

Women's voice for rights and equal participation in Colombia

Report from [Health Works](#)

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The project Women as Central Agents of Peacebuilding in Colombia has entered its second year, meaning it is a good moment to evaluate our programmatic response and share some updates on what has been done so far. The project is a Dutch consortium with Colombian partners, aiming to influence change of beliefs, values and norms in favour of the women rights and promote women equal participation. LIMPAL, Health Works's partner in Colombia is a sectional branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Founded in 1915, WILPF International is the oldest women's peace organization in the world. WILPF works to achieve peace through non-violent conflict resolution and the promotion of freedom and social, economic and gender-based justice for all human kind.

Gender based violence in Colombia: a national threat

The Colombian gender-based violence situation is rooted in cultural and political aspects. In 2015, gender based violence had affected 74% of Colombian girls and women. Almost 26% report being verbally abused at some point in their lives - manipulation, intimidation, threats, humiliation, and isolation. 37% claim to have suffered from some form of physical violence. The Survey on the Prevalence of Sexual Violence against Women report (2010-2015) found that 875,437 women had been direct targets of some form of sexual violence over the last six years.[1]

Our programmatic response

Women had played and will continue playing an essential part on reconciliation with high resilience. This is one of the main reasons the program focuses on psycho-social and emotional recuperation for women survivors of violence. LIMPAL's psychologists and lawyers have trained facilitators at community level to empower women and their communities, also promoting the participation of men and young people, and carrying out changes in their perception of conventional gender roles, imaginaries, beliefs, and values.

The project provides self-help group and community based support for women survivors to autonomously re-establish their life projects at household and community level. Activities and community, provincial and national events have been set over the year to transform prejudiced systems and practices with regards to sexual violence and other forms of violence against women. In order to foster equal participation by women in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, assistance and reconstruction, LIMPAL and Health Works have been disseminating a research on the Mujeres por el Desarme: + vida – armas (Women for disarmament, more lives, less weapons). We also participated in the campaign celebrating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Campaign used the hashtag #destapetelosojos (open up your eyes) encouraging people in the communities to help identify and thus prevent violence against women in all forms. The next phase of the project will focus on strengthening men and boys' engagement by targeting 300 men and boys within the communities to act as change agents. They will also attend awareness sessions on new masculinity.

[1] National Demographic and Health Survey (2015), Colombia

Primary country

[Colombia](#)

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