

International Service Program 2010-2012

Safe Cities for Women in Guatemala City, Guatemala and San Salvador, El Salvador

UN Women
US\$500,000

Project Description

THE GOAL

Safe Cities for Women will increase the safety of women in the most violent districts of Guatemala City, Guatemala and San Salvador, El Salvador by helping local women collaborate with each other, the local government and urban planners to identify risks and participate in planning to create practical solutions, public policies and municipal plans to produce safe neighborhoods and decrease the risk of violence against women. The project will build on a larger, ongoing UN Women regional effort in four other Latin America urban areas.

BACKGROUND & NEED

Urban violence in Latin America has increased at an alarming pace, with a murder rate 114 percent higher than the world average. Civil war, lack of employment opportunities and repatriation of gang members and criminals have contributed to a rise in violence against women (VAW) in private and public spaces. The risk for VAW becomes even higher due to the traditionally subordinate position of women in society. Guatemala and El Salvador have rates of urban violence and violent homicide above the regional average. In Guatemala, in the last seven years, more than 3,200 Guatemalan women have been kidnapped, murdered and in many cases, raped, tortured and mutilated. In El Salvador, the second most violent country in the region, an estimated 1,000 women were murdered between 1999 and 2005. The rising rates of violence against women have alarmed women's organizations, national government and the international community.



RESPONSE

UN Women is currently building on the progress and results achieved from the first phase of the program in Guatemala City and San Salvador that is part of a regional program to promote "Safe Cities for Women." The focus of the program is on urban security as a gender issue, and the main objective of the program is to strengthen women's right to active citizenship in order to reduce violence. In order to prevent and address VAW in urban spaces, the project will work in

coordination with women's organizations and networks and with local government to develop and implement public policies on urban security that include women's issues and views. The program implements a participatory model that has already been developed and builds the



capacity of local women's organizations to form coalitions to identify risks and advocate for their right to lives and neighborhoods free from violence. The project will also increase awareness on the issues of gender-based violence using media campaigns as well as existing information. The second phase of the program will deepen the work in local communities in Guatemala and El Salvador and focus on the most violent districts. There will also be efforts to replicate the experience in all districts of the capital cities and incorporate the issue of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. UN Women

will continue to strengthen its collaboration with other UN and international development agencies.

Activities

- Create documentation and production of knowledge and information on gender and urban security to be used by women's networks and organizations, governments and international agencies.
- Launch public outreach and sensitization campaigns regarding women's security and human rights through web and media.
- Implement and adapt the program's participatory model to incorporate a gender perspective in security policies of Guatemala City and San Salvador.
- Empower women's organizations to influence authorities and security policies by forming coalitions, using information, assessing security in neighborhoods (walk through assessments) and building skills.
- Disseminate knowledge and best practices of the program through seminars, publications, the media and electronic platforms.
- Revise penal codes and discriminatory legislation. This includes addressing sexual violence through criminalization of men's attitudes and behaviors that are offensive to women in public spaces and which are not typified as violence against women.

CONCLUSION

The program will increase knowledge on the link between urban violence and gender to inform ongoing debates on violence and urban security. The program will also ensure that gender-based violence is included in the agendas of stakeholders from social organizations and governments in Guatemala City and San Salvador and that urban development plans are formulated with the active participation of women's organizations, civil society and local authorities.

UN Women

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. UN Member States took a historic step in accelerating the organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It will merge and



build on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system which focus exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The UN Women administration fee is seven percent.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

The International Service Program is a Zonta International program, funded by contributions to the Zonta International Foundation's **International Service Fund**. During the 2010-2012 Biennium, three projects are being funded by the International Service Fund:

- Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV and Gender-Based Violence in Rwanda
- Towards elimination of Obstetric Fistula and the Reduction of Maternal and Newborn Mortality and Morbidity in Liberia
- Safe Cities for Women in Guatemala City, Guatemala and San Salvador, El Salvador