


PROJECT SUMMARY

Prevention and Attention to Pathways to Violence against Girls with Disabilities for the State of Yucatan, in Mexico


IMPLEMENTED BY

CIENCIA SOCIAL ALTERNATIVA A.C.





About this brief: This paper presents the summary of a project implemented by the civil society organization (CSO) Ciencia Social Alternativa A.C. (CSAAC) for three years, from 2018 to 2021, through a small grant provided by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). This summary was co-created and co-authored by CSAAC with the support from an independent, external consultant. It summarizes the results of, and lessons learned from the project, with the aim of contributing knowledge to the evidence base on ending violence against women and girls (VAWG), for use by other practitioners and partners. It also serves as a useful tool to inform the next stage of the project and to raise awareness for the continued investment in this CSO, and its efforts to prevent and respond to violence against refugee and migrant women and girls, and support gender equality in Mexico.



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND PROJECT

CSAAC

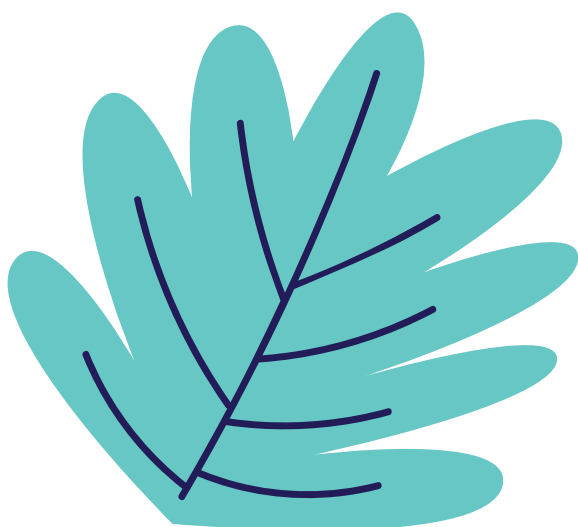


CSAAC is a civil society organisation (CSO) based in Yucatan, Mexico, that since 2004 has participated in the construction of an inclusive society by promoting community development, with a focus on equity, justice and respect for human rights.

Its **vision** is to build an inclusive society in which everyone has access to education, justice, a decent job, a healthy environment, self-determination and autonomy, respecting cultural and sexual diversity.

Its **mission** is to work to ensure the respect of human rights by building spaces for reflection, facilitating processes for providing support, promoting the respect of human rights in the community and conducting public policy advocacy.

CSAAC developed a **strategy** to carry out extensive work in favour of women and girls in the state of Yucatan, mainly through training aimed at awareness-raising, reflection and the empowerment of women, and communication with local and state governments regarding public policies, from human rights and gender perspectives. It has also been an implementing partner of the United Nations Development Programme, and an executing organization for various donors, in projects working to strengthen and institutionalize the gender perspective in state and municipal public policies in the Yucatan Peninsula. It belongs to networks of organizations that work to promote the rights of children and adolescents and participates in the national network of civil human rights organizations, Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos (All Rights for All).



Project Title: Prevention and response routes to violence against girls with disabilities for the state of Yucatan, Mexico



FORMS OF VIOLENCE ADDRESSED

Violence against girls with disabilities in the:

- education;
- healthcare;
- family;
- gender; and
- domestic contexts



IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The Department of Education of Yucatan, the Secretariat of Health of Yucatan, the Secretariat for Women, the Secretariat of Public Security of Yucatan, the State Attorney General's Office, the judiciary of Yucatan, the Institute for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of Yucatan, the State Instance for the Integral Development of the Family, the Integral System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents of Yucatan, the State Committee for Attention to Victims, the Ministry of Social Development, the Office of the Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents of Yucatan, and municipal governments (of Merida, Motul, Ticul, Tizimin and Valladolid)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project, implemented by CSAAC with the support of a small grant from the UN Trust Fund, addressed violence against girls with disabilities in the state of Yucatan, Mexico.

The project involved key stakeholders from the state government and civil society, school-age girls with disabilities and their families, and municipal and state authorities in relevant sectors, such as in the education, healthcare, and justice sectors.

The project aimed to make positive changes to the lives of girls with disabilities by developing an intervention model for the prevention of and multisectoral responses to violence in the family and community. The project empowered girls with disabilities and enabled a change in attitudes and behaviours among service and care providers to reduce the risk of the girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination.



PROJECT BUDGET

UN Trust Fund's contribution:

\$150,000

+

CSAAC's contribution:

\$30,850

=

Total:

\$180,850



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:

1 Sept 2018–31 Aug 2021

no-cost extended until

30 Nov 2021

to participate in organizational learning activities and document project lessons



PROJECT LOCATIONS, BENEFICIARIES AND AGENTS OF CHANGE



The project was implemented in the state of Yucatan, Mexico, in the municipalities of **Merida, Motul, Ticul, Tizimín and Valladolid.**

Primary project beneficiaries/ agents of change:	
PLANNED	ACTUAL
270 girls with disabilities between 6 and 12 years of age attending primary school	131 girls with disabilities between 6 and 12 years of age attending primary school*

*(Pandemic restrictions greatly affected school attendance, prompting a shift towards more outreach strategies involving primary beneficiaries)

Secondary project beneficiaries/ agents of change:	
PLANNED	ACTUAL
300 people: 100 special education professionals who work directly with girls with disabilities 80 municipal health professionals and state and municipal government officials 100 parents, justice officials and police officers 20 CSO members	633 people: 180 special education professionals 33 health professionals 43 parents 92 members of the judiciary or the police 30 CSO members 255 civil servants from other institutions

Country context

In Mexico, violence against girls with disabilities is a barely visible reality that occurs in all spheres, such as in families, communities, and schools and other institutions, and is perpetrated by various parties. Access to justice for these girls is limited, as they are often victims of crimes that are rarely reported, and their families are often unaware of the legal path to follow and the agencies to which they can turn. In addition, government officials responsible for violence prevention and response are not always familiar with the rules and protocols to be followed, which further complicates the problem.¹

Indigenous girls who are living with disabilities are in a situation of great vulnerability, as they experience various overlapping forms of discrimination. Therefore, combatting this discrimination requires an intersectional programmatic approach. The age group most exposed to sexual violence is children between 6

and 12 years of age, followed by adolescents between 13 and 18 years of age.²

According to data from the 2020 national population and housing census, **65.2 per cent of those living in the state of Yucatan self-describe themselves as indigenous,** and 23.7 per cent of Yucatecans speak an indigenous language, while 17.3 per cent understand it. In addition, the state ranks third nationally in terms of the percentage of the population that speaks an indigenous language.³

Although being an indigenous language speaker is not a vulnerability in itself, historically this population group has been marginalized. For example, 7 out of every 10 (74.9 per cent) indigenous language speakers in Mexico live in poverty, almost double the figure for non-speakers (39.4 per cent). In the case of extreme poverty, the figure is six times higher: 35.6 per cent

compared with 5.6 per cent.⁴ However, according to estimates by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy, as of 2018, 46 per cent of the Yucatecan population lived in poverty.⁵

In the state of Yucatan, violence against children has not received the same attention as violence against women

Theory of change

Vision of change (project goal): the goal of the project was to ensure that at the end of the implementation period girls with disabilities between 6 and 12 years of age in the state of Yucatan were better protected against gender-based violence they were exposed to at school and in the health sector and were better informed about their rights and how to exercise them.

Characteristics of the problem addressed by this project are as follows.

- Violence against girls with disabilities is an inconspicuous reality that occurs in all settings, including in the family, the community, and schools and other institutions, and is perpetrated by diverse groups of people.
- Access to justice for girls who are subjected to violence is limited because they are often victims of crimes that are rarely reported, and their families often lack knowledge of the legal path to follow and the agencies to which they can turn to ensure that the aggressor is punished.

and has been subsumed in the instruments designed and intended for adult women. These instruments leave significant gaps when the victim is a minor and, in particular, when they also have a disability. In addition, cases of violence, especially domestic violence, are severely underreported.

- Officials responsible for preventing and addressing violence against women and girls are not always aware of the norms or protocols that must be followed, particularly when it comes to girls with disabilities.

To address these issues, the following intermediate changes are required.

- Awareness of the issue of violence against girls with disabilities should be raised through sensitization seminars.
- Access to services should be improved for girls with disabilities, through the dissemination of information about the pathways for preventing and responding to violence in the areas of health, education and justice.
- Civil servants should be trained through the creation of a manual on preventing and responding to violence against girls with disabilities in the state of Yucatan.



Description of the photo: Training seminar: "HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN YUCATAN". Held in Motul, Yucatan.

Date: January 25, 2019

Photo credit: Hadasa Yamile Dzul Uuh.

PROJECT INTERVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Inter-institutional collaboration

Effective and efficient agreements were established with the government, both at state level and at municipal level, which made it possible for the civil services to participate extensively in the project. More than 500 people contributed to the creation of the manual *“Prevention and Attention to Violence Pathways:*

Operational manual for education, healthcare and justice officials in the state of Yucatan.” (hereafter the manual), based on 15 workshops enabling the exchange of experiences among the personnel of different public administration agencies that detect, refer, address, sanction, and redress acts of violence against girls.

Technical capacity-building

In response to the proposal made by the civil servants who participated in the workshops designed to construct the manual, work was done to strengthen the technical capacities of both government personnel and CSOs in Yucatan, through five seminars.

Development of communicative resources designed in a participatory manner

An animated video entitled *‘Platicando entre niñas’* (‘Chatting among girls’) was made. It presents situations of discrimination and violence in the education, health and justice sectors so that girls with disabilities can identify them and know where to go to report any problems. The video was distributed to 137 girls with disabilities through a group of teachers and members of CSOs working on disability issues.

To disseminate the contents of the manual, CSAAC, in strategic alliance with the state government, designed and implemented a communication campaign aimed primarily at municipal and state officials. Considering this target audience, the dissemination

methods selected were banners, social networks and institutional mailings. To this end, CSAAC signed a collaboration agreement with the Directorate General of Social Communication of the Government of the State of Yucatan, which coordinates the communication strategies of all state agencies. This allowed the campaign to be spread on social networks. In addition, CSAAC signed agreements with the city councils of the municipalities of Merida, Motul, Ticul, Tizimín and Valladolid, so that the products generated for the campaign could be disseminated on the state government’s social networks. This campaign was active from May to August 2021.



“ The objective of the video was to enable girls with disabilities to identify situations in which they were subjected to violence and to teach them how to denounce such violence.

”

PROJECT ADAPTATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Due to the pandemic, CSAAC was unable to carry out many of the activities that it initially planned to carry out in person, so it had to adapt very quickly to the restrictions resulting from the epidemiological situation in the country. The organization planned, designed and developed new activities to be carried out virtually, mainly through Zoom, so that it could continue implementing the project. In particular, changes were made to facilitate the transition from face-to-face to virtual work. For example, presentations and materials were adapted for use during online meetings. The activities with teaching staff and with girls with disabilities, as well as the workshops involved in the creation of the dissemination campaign, had to be adapted to the virtual environment. Throughout the pandemic, the CSAAC team was able to continue all its work, working in a coordinated and united manner and taking measures to promote self-care through holding special sessions focusing on this.

Project results

- 90 out of 131 girls with disabilities identified gender-based violations of their rights at school and in the health sector and were able to identify useful prevention and care pathways.
- 110 out of 131 girls with disabilities identified the ways in which they were discriminated against because of their disability at school and in the health sector, in addition to recognizing the existing institutional mechanisms to address the discrimination.
- 43 members of CSOs, public officials, and education, healthcare and justice professionals participated in the seminar on ‘preventing and responding to violence against girls with disabilities in the state of Yucatan’, focusing on the issues of human rights, violence, and disability.
- More than 600,000 people were reached through the communication campaign designed and rolled out in collaboration with public agencies of the Yucatan state administration, according to reports from the Directorate General of Social Communication of the Government of the State of Yucatan.
- Five events were held to disseminate information on pathways for preventing and responding to violence against girls with disabilities in the five participating municipalities.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

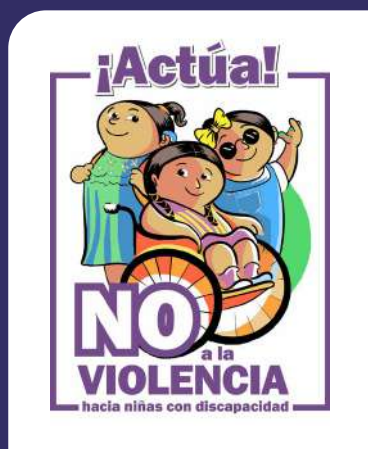


A mixed model was used to monitor the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project and its impact. A baseline was established and applied during the first two years of the project. In addition, the following instruments and methods were used: surveys; telephone interviews; *ex post* evaluations of learning and reflections on the process of designing the methods of information dissemination; pre-tests and post-tests; forms; participant and non-participant observational visits during seminars; participatory workshops; and workshops and meetings with key partners and other stakeholders.



New knowledge and products

- The first survey on violence experienced by girls with disabilities in the health, education and justice sectors was carried out.⁶ It was a pioneering tool in the state of Yucatan that generated new evidence on violence and disability.
- The manual “*Prevention and Attention to Violence Pathways: Operational manual for education, healthcare and justice officials in the state of Yucatan.*” was created. This tool has been so successful that the Executive Secretariat of the National System of Integral Protection for Children and Adolescents at federal level has proposed that this model of disseminating information on the violence prevention pathways in Yucatan should be replicated in other states, adapted to local contexts.



CASE STUDY: CHATTING AMONG GIRLS (PLATICANDO ENTRE NIÑAS)

One of the most successful and innovative results of the project was the creation of a unique methodology enabling the CSAAC team to work with girls with disabilities in the context of the restrictions implemented during the pandemic, which made it impossible to carry out the face-to-face activities originally planned. The CSAAC team had to be innovative in finding a way to reach them. As a result, the animated video ‘[Chatting among girls](#)’ was made. The video was developed using a strategy based on the use of information technology and communication tools that made it possible to share information with girls with disabilities. It was presented by teachers and caregivers as part of a pedagogical activity focused on information dissemination and reflection.

The objective of the video was to enable girls with disabilities to identify situations in which they were subjected to violence and to teach them how to denounce such violence. Initially, this was supposed to be achieved through an educational game. However, as the game was impossible to play in the context of the pandemic, the strategy had to be reimagined to produce a new methodology. Prior to the design and creation of the video, a connectivity census was carried out to determine how well teachers, caregivers, girls and their families were connected (through the media, electronic devices and online tools). The census also facilitated the process of identifying existing institutional mechanisms for preventing and responding to violence against girls with disabilities.

Thanks to the broadcasting of the video, more than 180 teachers and 131 girls with disabilities participated in this activity, much higher numbers than could have been reached by conducting the exercise in person, as initially planned. It was very well received, was easy to manage and fostered the creation of alliances with key project stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Intersectoral work between the government, civil society and the community was a key factor in ensuring the project's success. Through this collaboration, it was possible to develop activities and products in a cross-cutting and comprehensive manner. It was also possible to consider all aspects of the problems that arose to address them from an approach involving the participatory construction of strategies for finding solutions. The campaign to disseminate the manual was a clear example of this, as intersectoral collaboration was required not only for the planning of the document's dissemination but also for the systematization of its scope.
- A lack of awareness and information on disability among civil servants and a lack of inter-institutional coordination between the agencies that prevent and deal with violence were shortcomings recognized by the civil servants themselves. This represented a major step forward in addressing violence against girls with disabilities in a relevant way and addressing the issues identified by the project. It is necessary to raise awareness, provide information and ensure effective coordination between agencies to effectively detect, channel, address, punish and redress acts of violence against girls.
- The importance of the active participation of key stakeholders such as civil servants, members of CSOs and girls with disabilities in the planning, execution and evaluation of the project processes facilitated the development of actions that corresponded to the particularities of these groups. For example, in the process of designing and piloting the video 'Chatting among girls', teachers, family members and girls living with disabilities participated and validated the final product collaboratively. The state government participated in five seminars and 15 workshops, as well as in piloting the manual on pathways for preventing and responding to violence. In addition, the heads of various government agencies⁷ validated the contents of the manual.



Photo description: Inauguration of the training seminar: "HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN YUCATAN". Held in Mérida, Yucatán.

Date: January 30, 2019

Photo credit: Ayuntamiento de Mérida, social communication office (photo that was published in the local newspaper).

WHAT'S NEXT?

The results of the project have great potential to be replicated in other municipalities in Yucatan and in other Mexican states.⁸ This is particularly true for the application of the manual, which doesn't exist at national level. To aid in this replication, the Kellogg Foundation has awarded funds to the project 'Strengthening institutional and community capacities for comprehensive attention to violence and discrimination against indigenous children and adolescents in 13 municipalities of Yucatan 2022–2023', which will provide continuity to the actions carried out as part of the UN Trust Fund project.

The new project aims to increase the number of situations dealt with by relevant institutions in the municipalities; to carry out initial and final evaluations that reveal changes in the processes of detecting, referring and responding to violence against indigenous children and adolescents living with disabilities; to design a campaign that is built in a participatory manner by and for the beneficiaries and that recognizes the phenomena of violence and discrimination from their perspective; and to disseminate relevant information. All these actions will be implemented with a view to being replicated in other municipalities or states in the country.



FURTHER INFORMATION

This brief was co-created by **Donatella Montaldo**, an independent external consultant, and **María Teresa Miyar Bolio, Inti Torres, Yamile Dzul** and **Nancy Walker** from CSAAC.

For more information about CSAAC <http://www.kookay.org/>

Recommended citation: Montaldo, D., Miyar M. T., Torres, I., Dzul, Y. and Walker, N. (2022), *Project Summary: Prevention and Response Routes to Violence against Girls with Disabilities for the State of Yucatan, Mexico – Promoted by Ciencia Social Alternativa A.C.* (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women).

About the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, managed by UN Women on behalf of the United Nations system, is the only global grant-making mechanism dedicated to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. Since its establishment in 1996 by United Nations General Assembly [Resolution 50/166](#), the UN Trust Fund has awarded \$198 million to 609 initiatives in 140 countries and territories. For more information, visit the [UN Trust Fund website](#) and [Learning Hub](#). To give feedback on this product, please contact the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women at untf-evaw@unwomen.org.

About the UN Trust Fund small grants modality

Small grants are currently provided to organizations managing annual operational budgets below \$200,000 and eligible for a UN Trust Fund grant of up to \$150,000. This modality was introduced in 2014 to build the capacity of small organizations, with a specific focus on small women's organizations. The proportion of the UN Trust Fund portfolio allocated through small grants at the time of publication was 34 per cent. Small grants include a higher proportion of flexible funding (for core costs) and a dedicated budget for self-care, which sets the modality apart from the general grant allocation. The [UN Trust Fund's Strategic Plan 2021–2025](#) makes a commitment to focusing grant selection on women's rights organizations, women- and girl-led organizations, and organizations with local and community reach. The small grants modality is a key mechanism to achieve this. Organizations receiving small grants are eligible for support in producing a final, external evaluation and/or (from 2021) support to co-create and produce a knowledge product summarizing the results and lessons of the project. The methodology for co-creation includes focus group discussions and interviews with the organizations involved, desk reviews of project documents, baseline and end-line surveys and monitoring reports, and co-drafting and co-editing the brief.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ciencia Social Alternativa A.C. (2019), "Survey on violence experienced by girls with disabilities in health care, education and by gender."
- 2 Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (2017), *Protocolo para la Prevención del Abuso Sexual a Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes*. Available at: https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/306450/Protocolo_Prevenci_n_Abuso_Sexual_2017.pdf.
- 3 National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) (2020), *National Population and Housing Census 2020*. Available at: https://inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/ccpv/2020/doc/Censo2020_Resultados_complementarios_ejecutiva_EUM.pdf.
- 4 Consejo Nacional de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL) (2020), *Estadísticas de pobreza en Yucatán*. Available at: <https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Yucatan/Paginas/principal.aspx>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 The survey was created to obtain a general overview of the state of the response to and prevention of violence against girls with disabilities in the municipalities targeted by the project. It contains 71 items and sections with specific questions for parents of children with disabilities, teachers and staff of CSOs. It was designed by a multidisciplinary project team to provide relevant baseline information to evaluate some of the indicators in the project.
- 7 The State Committee for Attention to Victims, the State Instance for the Integral Development of the Family, the Office of the Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents of Yucatan, the Integral System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, Directorate For Child And Family Care, the State Attorney General's Office (Women's Justice Center), the Institute for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Municipal Institute for Women in Merida, the Secretariat for Women, the Department of Education of Yucatan, the Secretariat of Health of Yucatan and the Secretariat of Public Security of Yucatan.
- 8 For more information, see Ministry of the Interior (2021), "Sipinna proposes that the model developed in Yucatan could be replicated by other states". Available at <https://www.gob.mx/segob/prensa/comparten-autoridades-y-sociedad-civil-rutas-de-prevencion-y-atencion-a-violencia-contra-ninas-con-discapacidad?idiom=es>.

