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Project primary stakeholders (priority target group(s))

Vulnerable communities affected by the armed conflict and violence, with emphasis on multi-affected populations (natural disasters, migration) and belonging to population groups with higher protection risks and multiple needs (indigenous, Afro, women, boys and girls). To reach these communities, the consortium focuses its activities in Puerto Nariño (Amazonas), Tumaco (Nariño), Buenos Aires and Suarez (Cauca) and Alto Baudó (Chocó).

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

The execution and implementation of the project was accompanied by various public entities, with whom coordinated activities were carried out to provide an appropriate and effective response to the affected community.



Some key challenges faced:

- The perception that remains within the communities regarding the roles that men and women should play makes it difficult for women to participate in the different activities.
- The women's lack of knowledge of the Spanish language made it difficult for them to transmit and appropriate the knowledge imparted in the workshops and training sessions, which meant that in many cases they had to rely on interpreters from the community, who were generally men. .

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

Key design and implementation features, included:

- The project design was based on a gender analysis with a cross-cutting methodology through the four lenses implemented by SDC: (1) access and control of services and processes; (2) gender roles and distribution of tasks; (3) voice, participation and leadership; and (4) needs and interests of women and men. This ensured a comprehensive but differentiated ethnic and gender approach, taking into account the variety of cosmo-visions of the territories and communities.
- A political and leadership training for 40 Emberá indigenous women to strengthen the knowledge, skills and practices necessary for the exercise of leadership, participation and political advocacy of these women.
- Menstrual Hygiene and Health issues were addressed as part of the WASH sector activities. The practices focused on raising awareness among men and women, both young and old, through 'voice to voice' talks designed to eliminate stereotypes and negative beliefs rooted in the community.
- "Safe Water for Women" focused on the construction of water supply systems, including filtered water storage tanks, water filters and safe water storage kits, in some territories complemented with the installation of gender-segregated sanitary facilities.
- A variety of approaches were used to address gender based violence. Training on gender equity and gender-based violence were organized in joint roundtables, where specific needs, gender challenges and actions were presented.
- Service fairs were held as part of the legal and psychosocial care trainings, addressing GBV issues, actors or institutions that can be approached for help, and how care should be provided to women victims of violence.

The time to plan and carry out NEXUS-type interventions with a gender mainstreaming approach must be longer (at least 12 months of direct work with the communities), given the comprehensive approach to addressing situations. Time is required to carry out processes that lead to significant and sustainable changes in relation to relationships, roles, and participation of women and men in communities.

Key Achievements and Good Practices

- Successes in raising awareness about menstruation and the importance of menstrual hygiene in women's lives. This has led boys, girls, youth and men to break down stereotypes around menstruation and see it as something natural. As a result, women have become more empowered to make decisions about their daily lives in a responsible and safe manner.
- Community leaders are more sensitive on issues related to gender-based violence (GBV). This has generated greater awareness among both men and women about the importance of gender equity in the community, generating changes in relations between men and women.
- Women's rights are recognized by men and women in the community. Actions such as forcing a woman to have sex have been identified as constituting an act of sexual violence. Women have also gained knowledge about GBV response routes.
- Gender stereotypes regarding women's roles in the public sphere have decreased. Women are more empowered and participate in community decision-making, including community councils.
- Actions in water and sanitation, particularly the construction of toilets in communities, have contributed to reducing exposure to GBV and increasing safety, especially for women who previously used shared toilets. The provision of water in the communities has decreased women's domestic workload, allowing them more time for other activities. Water committees in the communities have generated a change in gender roles regarding water management, promoting a more equitable distribution of responsibilities
- 40 indigenous women have been trained in the department of Chocó,, strengthening their knowledge, skills and practices to exercise leadership, participation and political influence in their communities. The positive experience can also be used in other contexts.



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

juan.mosquerassepulveda@eda.admin.ch or
bogota@eda.admin.ch

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



Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- A differentiated and gender approach must be incorporated from the planning of the project, considering that the needs of men and women during protracted emergency situations are different from those of communities in normal situations, so the gender approach can have rapid and sustainable effects in the communities.
- In communities impacted by armed conflict, it's typically men who predominantly make decisions, which often contributes to escalating the violence women face. Therefore, designing activities that promote gender-transformative action for both men and women is crucial. Such initiatives enhance women's involvement and help to narrow gender disparities by altering traditional roles and relationships.
- It is essential to address the specific needs of women and ensure their active participation in the country's reconciliation and reconstruction efforts.
- To ensure women's participation in communities with patriarchal structures it is helpful to incorporate gender quotas in project implementation policies. This promotes inclusion and equal opportunities for women.
- In interventions in small communities it is essential to target activities to the entire community, with special attention to women. Lack of inclusion can generate tensions.
- Both the general and specific objectives of the project and the activities are monitored through specific indicators, including gender sensitive indicators, making it possible to demonstrate progress in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the project. Baselines and monitoring and follow-up reports are used by the consortium to verify the progress and sustainability of the project.