

▶ Fighting Violence against Women in Latin America



Rondas Campesinas facing violence against women

▶ Counterpart

The Ronda Campesina from the rural community of Chililique Alto, located in the district of Chulucanas, the province of Morropón and the region of Piura, Peru and their male and female members are the direct counterpart of the project.

The Rondas Campesinas are autonomous, democratically structured, community organizations whose main function is to facilitate the dialogue between “Comunidades Campesinas y Nativas” – the indigenous and native communities - and the Peruvian state. Being recognized under constitutional law, they assist in conflict resolution, exert extrajudicial conciliation tasks and maintain peace and security within the communities.

The Rondas Campesinas are active at the communal, district, provincial, regional and national level. At the regional level they collaborate with judicial authorities, the public ministry and the regional governments, whereas at a local level they work together with several community authorities such as district and provincial mayors, governors, lieutenant governors, teachers and representatives of health centers.

▶ Cooperation

Violence against women in the Chililique Alto community had become such a burden to the community that intervention was urgently needed. The provincial prosecutor, the local Ronda Campesina and the Centro de Emergencia Mujer – CEM (Woman Emergency Center) of Chulucanas took the initiative and approached ComVoMujer to start a violence prevention program. ComVoMujer considered this an invaluable chance to cooperate directly with

such an important rural organization. The cooperation is based on the common goal to develop effective capacity building trainings with the aim to prevent violence against women in rural areas.

When the community held its first event to raise awareness about gender-based violence, the public response was unexpectedly strong. 200 people attended, and the next event attracted 700. The subsequent “Training of community leaders” program, which consisted of three monthly meetings, was especially designed for the community leaders of the “Rondas Campesinas” in Chililique Alto. They shared personal experiences and discussed topics such as

- machismo,
- the different types of violence,
- the importance of leader personalities,
- democracy and participation within and outside the household,
- women's autonomy,
- alternative educational models and
- the importance of the “Rondas Campesinas” in the context of preventing gender-based violence.





► Lessons Learned and Impact

The training of community leaders program showed excellent results thanks to the coordinated efforts of a number of actors including women and men from Chililique Alto, representatives of the Rondas Campesinas, representatives of the municipality, the district Chulucanas, and the province Morropón, representatives of the women emergency center (CEM) of Chulucanas, and civic actors from the region of Piura and the Regional program ComVoMujer. But truly critical to the success was the strong role played by the prosecutor in Chulucanas. She convinced authorities of common law and regulatory law to join their efforts to fight gender-based violence.

From the beginning of the process, the citizens of Chilique Alto were eager to participate. Their desire to participate, coupled with an open attitude for dialogue, were key factors in the successful implementation of educative measures. Moreover, the measures were designed so that all could participate, regardless of gender or educational level.

The program managed to establish its message firmly in the minds of those involved – which is an important contribution to the prevention of violence against women in rural areas. The mere

process of listening has brought about change, both in personal and family environments as well as in the community. Additionally, the program also reinforced the leadership skills of the participants, many of whom now hold important local positions.

Another indicator of the success of the program in changing awareness and growing commitment to fight gender based violence is the fact that on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the community of Chililique Alto independently organized a protest march with an enormous number of participants.

At the instigation of the Women's Emergency Center of Chulucanas (CEM) the Supreme Administrative authority of the province even joined the initiative. It included the topic of violence against women in its round table agenda on women's affairs and organized a mass protest march on November 25.

Finally, the Ronda Campesina concluded the training with a firm intention to continue violence prevention activities and to support women who are victims. One of the strategies to reach this goal is to focus more on problems rooted in violence and to replicate the program in other Rondas Campesinas in the region.



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