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REAL HUMANITARIAN

Testing A Holistic Three-Pronged Approach to Violence Prevention & Response

Context

Gender-based violence (GBV) is extremely prevalent in Guatemala. The country currently ranks 119th out of 189 countries on the International Gender Equality Index and, from 2004 to 2009, had the third highest femicide rates in the world. GBV in Guatemala also contributes to high child marriage and adolescent pregnancy rates. Nearly 30% of girls are married before the age of 18. This leads to low education rates, with only 55% of girls completing secondary school. These issues are even more prevalent in Indigenous Guatemalan communities where over 80% of people live in poverty and 40% live in extreme poverty.

The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, Real Humanitarian and its local partner Asociación SERniña tested an innovative solution aimed at enhancing gender equality in the rural indigenous (Maya - Kaqchikel) community of El Hato, Guatemala by reducing rates of gender-based violence and fostering gender equity. This was done by offering a holistic, family-centered, gender equity-focused violence prevention and response program. The innovative 'Holistic 3-Pronged Approach' (H3P) included Family Trauma Healing and Empowerment Sessions, Community Violence Prevention Education, and Comprehensive Violence Response Programs for Victims of Abuse. The first of its kind in the country, the innovation offered a 'one-stop shop' for survivors that incorporated Mayan restorative justice methodologies, a healing-focused approaches to violence prevention and response, and the engagement of whole families (including boys and men) throughout the process.

Advancing Gender Equality

The innovative solution was developed based on the lived experiences of girls and women in El Hato, where Real Humanitarian has been working since 2015. In designing the innovation, 100 families from the community were engaged through group discussions, as well as one-on-one interviews and in-depth group discussions with only girls and women. A gender-diverse Youth Advisory Committee was also established to offer ideas, solutions and feedback.



COUNTRY
Guatemala

AMOUNT
\$ 244,702

TESTING PERIOD
15 months
Ended August 2022



GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GE3)

THEME: SOCIAL JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

To ensure women's participation, childcare was provided during activities, women's domestic and family schedules were considered, accommodations were made for illiteracy, and men and boys were engaged to ensure community support.

Testing Framework

Participant surveys and questionnaires were used to measure changes in attitudes, knowledge and behavior. Real Humanitarian worked with expert partner organizations and public offices to compare quantitative data pre project testing phase, during the testing phase, and after the testing phase (rates of violence, access to supports, etc.). The testing methodology was co-designed by local and Canadian staff and MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) consultants. Qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies (one-on-one interviews, focus groups, feedback meetings, and surveys) were blended to have the most comprehensive data set possible. Testing tools were administered before, mid-way, and after the testing period.

Results and Impact

Findings demonstrated that the H3P approach resulted in community members adopting more gender equitable views and practices and a decline in the rates of gender-based violence. Cases of violence among participants decreased by 45%, while 79% of participants reported experiencing less violence in their homes, and 67% reported experiencing less violence in their community. Additionally, 90% of the women who participated reported taking a concrete action towards their empowerment, and 47% of participants were able to name a clear action they have taken in their families or communities to better support girls and women (compared to 34% at baseline). Participants demonstrated more gender equitable views after the testing period demonstrated by a significant increase in their scores on their 'Attitudes Towards Women Scale'.

Key Lessons

1. It became evident during the innovation that broad terms such as 'violence' had to be unpacked. Project personnel worked with staff and participants to understand the different types of violence that exist and provide them with clear definitions of each. This allowed for the collection of more reliable, nuanced data.
2. It was important to see women's empowerment not only as individual, but also collective. One of the most documented positive shifts felt by the women and girl participants was the improvement of solidarity among women in the community and the value of creating networks of 'women helping women'.
3. A key to working in this area is understanding that survivors of familial violence want healing for themselves, their family and even for the perpetrator, not legal action that could result in incarceration or other serious legal consequences. This is at the root of Restorative Justice Practices.

After receiving in-depth violence response support for one year, a test participant and mother of four, reports feeling more at peace. She shares that she no longer feels the sadness she used to as a result of her traumatic experiences and feels as though she is in a stable and healthy place so she can not only take better care of herself, but also her children.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Asociación SERniña

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

26 participating families (119 beneficiaries including 76 women/girls and 43 men/boys)

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



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