

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

### Context

The internal armed conflict in Colombia has left more than nine million victims since 1985. In the department of Meta, the municipality of Vista Hermosa has been one of those that has suffered most acutely from violence. The victimizations with the most significant impact and frequency in this territory have been forced displacement, homicide, and forced disappearance. These events have had differentiated impacts on women: violation of their rights, sexual violence, discrimination. Also, the case of Vista Hermosa is relevant to focus efforts towards gender equity since it is the municipality with the highest rate of forced disappearance of women in the country —within other structural conditions such as high rates of Multidimensional Poverty, illiteracy, low levels of education and health coverage, high maternal and infant mortality, among others.

In the Peace Agreements framework signed between the FARC-EP guerrillas and the Colombian State, the *Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition* (SIVJNR) was created with institutional mechanisms of transitional justice to guarantee the rights of the victims of the armed conflict. The institutions that comprise it are the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth (CEV). The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and the Unit for the Search for Missing Persons (UBPD).

The *Territorial Model of guarantees of non-repetition and empowerment of women and youth for their adequate access to the comprehensive System of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition* (SIVJNR) aims to bring young and adult women of Vista Hermosa closer to the mechanisms of transitional justice, promoting protective environments from a comprehensive perspective that guarantee their participation. This project aims to be a model capable of being replicated in other territories and contexts to promote women's effective participation at all levels of peacebuilding and implementation of the agreements.

### **Project's stake to be evaluated.**

The project in question focuses on the women and youth of Vista Hermosa, focusing on capacity building for their access to the SIVJNR, the strengthening of leadership, and their political advocacy. On the one hand, the previous aim implies that guaranteeing their rights as women and as victims within transitional justice, and on the other hand, contributes to the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition. Thus, it seeks to advance in the practical overcoming of the barriers women, and young girls face in Vista Hermosa's municipality (Meta) to access their rights as victims of the armed conflict by implementing a territorial model that promotes guarantees of non-repetition of the violence suffered.

With this purpose, a Territorial Model for Vista Hermosa was proposed to promote access to transitional justice for women and young people in Vista Hermosa and to guarantee their economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights (DESCA) through the promotion of protective environments as a strategy for empowerment. In this process, 529 young women from the municipality participated (urban and rural), mostly victims.

The project articulates national agencies such as UN Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; regional organizations such as Corporación SISMA Mujer, the UN Women Regional Office in Meta; and community-based organizations in Vista Hermosa such as Asociación de Mujeres Desplazadas del Meta ASOMUDEM and Corporación Yo Puedo.

### **Evaluation methodology**

The evaluation process focuses on the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact. Besides, an evaluation of the gender focus of the intervention was incorporated. It is *summative* in nature, seeking to determine the impact of the results, i.e., whether the project could respond to the needs generated. It also has a *formative character* that seeks to identify the intervention's strengths and weaknesses to propose recommendations, good practices, and lessons learned that are useful to guide future actions framed in the model's territorial installation.

Among the techniques applied for data collection were the review and documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and in-depth interviews to construct life histories. Despite the limitations of face-to-face fieldwork due to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the work was carried out remotely.

### **Findings**

#### *Relevance*

Relevance or pertinence is determined by the relationship of the project's results with the context's needs. There was a correspondence between the objective and the territorial model's goals in the project to be evaluated. The age and gender approaches were relevant to consolidate diverse groups of women (especially young women) that strengthened their leadership. The strategies, methodologies, languages, and contents of the training processes were adjusted to the needs and potential of the women who participated; this fostered an environment of trust. In that way, the participants were able to strengthen ties and enrich their experiences. Likewise, the targeting of the territory and the actions proposed were relevant according to the needs identified by UN Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The participants' broad convocation allowed the inclusion of young people as young as 14 years old and, besides, responded to the need for strengthening leadership to promote gender equity and reinforce democracy. Finally, the territorial organizations and the participants recognized the correspondence of the project's objective with the efforts and initiatives previously promoted in the territory.

### *Effectiveness*

By using this criterion, it is possible to investigate the scope or real fulfillment of the results and objectives proposed. The evaluation shows that Vista Hermosa's women effectively incorporated their priorities in transitional justice and peacebuilding through public policy instruments in decision-making instances for local peace and development management. The training processes strengthened women's political capacities, recognizing them as subjects of rights capable of collectively building themselves as political subjects, developing advocacy, mobilization, and dialogue actions. Furthermore, a leap was made from the agendas built-in protected and safe training spaces to public decision-making scenarios in which women's participation has historically been limited to patriarchal and adult-centered logic. Finally, this strengthened political capacities and supported 71 productive projects for the participants, an initiative that arose due to the economic crisis derived from the pandemic and led by Sisma Mujer.

### *Efficiency*

This aspect analyzes how the processes and activities have been adequate and contributed to the results' achievement. The evaluation concludes that the project had an efficient use of human resources, a team made up of women that allowed trust and sorority, a co-ordination from the UN Women Meta Regional Office whose team achieved an optimal process development. Economic resources were effectively used, even when they had to be adjusted to the pandemic contingency, generating an extension in the project activities' execution time.

### *Impact*

Impact asks about the effects and positive transformations of the intervention. For this, the evaluation inquired at two levels:

1. Strengthening women's capacities to access and narrate the truth. Through the development or consolidation of emotional, relational, and political capacities for women's mobilization through close methodologies proposed by organizations with recognition and trust in the territory, women had a safe environment to learn about the SIVJRNR, their rights, and their participation mechanisms. This development was also related to the training processes with a vital psychosocial accompaniment component to prepare the reports. That accompaniment generates confidence and expands information on access to rights, the Peace Agreement institutions' functioning, bringing the JEP, CEV, and UBPD closer to the participants to generate confidence in the peace institutions. The psycho-legal accompaniment also allowed for collective recognition of the conflict's effects, recognizing the structural elements that have sustained it and focusing those pains on organizational strengthening for reparation.

2. They discovered the capacities of the JEP, CEV, and UBPD as mechanisms of the SIJVRNR to generate safe spaces of reparation for women. The most significant methodological contribution of the project to the System's mechanisms has its roots in access and participation. Additionally, communicating these forms of participation, the implementation of methodologies built by the organizations for the socialization of each entity's mandate, and the mechanisms for their adequate access, the documentation of cases, and the elaboration of context report with direct victims and their families. Therefore, one great lesson learned for the System mechanisms was recognizing the imperative need to adapt their technical discourses to the languages, knowledge, and potential of the territories, approaching the territorial level, and strengthening their research capacities.

### **Sustainability**

This aspect inquiries about the organizational conditions that make it possible to face long-term problems to maintain the results over time. One of the central elements for the project to be sustainable were the training processes since they aimed at strengthening political capacities so that women could access public policy planning spaces from a critical, feminist, and gender perspective, and include not only their needs but also the knowledge from experience in their communities. This experience had an echo when the women who received the training became trainers, multiplying the learning and allowing them to replicate the knowledge to new groups of women. Additionally, regional, national, and international organizations' alliance allows the generation of a network to follow up on actions to make women's rights effective in Vista Hermosa, facilitating local organizations' direct relationship with institutional mechanisms.

### **Assessment of the gender approach**

The project has a gender focus inscribed in its DNA. It was directed by and for women, mixing in its development different activities and processes that combine institutional changes with cultural changes that together allow sustaining in time a permanent process of organization and action of women for the access to rights and the change of gender relations in the municipality of Vista Hermosa. A gender perspective guided identifying the problem as the intervention's objective was chosen deliberately as the generation of protective environments to enjoy rights and access to the SIVJRNR. Technical teams also implemented the project at the national and regional levels with gender sensitivity and knowledge. Likewise, the participation and contributions of the municipality's grassroots women's social organizations were fundamental for the intervention to be contextualized, relevant, and respond more accurately to the participating women's particularities and needs.

On the other hand, the project stimulated institutional transformations that allow the formation of new sustainable power relations in the future, mainly through the positioning of the Peace Agendas built in the training processes, capable of influencing and establishing themselves in local institutions and opening a critical path for the participation of women from civil society or in public positions. The project promoted a rich process of empowerment and strengthening of autonomy, generating cultural transformations and changes in the municipality women who participated in the processes, replacing old paradigms of gender relations and roles that significantly impacted daily life.

### **Good practices**

- i. The functioning of a management committee as a coordinating body, since it facilitated participatory decision-making in which ideas, contributions, concerns, and lessons learned were collective.
- ii. Technical autonomy in the design of methodologies for training processes. Local organizations' knowledge and experience were respected, respecting their sovereignty and strengthening their previous capacities for creation, trust, collective support, and confidence in their work.
- iii. The inclusion of this possibility in the framework of the intervention as a measure of adaptation to the abrupt changes resulting from the health emergency caused by the pandemic contributed not only to mitigate the adverse effects on the family economy of the selected women but also in a structural way is favoring the economic independence of women.
- iv. The methodology of replicating training spaces allowed for the sustainability of the actions, improved confidence, management of public spaces from the participants' leadership, the appropriation of knowledge, and the opportunity to share individual skills and experiences collectively.
- v. The project's approach focus on age since it allowed us to recognize the richness of the participants' skills from a generational perspective, encouraging dialogue between adult women and young women at the individual and organizational levels.
- vi. The care of children was a success that contributed to guaranteeing the participation of an essential part of the women in the community, opening up the public space for them.

### **Lessons learned**

- i. The outcome is the need to generate frequent meeting spaces between the territorial organizations, the women participating in the advocacy processes, and the administrations so that relationships established are trustful and institutional processes. They do not depend on the will or presence of the official on duty.
- ii. It is necessary to count on the participation of grassroots organizations in the model's design so that the generation of protective environments and local actions have greater recognition by both civil society and public entities.

- iii. Although the project indeed had coordination instances of which the grassroots social organizations were part, it is necessary, within the project approach, to plan exclusive meetings and articulation spaces for them.
- iv. Psychosocial accompaniment should be cross-cutting and have specialized teams with a gender focus and the technical capacity to accompany women victims' processes, especially in cases of sexual violence and forced disappearance.
- v. Constant monitoring of the context is necessary as a strategy to protect teams and participants. This action will provide an updated continuous reading of the territory's socio-political dynamics that will allow the intervention to adapt to emerging needs or situations.
- vi. Although the promotion of productive projects was relevant within the intervention framework, it is essential to bear in mind that this type of process, involving the management of economic resources, must be collectively agreed upon to avoid breaking the project's trust.

### **Recommendations.**

The recommendations in this document are of two types. On the one hand, the recommendations are made with a view of the Territorial Model's replicability in the post-agreement context and taking into account the respective political and social challenges that this scenario poses. On the other hand, there are recommendations for implementing the project as a first step to start the designed model.

#### *Territorial Model Recommendations*

- i. Act proactively and preventively in the face of threats from armed actors and new victimization in the region, such as dissidents, extortion, or young people's recruitment.
- ii. Promoting reconciliation actions implies recognizing the legitimacy of the Final Agreement and its components.
- iii. It is necessary to articulate and advocate with regional and local authorities to view the sustainability and territorial institutionalization of peace.
- iv. It is appropriate to promote pedagogy on the Peace Agreement not to be perceived as an "impunity agreement," highlighting its dynamic nature and the differentiated functions of each mechanism to recognize the conflict and its victims.

#### *Implementation recommendations*

- i. To design and implement gender awareness strategies with public administrations. The construction of protective environments centered on gender justice and access to and enjoyment of DESCAs requires a component to favor the collapse of androcentric and adult-centric imaginaries and attitudes that make young and adult women invisible as political subjects.
- ii. Incorporation of processes of deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity with men working in the implementation. Working on gender and masculinities with men implementing this type of intervention contributes to gender equity by promoting

processes of reflection, sensitization, and training to achieve behavioral changes at both the personal and collective levels.

- iii. Design and implementation of productive projects component as part of the strategy for women's empowerment, given the importance of women's economic independence in developing their own personal, political and social empowerment.
- iv. To guarantee the teams' care from the very design of the intervention through accompaniment and self-care strategies for the implementing team and the partner community-based organizations' members to avoid burnout or professional exhaustion.
- v. To strength the use and adaptation to ICTs. To the extent contemplated to continue with the program or for the planning of future interventions. Also, taking into account the eventual extension of the health emergency due to the pandemic, specific strategies should be taken into account for the implementation of telematic activities that include a budget for the acquisition of data packages and telephone recharges for women, basic training in ICT management, as well as a diagnosis of their knowledge and technological tools.
- vi. To implement a documentation repository derived from the implementation of the project. Its relevance lies in the fact that the knowledge and experiences of the organizations and entities participating in the design and implementation of the model for the first time constitute a significant source of learning and accumulated experiences that are very useful for its replicability.