

Gender-Based Violence

Welcome

To **'RUTA DE ATENCIÓN'** – the Route of Care for women survivors of domestic violence in the Department of Choluteca.



What is the Project about?

Background

The 'Seguridad Ciudadana' program (Territorial Citizen Security Program) hosts the Route of Care project. The TCSP facilitates virtual spaces for dialogue between the various institutions of the 'Route of Care'.

The identification of the members of the Regional Network of Women of the South, and the support for the mobilization of women's networks, made it possible for the Municipal Women's Office to resume providing shelter services and for the various actors to provide assistance, thus initiating the 'Route of Care'.

The 'Route of Care' derives from a need for an alternative to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. The National Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, the Municipal Women's Office, and the Regional Network of Women of the South established strategies to stimulate dialogue and initiate the coordination of actions.

Context

With the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (United Nations, 1979), the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (United Nations, 1993), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Organization of American States, 1994), and the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (United Nations, 1995), Honduras is committed to preventing and addressing violence against women. The country approved the Law against Domestic Violence, which establishes the formulation of governmental plans and immediate protection measures for victims and the establishment of precautionary measures with the follow-up of compliance with the sanctions imposed on the aggressor (National Congress, 1997).

Summary

Theory of change

If women and girls experiencing or at risk of violence, have more sources and points of support, then it will be easier and therefore more incentivized for them to seek help. If duty bearers and other actors are better coordinated and capacitated, they can strengthen both formal and nonformal systems and pluralistic services for the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls. If actors and services are seen as available, accessible, safe and reliable, more women and girls will use these services to prevent and respond to violence against them.

Overall goal

To facilitate access to protection and justice for women, guaranteeing adequate response and care based on an intersectoral response .

Specific objective(s)

To establish an alternative mechanism to meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence, facilitate access to protection and justice for women and girls, through an adapted, coordinated and intersectoral approach.

Expected results

- A coordination platform between the police, the prosecutors' office, the judiciary and the regional network of women in the south is established and maintained
- Capacity, resources and data management is enhanced and shared between key state and non-state actors.
- Women and girls can and do access and use more services which respond to their protection and justice needs.

Stakeholders

Project partners

GFA Consulting Group <https://www.gfa-group.de/index.html>

Project primary stakeholders (priority target group(s))

Women and girls, survivors and/or at risk of domestic violence in the southern department of Choluteca.

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

The National Police,
The Public Prosecutor's Office,
The Judiciary,
OMM/CAIM: Municipal Women's Office,
The Departmental Unit for Prevention of Gender Violence (UDEP)
The Regional Network of Women of the South



In Honduras, **Article 5 of the Law against Domestic Violence** defines Domestic Violence as "Any pattern of conduct associated with a situation of unequal exercise of power that manifests itself in the use of physical, psychological, patrimonial and/or economic and sexual violence"; and gendered power abuse as "Any conduct aimed at affecting, compromising or limiting the free development of the women for reasons of gender".

The Law considers the following forms of violence:

- Physical violence
- Psychological violence
- Sexual violence
- Property/ economic violence.

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

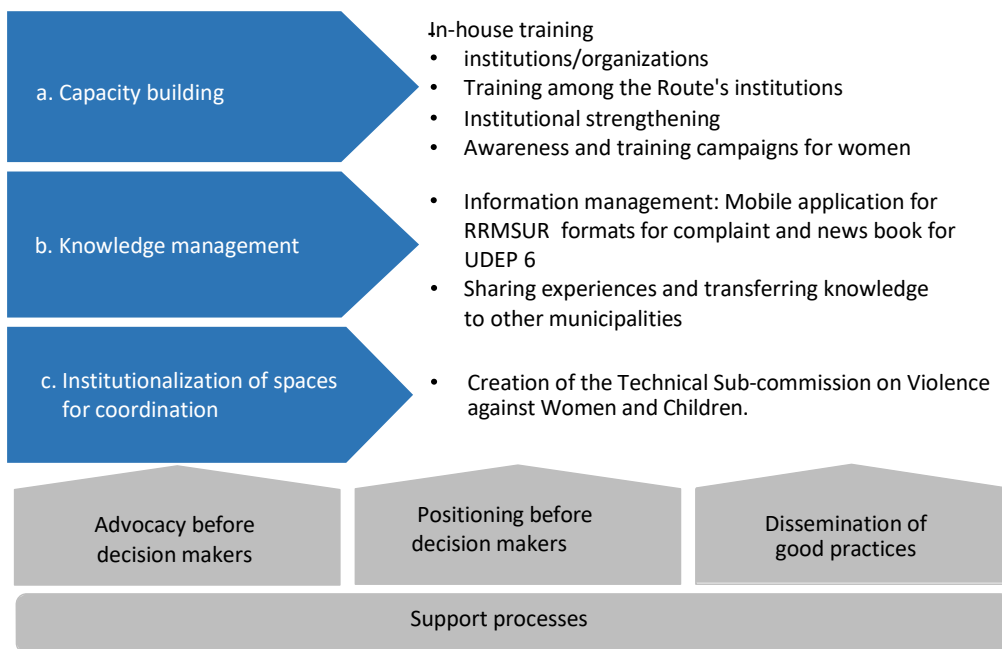
Key design and implementation features, included:

- Knowing, leveraging and using the existing relevant legal framework.
- Leveraging and integrating into other existing programs, like the [Citizen Security Program](#).
- Territorial and cross-sectoral approach involving multi-stakeholder actors with relevant mandates to preventing and responding to domestic violence.
- Involving a reputable and well linked with broad outreach civil society network focused on women's issues to work in collaboration with state authorities and duty bearers.
- Addressing data unavailability and unreliability by consolidating the different databases and tools used by the different actors.
- Diversifying and enhancing means and locations for accessing information and services.
- Training and formally recognizing community based legal advisors.

Honduras has broad regulatory framework and international agreements to protect women's rights, prevent and punish all forms of violence., However, putting them into practice has always been one of the greatest challenges for the country.

Key Achievements and Good Practices

- The 'Route of Care to Women Victims of Domestic Violence' involves and brings together successfully actors of the security and justice sectors, municipal authorities with an impact on the issue, and the Women's Networks.
- The inter-institutional coordination among these key duty bearers with the sub-committee of the Criminal Justice office.
- The strengthening of capacities, the improvement of facilities, enhancing the operations of the Office of Attention to Gender Violence in the National Police, strengthening of the management of the Board of Directors and the paralegals of the Regional Network of Women of the South in the department of Choluteca.
- Community paralegals do not have to be lawyers, but they need to have knowledge of the law. In Choluteca, this knowledge has been acquired through training given by officials from the Judiciary, the Public Prosecutor's Office and academia. There are 60 women who, through volunteer work, support women victims in denouncing the crime so that they feel accompanied and informed about the process.
- The community paralegals established communication channels at the community, municipal, departmental and regional levels to accompany women victims according to their needs.
- In 2022, the Southern Regional Women's Network had approximately 56 volunteer community paralegals. They provided advice and support to women victims of domestic violence in filing their complaints,
- The presence in the courtroom of community paralegals who accompany women victims of violence. Was formally accepted and adopted.
- By July 2023, the Network's lawyers and paralegals assisted in 16 trials of domestic violence.
- Creation of a WhatsApp group to coordinate more efficiently among the institutions.



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

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



Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Choluteca does not yet have a Special Court against Domestic Violence; however the 'Route of Care' shows that alternative systemic solutions are possible through co-working and trust building, contributing to improving care and response to women survivors or at risk of domestic violence opening the door to inclusive processes at the national level with the various actors to build a safer society for Honduran women.
- Data availability and reliability is a challenge, hence networking and coordinating between relevant actors helps to have a better overview through triangulation and cross-reference. Consolidation and maintenance in one secure database and use of common digital applications is recommended.
- It is key to have different entry points for submitting and responding to complaints. This enhances the chances and probability that affected women, girls and people will use the services if they are easier and more available to access as a first step.
- The limited personnel assigned to the courts and the lack of a secretary cause delays or the failure to hold hearings in domestic violence cases. However, some judges manage to resolve these difficulties by requesting support from the Office of Attention to Gender Violence of the National Police in order to deliver the citations while avoiding exposing the victims.