



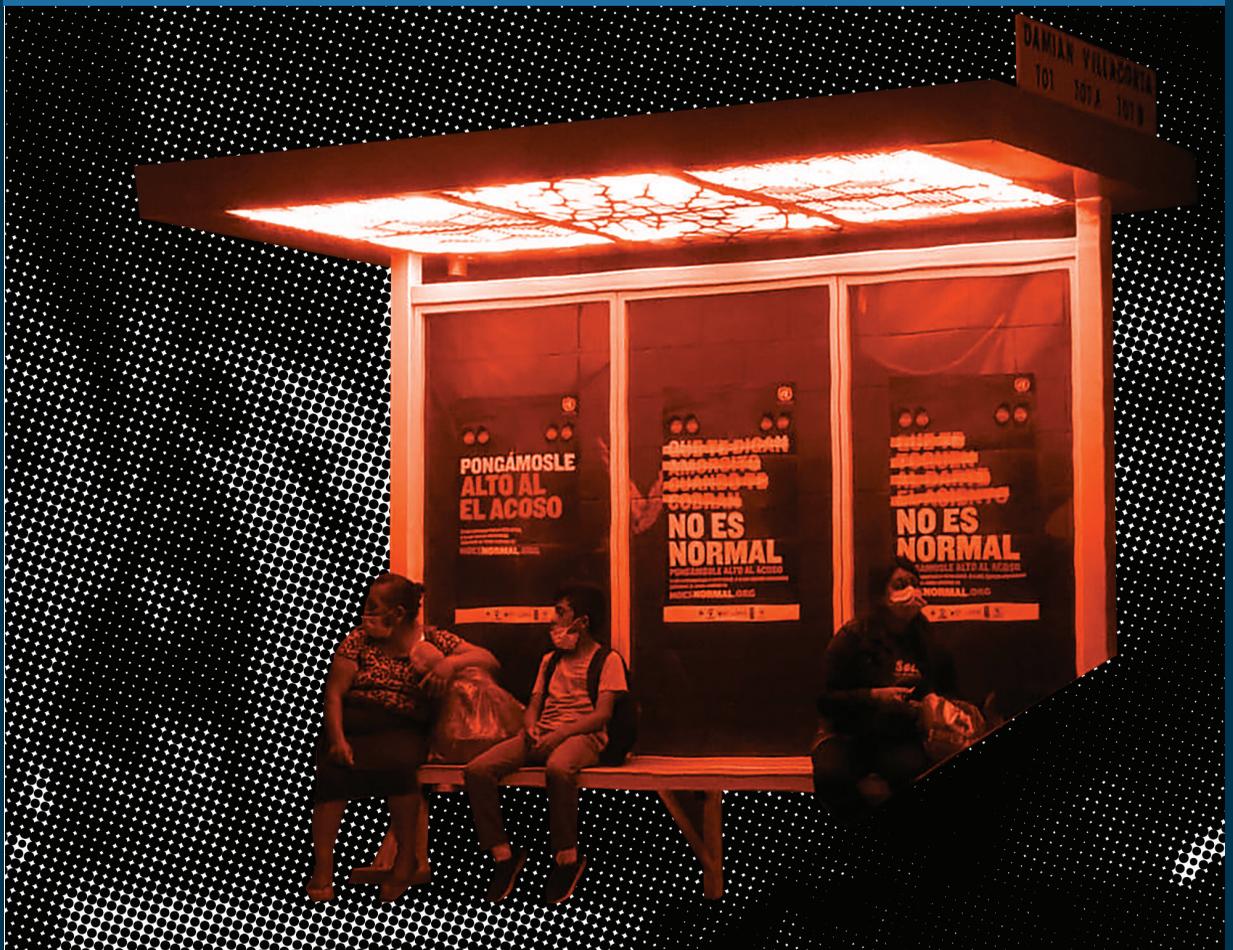
United Nations
Peacebuilding

NEWSLETTER

Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation

El Salvador

Newsletter No. 3





This multi-actor initiative seeks to prevent violence for public transportation users

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The project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation” is jointly implemented by UNDP and UN Women in El Salvador, financed by the United Nations Peace Building Fund.



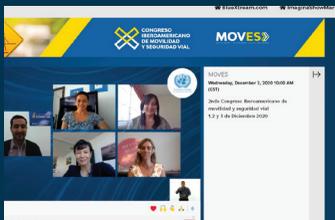
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First inclusive and safe bus stop designed by and for women

The first safe and inclusive bus stop is now available to women users of public transportation in the municipality of Santa Tecla. This effort is part of the initiatives carried out within the framework of the “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation” project.

This project is implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Women, in association with the Municipal Council of Santa Tecla, the Vice Ministry of Transportation (VMT); *Iniciativa por un Transporte Público Seguro*, ITPS (Initiative for Safe Public Transportation); *Asociación de Mujeres Teclenas*, AMT (Association of Women from Santa Tecla); and *Asociación de Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida, Las Dignas* (Association of Women for Dignity and Life).

This alliance has been consolidated as a first effort that brings together different sectors with the purpose of contributing to the eradication of violence against women.

DAMIAN VILLACORTA
101 101 A 101 B



First inclusive bus stop in Santa Tecla



In general, 69.9% of men and women users said that they felt unsafe in public transportation, with the places with the highest perception of insecurity being buses and minibuses (71.6%) and bus stops (71.3%).

Source: DIGESTYC, 2018

"This bus stop marks a before and after, because it is a model that will allow public transportation women users to feel safer and have access to transportation services that are suitable for them, and, moreover, because it is the first bus stop designed with the involvement of women," emphasized Georgiana Braga-Orillard, the Representative of the UNDP.

More than 80 women who use of public transportation in the municipalities of Santa Tecla and San Salvador were consulted for the creation of the bus stop. These women participated in focus groups expressing their needs and expectations and analyzing every detail of the design.

The new space has electric lighting, a map of the bus routes that provide service in the area, and podotactile pavement for people with visual disabilities, which will enable better movement.

The space provides comfort and greater safety, serving as a safe transportation spot to avoid harassment and other

expressions of violence against girls, youth, and women.

Another contribution of the initiative "Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation" has been the development of a guide on the minimum standards for the establishment of a safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive bus stop. This guide is expected to be adopted as a public policy to benefit Salvadoran women. The model will continue to be replicated in Santa Tecla and San Salvador.

In El Salvador, 54% of women have been victims of acts of violence in public transportation, with 72.4% of the victims of these acts being girls, teenagers and young adult women.

In general, 69.9% of men and women users said that they felt unsafe in public transportation, with the places with the highest perception of insecurity being buses and minibuses (71.6%) and bus stops (71.3%), according to data from the "Survey on Violence Against Women in Public Transportation."



Students participate in a virtual course on human rights and media coverage on violence against women

Within the framework of the project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation”, UN Women El Salvador organized the virtual course “Human Rights of Women and Media Coverage of Violence Against Women,” in which 158 students from the journalism, communications and graphic design careers participated.

The course was held from September 28 to November 24, 2020 and lasted 50 hours. The course included readings and videos, discussion in forums, analysis tasks, among other activities.

The main objective of this course was to enrich and deepen the reference framework



Videos of the instructors

of the participants on the human rights of women so they could understand and identify gender violence in everyday life and the role of the media in these situations, and, in this way, place the problem on the national agenda in order to generate the necessary changes.

Democratic journalism, based on respect for the rights and dignity of all people and without discrimination, is key to the development of countries and societies.

In this sense, students were trained in promoting a culture of peace, women's human rights, and media coverage of violence against women in data visualization. In addition, the course included discussions to guide participants in the preparation of proposals to transform public transportation into a safe space for women.

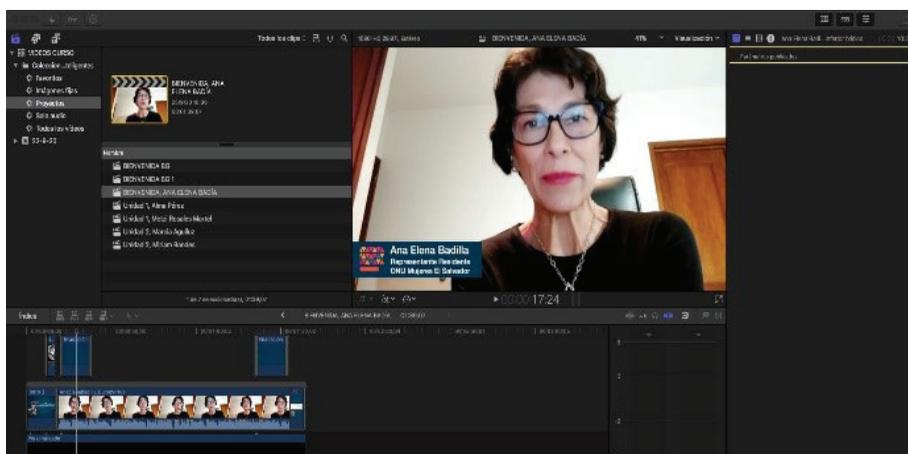
The course was divided into seven parts: an introductory one as a guide, five content units, and a final part to receive feedback from students, who also obtained a certificate of completion.

Compulsorily, the participants had to engage with the content of each of the units, participate in the discussion forums, and answer the assessments in order to continue onto the next session, which allowed for the whole course to be carried out in an orderly manner studying all the available material.

To monitor the learning of participants, the course included different activities such as questionnaires, forums, analysis of journalistic texts, infographics, and creation of advertising campaigns. The goal was for learning to be dynamic and not assessed through a traditional exam.

In addition, during the course, students were presented with real and tangible challenges faced by those who practice gender journalism in the digital information industry.

Regarding the promotion of the importance of the topic throughout the development of the course, each unit was built on strong foundations and had the participation of key people who



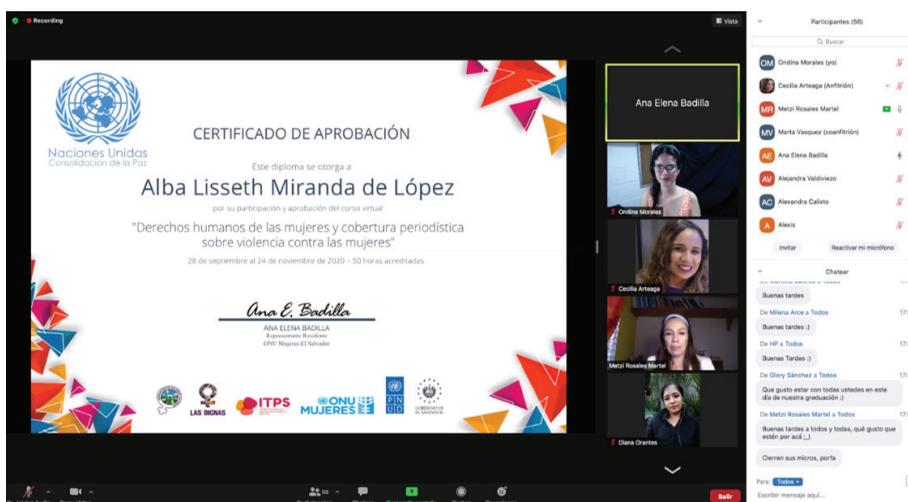
Videos of the instructors

motivated the students to be interested in the different topics to be discussed.

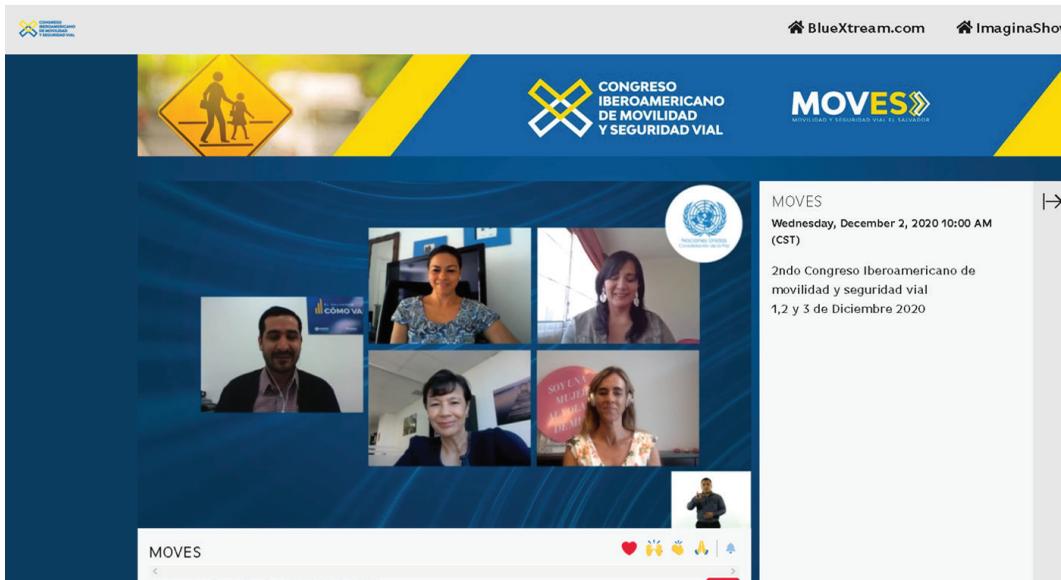
The people who completed the course not only enriched their reference framework on the human rights of women at a conceptual level, but also, through the training acquired, they now have an improved ability to identify gender violence in daily life cases and

they now know how to act when facing a situation as such, becoming key actors in the advocacy and public opinion.

More than just accumulating knowledge, the intention was for the students to have the necessary tools to protect the human rights of women and to be able to apply them in their personal and professional lives.



Graduation virtual ceremony.



Movete Segur@ (Move Around Safely): Third Ibero-American Road Safety Forum

For the third consecutive year, the “*Movete segur@* (Move Around Safely) Ibero-American Road Safety Forum” was held in December 2020, and in its three days of duration, the forum included a space for reflection and analysis on the need to promote solutions for inclusive transportation and road safety from the perspective of equity and gender.

The various panels were made up of experts from Colombia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Spain, Chile, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and El Salvador, who presented successful experiences in Latin America, as well as challenges for a transportation system that responds to the needs of women and ensures protection of their rights.

One of these successful experiences was the “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation” project in El Salvador, which is implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Women, with funding from the United Nations



Presentation of the project in the forum

Fund for Peacebuilding in alliance with civil society organizations. The project is a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to eliminate harassment and all types of violence against women in the transportation system.

Other shared experiences were: Building effective leadership for transportation and road safety; Sustainable and resilient post-pandemic recovery for transportation and road safety; Move safely; Solutions for inclusive transportation and road safety from the perspective of gender and equity; Electric mobility in El Salvador; Contributing to sustainability, among others.

Attendees to this forum included departmental Road Safety Commissions, as well as the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (MOPT), the Vice Ministry of Transportation (VMT), the Fund for Attention to Victims of Traffic Accidents (FONAT), Transit Division of the National Civil Police, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), member organizations of the Iniciativa por un Transporte Público Seguro ITPS

(Initiative for Safe Public Transportation), insurance agencies, and other private sector companies in Latin America.

The 2030 Agenda and, specifically the Sustainable Development Goal number 11, calls for transportation systems to be safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable. In addition, it is necessary to improve road safety, expand access to public transportation, and pay special attention to people under vulnerable life conditions.

The United Nations in El Salvador identifies three main challenges that exist for safe and inclusive transportation: (1) education that allows the entire society to become more aware of a culture of peace in the public transportation system; (2) inclusiveness in order to have the necessary structures and information to serve all citizens, including people with disabilities, and (3) strengthening of public institutions so that they can perform their functions well.

The “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation” project addresses these three axes to transform transportation



Opening remarks on the Road Safety Forum

services for women into a daily experience free of harassment and all kinds of violence.

This initiative starts from the premise that road safety goes beyond just improving laws and preventing deaths, since it also includes safe transportation for women.

In this sense, the project seeks to generate awareness of the breaches and difficulties that women face in their daily transportation experiences.

In El Salvador, 90.1% of the population uses public transportation. 69.9% of users expressed that they feel unsafe within the bus units, with the places with the highest perception of insecurity being buses and minibuses (71.6%) and bus stops (71.3%). Most of the population's use of public transportation is out of necessity, not preference.

That is why, among the actions undertaken by the project, work has

been done to raise awareness among users, to train transportation services' employees with a gender perspective, and to adapt spaces such as bus stops in order to make them more inclusive, not only for women, but also for people with disabilities.



In El Salvador, 90.1% of the population uses public transportation.

69.9% of users expressed that they feel unsafe within the bus units

Source: DIGESTYC, 2018



COSIFICADA (OBJECTIFIED): **short documentary that** **exposes sexual harassment** **against women in public** **transportation**

A common and daily activity such as getting around in public transportation becomes a real threat for many women in El Salvador. The sexual harassment to which they are exposed transforms their every-day journey into an unpleasant, dangerous, and even traumatic experience.

This reality experienced by women, youth, and girls, victims of violence, is presented in the documentary “Cosificada (Objectified)”, a short film that describes, in less than three minutes, the situations lived by women users of public transportation services.

Cosificada (Objectified) joins the awareness-raising activities led by Iniciativa por un Transporte Público Seguro ITPS (Initiative for Safe Public Transportation), framed within



COSIFICADA

DIRIGIDO POR VANESA TOMASINO

"EL ACOSO NO ES NORMAL"

WWW.NOESNORMAL.ORG



In alliance with BUS TV, the short film was shown during the month of february, reaching up to 1.3 million people.

the project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation,” managed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Women El Salvador with funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

In the documentary, Vanesa Tomasino, who is the producer, writer, and filmmaker, shares with the viewers a trip in which she shows, in a concise way, what a woman has to go through when getting on the same public transportation unit on which the man, who eventually becomes her stalker, is traveling.

The lascivious looks that she receives from all the men who are traveling in the public transportation unit is only the beginning of the overwhelming journey she has to undertake. Waiting in one of the seats is her attacker, who has not gotten enough from inappropriately looking at her, but rather completes his lascivious behavior with unwelcomed touches, all while the rest of the passengers remain unbothered.

“The short film deals with the experience of women who use public transportation (as their only accessible means of travel) and showcases the sexual harassment experienced by young girls and women traveling on it. The experience is so distressing; there are many women who do not want to get on a bus and with good reason because they know what is going to happen to them”

Vanessa Tomasino

According to the author’s definition, sexual objectification consists of reducing the value of a woman to her external body or to certain parts of it, which is considered a form of sexist discrimination because women are then treated differently, minimizing the importance of their internal attributes.

According to studies, one in two women has been a victim of violence in public transportation in El Salvador, the majority being teenagers and young adults (72.4%).



COSIFICADA being shown in buses through the country

Likewise, a focal study carried out within the framework of the project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation,” revealed that the main emotions experienced by the women users when traveling on the public transportation units are fear, trauma, anger, helplessness, discomfort, sadness, and distress.

Among the things that bothered women users of public transportation the most, the participants highlighted “verbal harassment with profanity, touching without consent, malicious closeness, being left alone with the driver and the collector, and having to report issues to other men.”

“They cannot ask for help. Many people think that they do not have the power to ask for help or to help someone else, and, sometimes, we are complicit in the aggression because we think that a compliment is good, that sexual attention is good for the person who receives it, when, in reality, that is attention to women do not want to have,” said Tomasino.

The purpose of the short film is to denounce this type of actions and eliminate the label of “normality” that a large part of the public opinion has placed on sexual harassment and violence that women face when traveling on public transportation.

“We do not have to normalize or accept it; the time to change it is now. We must say ‘no more,’ harassment is not normal. We demand our rights and, even more important, we demand the rights of the most vulnerable populations in our country,” said the producer.

In its opening week, the short film reached more than 10,000 views and was broadcasted by different media. Correspondingly, the material will be broadcasted in different bus routes around the country through BusTV, once an hour every day (1,300 times a day), reaching an audience of more than 25 thousand people daily.

In the coming months, Usulután bus routes will be added, reaching more than 8,000 users of public transportation services.

Vanesa Tomasino has a Bachelor’s Degree in Acting for Film and Television, a Master’s Degree in Political Science, and is a doctoral candidate. In addition, throughout her professional career she has worked as a radio presenter, political scientist, voice actress, and film teacher.

See the short:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IS2O7bT6KO>



Civil Society proposes legal reforms with a gender perspective to public transportation regulations

On January 18, as part of the *Iniciativa por un Transporte Público Seguro* (ITPS) (Initiative for Safe Public Transportation), the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES), with the support of the United Nations Fund for the Consolidation of Peace, presented to the Legislative Assembly a preliminary draft of reforms to the current regulations of public transportation in the country, seeking to guarantee safe and violence-free transportation services.

The proposal argues that about 90% of citizens in El Salvador travel on public transportation, and it is estimated that seven out of 20 women consider that buses, minibuses, and bus stops are unsafe, with sexual violence and harassment being some of the most common problems.

The ITPS proposes to amend the Law of Land Transportation, Traffic and Road Safety, as well as its regulations, in order to incorporate norms that favor the safety of women



Presentation of the legal reforms proposed to the municipality of Santa Tecla

and to prohibit and punish the display of images and reproduction of music and videos that are considered violence against women.

They also suggest approving and implementing a model Municipal Ordinance for the construction of modern, clear, and safe bus stops to prevent robbery, theft, and acts of harassment against women.

A parallel proposal

Correspondingly, within the framework of the project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation,” civil organizations such as the *Asociación de Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida, Las Dignas* (Association of Women for Dignity and Life) and the *Asociación de Mujeres Teclenas, AMT* (Association of Women from Santa Tecla) prepare a reform proposal to the same regulations in order to have the legal tools that allow users to report sexual harassment instances that occur within public transportation.

This initiative seeks to promote a transformation of the hostile environment faced by women users of all ages and to achieve more legal

provisions to protect them in all aspects of their lives.

Unlike the FUSADES proposal, the focus of this preliminary draft is more fixated on the evidentiary issue of the crime of sexual harassment, with the purpose of diluting the deficiencies that transport regulations currently present regarding having a gender-approach and the way to prove the crime.

According to research carried out by Las Dignas, to date, there is no law or article in the public transportation regulations intended to prevent sexual harassment or conduct that violates the sexual and reproductive freedom of women; therefore, it is imperative to modify these regulations to give them a proper gender perspective.

The proposal includes reforms to the Law of Land Transportation, Traffic and Road Safety; to the General Regulation of Traffic and Road Safety; to the Organic Law of the National Civil Police; and to the Ordinance of Citizen Coexistence and Administrative Contraventions of the Municipality of Santa Tecla. In the case of the latter, the reforms have already been presented, approved, and published in the Official Journal.



Regarding the Law of Land Transport, Traffic and Road Safety and its General Traffic and Road Safety regulations, serious deficiencies were found related to the protection of women's sexual rights and freedoms in public transportation; therefore, the proposal has focused some efforts to incorporate into this law a section with articles and provisions to provide the legal security that women have needed for so long.

Likewise, regarding the Organic Law of the National Civil Police, civil society seeks to obtain support from the Traffic Division of this institution in the eradication of sexual harassment in collective public transportation, expanding the functions and obligations of police agents in the head-on combat against this crime on public roads and, especially, in public transportation units.

According to the results obtained in the workshops carried out with public transportation women users, within the framework of the project "Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation," nine out of ten participants were unaware of the legislation that protects them, that is, the Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence Against Women (LEIV); the Law on Equality, Equity and the Eradication of Discrimination against Women (LIE); the Family Code; and

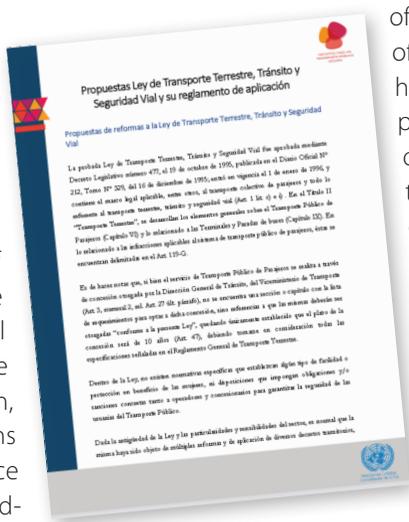
other regulations. Although some had heard them mentioned, they did not know their content.

Similarly, five out of ten women related the crime of harassment to some physical sexual assault, ruling out lascivious comments, profanity, and suggestive non-verbal expressions.

For Emma Julia Fabián, president of the AMT, an instance of civil society that has joined this reform proposal, these results demonstrate the need to continue promoting campaigns to increase awareness, education, and support so that women can have greater knowledge of the legislation that protects them and the processes that must be followed to enforce them.

She assured that once the proposal is received, the next step will be to undertake dialogue activities and seek consensus in the corresponding instances in order to obtain the approval of said reforms.

"It will be important to lobby with the parliamentary groups to ensure that the initiative enters the Legislative Assembly so that there is consensus and political will to approve them. In addition, there must be a process of dissemination and awareness of the laws," she said.





Asociación de Mujeres Tecleñas, AMT (Association of Women from Santa Tecla), promoters of activities to stop gender violence in the streets

The project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation,” implemented in San Salvador and Santa Tecla, has been able to identify in a clearer manner sexual harassment in the streets as a form of violence against girls, young and adult women in general. This practice had become normalized as certain expressions and actions were considered harmless even though they encompassed disrespectful or degrading messages against women.

This is the perception of the president of the Association of Women from Santa Tecla (AMT), Emma Julia Fabián, who confirms that the implementation of this project, managed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Women with funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, has allowed many women to become aware of these attacks, report them, and demand laws to guarantee their safety.

“Generally, other types of violence are heavily discussed, but the issue of gender violence in the streets is hardly brought up; this has helped incline women to gain awareness, to



AMT activities

report, and to also ask for a continuity in the process to keep moving forward with the eradication [of this issue],” she said.

The AMT is an autonomous organization working for the empowerment of women so that they can fully exercise their human rights through political, economic, and civic organization, promoting strategic alliances at the local and national level.

Jointly with other civil society organizations, the AMT has taken an active part in the implementation of the project “Women Free of Violence in Public Transportation,” through the promotion of training, awareness-raising activities, and coordinated work with local governments.

For Fabián, involvement in this initiative has brought important benefits for the AMT, such as better showcasing the work carried out for women and gaining support from international cooperation to give much-needed relevance to the subject of eradication of violence against women in all its manifestations.

“This project has given us more recognition. Previously, we were developing projects in other municipalities, but this has positioned us more in Santa Tecla (...), our staff is also learning to implement initiatives like this,

and, most importantly, we have managed to bring to the discussion table the issue of harassment in the streets, something that was not done before,” she said.

Likewise, she assured that, as a result of the backing and support from UNDP and UN Women El Salvador, a greater impact has been achieved in the media, as well as closer ties with the private sector, which involves key actors in the work carried out to ensure a life free of violence for women.

In El Salvador, more than half of the women users of public transportation have been victims of violence aboard, and many of them have not been able to identify such attacks.

According to the results of a series of workshops promoted within the framework of this project, five out of ten women did not know what harassment was or reduced it to physical sexual harassment, not including as such unwanted compliments, verbal expressions, or suggestive proposals.

The representative of the AMT emphasizes the need to continue undertaking awareness-raising campaigns, so that the women population knows how to identify any type of aggression, while feeling supported to report these issues.



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