

▶ Fighting Violence against Women in Latin America



Stop the stream of violence against women!

▶ Counterpart

La Federación Departamental de Cooperativas de Agua y Alcantarillado de Santa Cruz (FEDECAAS; The Departmental Federation of Cooperatives of Water and Sanitation Services of Santa Cruz) serves as an umbrella organization for the cooperatives that provide water and sanitation services in Santa Cruz and represents the interests of these cooperatives.

These cooperatives provide a basic service and have the potential to reach a large part of the population and to have a particular impact on women: women make up the majority of service providers and customer service representatives of these cooperatives; for this reason they are the corporate image that customers most often see. These women can be an important point of information and prevention against all types of violence against women, particularly because the majority of their clients who come to pay the water bills are women.

▶ Cooperation

Knowing about the success of the Peruvian campaign, "Stop the flow of violence against women," FEDECAAS recognized the large potential to replicate the program in Bolivia and thus decided to adapt it to local conditions.

During the campaign FEDECAAS counted on the support of the GIZ programs PROAPAC and ComVoMujer, programs that shared the desire to sensitize the cooperatives and their customers on the topic of gender-based violence. The effort aimed to make the employees of their companies into caretakers to report the cases of violence against women that occur in their surroundings.

The first steps were information sessions with cooperative partners, offering them the option of joining any of the various activities. Between November 2011 and March 2012, messages were placed on water bills and company newsletters and campaign materials were distributed to customers. Furthermore, FEDECAAS partnered with the Family Protection Brigades of Santa Cruz. Through this collaboration, they launched a pilot project of a telephone hotline that provides guidance, support and assistance on gender-based violence. This number was also printed on water bills.

▶ Lessons learned and impact

The campaign is a great example of the collaboration between governmental and non-governmental institutions and represents a clear demonstration of the importance of companies acting as social agents in the communities in which they operate.

Three factors of the collaboration's success can be highlighted that led to important impacts:

1. The mutual exchange and learning experience was made easier because the campaign already existed. This saved resources and time, thereby generating a greater impact. At the same time, it was critical to adjust the campaign to the local context. While the campaign slogan, messages and common





designs which identify the campaign already existed, each community was free to make the necessary modifications to reach its target population in the most effective way. In addition, it was helpful that ComVoMujer and PROAPAC are members of the same organization and that FEDECAAS is strategically aligned with PROAPAC. FEDECAAS used the alliance of ComVoMujer with the Family Protection Brigades of Santa Cruz to create further synergies.

2. The dynamic use of groups was also important: the socialization of the campaign helped to generate enthusiasm which included a healthy competition between the cooperatives, a competition that immediately turned into collaboration through the signing of commitments and through the planning of campaign actions.

3. Starting from the public launch during the collaboration until the end of the campaign, the support and diffusion of print media and television material by the department of Santa Cruz was an important component of the campaign's success. The participation of the cooperatives in information sessions, as well as in the launch of the campaign and in its diffusion, led to the campaign being known and covered in the news programs of departmental TV channels (Sitel 57, ATB y Red PAT,) local radio stations such as Aboro and Radio Oriental, national magazines such as the Lea Magazine and Enlace Cooperativo, and in the national newspapers El Mundo and Hoy Bolivia.

Through quarterly newsletters, the awareness-raising campaign reached over 17,000 members in 20 water and sanitation cooperatives, while water bills reached over 300,000 clients in approximately

90,000 households. Importantly, these numbers do not include the individuals reached through the media campaign.

The campaign was completed after five months and the impact within the cooperatives has proven sustainable. It led to the development of the gender action plan of FEDECAAS for the year 2012, in which actions against violence against women played an important role. A process of sensitization and training has been established involving both men and women. Moreover, gender groups have been created which monitor the actions undertaken on a local level.

In addition to the trainings developed in different cooperatives in 2012, a big awareness-raising event was planned and carried out on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The commitment of the cooperatives to work on this issue long term has been clearly demonstrated through the example of the cooperative of San Julián. Several times per week, the company's employees wear T-shirts with the campaign's slogan reminding everyone of the importance of prevention of gender-based violence. The employees also wore them on November 25. These and other actions have been recognized in the competition of "Ojo con la violencia" ("Attention to violence") conducted by the GIZ program PADEM.

The fact that the campaign was re-launched in 2012 further demonstrates the commitment by the cooperatives and the sustainability of the effort.



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