EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WITHIN THE INTEGRAL PROGRAMME AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Main Participants: UN Women (lead agency), UNFPA, IOM, High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena, Council of the District of Buenaventura
1. Introduction

From 2008 to 2012, the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence (the Programme) designed and implemented an Educational Communication Strategy (the Strategy) aimed at reducing the Colombian population’s social and institutional tolerance to violence against women. With a clear conceptual focus—combating gender-based violence demands a transformation of the cultural and social beliefs that lie at the heart of the problem—the Programme assembled a great diversity of actors from government institutions, civil society and the media to join forces in the design and dissemination of culturally sensitive messages demystifying and condemning violence. The various campaigns launched as part of the Strategy were disseminated through mass and alternative media and through social mobilization actions. The strategy gained national and regional coverage, with specific lines of communication tailored to the territorial and ethnic characteristics of the pilot cities of Buenaventura and Cartagena.

2. Initial Situation

The Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence sought to contribute to the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombia, with a special emphasis on the most prevalent and most serious forms in the national context: partner violence, sexual violence, trafficking of persons, conflict-related violence and harmful traditional practices which violate the rights of indigenous women.

The Programme, carried out by UN Women, UNFPA and IOM from 2008 to 2012 was based on three components. The first was prevention, aimed at promoting the transformation of individual, social and institutional behaviors, attitudes and practices that promoted and legitimized GBV. The second was strengthening quality holistic services for survivors of GBV. The third was the development of a legal and public policy framework for GBV. In addition to actions on a national scale, the Programme identified four pilot territories—Buenaventura, Cartagena, Pasto and the indigenous communities of Pueblo Rico and Mistrató—in which all the strategic axes of the three components were focused.

From the moment of its conception, the Programme was based on the premise that the first and essential step in designing effective strategies to combat GBV is to understand the cultural and social context and other driving factors. With this aim the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia was carried out. This study, undertaken in 2010 on the basis of a survey of 1,080 persons and 300 institutions providing health, justice and education services in 10 of the country’s towns and cities, made it clear that the “social and cultural beliefs deeply rooted in Colombian society, generating rigid gender roles and patterns of sexist, patriarchal and discriminatory behaviors, facilitate, allow, excuse or legitimize violence against women.” To bring relevant changes in the GBV situation, therefore, requires an emphasis on the transformation of discriminatory ideas and practices historically embedded in the Colombian population. It was with this objective that the Programme designed its Educational Communication Strategy.

The Strategy was developed in the context of a favorable legislative framework, after the passing of Law 1257 of 2008 and Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court, which oblige public institutions to develop communication strategies for the prevention of violence against women.

3. Objectives

- Educate, inform and mobilize audiences—collectively and individually—to build and adopt new patterns of masculinity and femininity, new behaviours and partner and family roles.
- Challenge stereotypical patterns of masculinity and femininity.
- Educate and mobilize institutional and social actors to prevent GBV, detect it early and act.

---

7 Law 1257 of 2008, which lays down rules for awareness-raising, prevention and the prosecution of forms of violence and discrimination against women, reforms the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and Law 294 of 1996 and lays down other provisions.
8 Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court covers the protection of the fundamental rights of women who are victims of forced displacement on account of armed conflict.
4. Key Actors

One of the Strategy’s key success factors was its ability to call on a considerable diversity of institutional actors, at both national and local levels; civil society, especially women’s organizations; international cooperation organizations; communications media; the private sector and opinion leaders. Following are the main actors involved:

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

• The High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women
• The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies
• The Inter-institutional Communications Committee for the Prevention of Violence against Women
• The Town Council of Pasto
• The Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena
• The Council of the District of Buenaventura
• Inter-Institutional Networks for Decent Treatment in Cartagena, Pasto and Buenaventura

PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION ACTIONS

• The European Cinema Festival Foundation in Colombia
• The Woman is Audio-visual Foundation
• The Red Kayman Foundation
• The Tridha Foundation
• The Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra
• Corpocarnaval

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

• Caracol Television
• El Tiempo Publishing House
• AVON
• Babilla Ciné
• El Espectador – Cromos
• Semana Publications
• RCN Radio
• Colmundo Radio
• Colombian Union of Advertising Companies

5. Strategy

The Educational Communication Strategy:

• Anchored in the fundamental premise that combating GBV requires a change to the cultural and social beliefs that lie behind the problem;
• Based on the findings of the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia;
• Adheres to the precepts of the Secretary-General’s “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” campaign;
• Incorporates the promotion of non-violent masculinities;
• Combines and complements educational and capacity-building processes with mass and inter-personal communication;
• Promotes alliances with mass and alternative communications media;
• Articulated through social organizations to carry out social mobilization and citizen actions;
• Includes artistic, recreational and sporting components;
• Covers both national and territorial levels, with culturally sensitive lines of communication suited to the country’s territorial and ethnic diversity; and
• Promotes, supports and works hand in hand with local and national Colombian State strategies in this area.

Considering all these elements, the Programme designed and implemented a Strategy which included, among others, four strands of work:

• The “Nothing justifies violence against women” campaign;
• Support for the Colombian State communication strategy “Woman: You have rights;”
• Regionalization of the Buenaventura strategy “Not one more;” and
• Regionalization of the Cartagena strategy “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty.”

9 “Oye men, no le pegue a la negra”
The Programme focused its strategic lines of work in four pilot territories, the cities of Cartagena and Buenaventura among them. Both cities have some characteristics in common: a high level of Afro-Colombian communities, large marginalized sectors and high levels of segregation and poverty. For an integrated approach to GBV, both cities had important characteristics: a committed institutional framework in the case of Cartagena, and a weak institutional framework but active civil society in the case of Buenaventura. The Educational Communication Strategy took as its starting point the recognition of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the pilot territories and, in each of them, it proposed culturally sensitive communicative actions, with messages that recognized and valorized their particular ethnic and territorial features.

THE “NOTHING JUSTIFIES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” CAMPAIGN

The strategy for the Campaign’s design and implementation developed in four stages:

Stage 1: Collecting information and constructing the over-arching arguments of the Strategy’s main ideas (Tolerance Study)

Seventeen of the beliefs and prejudices identified in the Tolerance Study were selected. They touch on patterns of femininity and masculinity, concepts of love in the couple, the view of violence as a means of solving conflicts and the justifications given for VAW. For each of these beliefs the qualitative and statistical evidence available was analysed and an argument was developed to counter the stereotype with reality.

Stage 2: Public relations and strategic advocacy with public and private bodies, opinion leaders and high level members of the Government to secure the signing of a National Pact against GBV in Colombia

The Programme mapped relevant institutional and social actors. Government bodies and political parties were visited; with the aim of exploring their VAW-related practices, training dynamics, their interest in promoting the Communication Strategy and the body responsible for this. The institutions were approached with evidence, including the Tolerance Study findings, in order to speak a common language and establish key principles and messages. The Programme secured undertakings from various institutional actors.

Stage 3: The high impact mass communication campaign aimed at raising the awareness of the population of the seriousness of the VAW problem in Colombia

Using the slogan of “Nothing justifies violence against women,” seven radio slots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence), two television commercials, three poster designs and three postcard designs were developed. The campaign counted on the collaboration of famous male and female actors who donated their images and voices, which also benefited the mobilization of the communications media around the campaign.

Two commercials were the center of the mass communication. The first promoted the social disapproval of male aggressors’ behaviours. The second argued that the consumption of alcohol did not justify violence against women.

The launch of the campaign benefited from the participation of the United Nations system in Colombia, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, survivors of GBV, journalists and male and female actors. More than 40 media outlets covered the launch of the Campaign, which continued making news in the media for months afterwards through continued free press actions.

The Campaign established a strategic alliance with one of the most important communications media in the country, Caracol TV, thanks to which it obtained: an average of 20 prime time broadcasts per day, free of charge, of the two television commercials produced by the Programme; 10 videos made by the channel, with its artists and journalists as spokespersons for the Campaign; the activation of the channel’s social networks with hash tags referring to the topic; the reading of Twitter messages on Caracol Channel news.
broadcasts; and the creation of a five-minute section on the Caracol Channel News focused on analysing the problem of GBV. It is calculated that Caracol TV’s contribution to the Campaign, in the form of pro-bono exposure, amounted to some US$760,000 per month.

**Stage 4: Social mobilization, media presence, community education and awareness-raising**

Having established the Campaign, the Programme focused on social mobilization. “Citizen Brigades” were set up in the cities of Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá to mobilize citizens, artists, senators, journalists and opinion leader towards the eradication of GBV. As part of the 25th November celebrations, some 1,200 phrases expressing social tolerance to GBV were gathered together to be buried in a symbolic act to commit citizens to socially sanctioning aggressors.

**SUPPORT FOR THE COLOMBIAN STATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

In June 2009 the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to Prevent Violence against Women in Colombia was formed as the body responsible for the design and implementation of the Colombian State Communication Strategy. The Committee is made up of 13 national bodies with responsibility for the prevention of and response to GBV, the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia and a feminist organization with expertise in gender and communications. This Committee, without precedent in Colombia, worked in a coordinated manner during one year to design the “Woman: You have rights” communication strategy, approved in June 2010.

The Colombian State Communication Strategy had as objectives providing information on the State’s legal mandate; debunking the myth of violence against women being “natural;” promoting male
and female officials' and survivors' understanding of GBV, and building confidence around the new legal framework.

The Strategy defined three target groups: institutions and officials of both genders at national, departmental and local levels, non-perpetrator men and society at large.

Implementation of the Strategy turned on five components:

- **Social mobilization**, to disseminate the educational content;
- **Mass communication**, to give public recognition from State institutions to the commitment to non-violence against women.
- **Internal State communication**, that is, communication from the State for the State, with an internal message for government institutions themselves, reinforcing the role and institutional mandate, with the recognition and enforceability of women's rights.
- **External communication** from the institutions, by means of the channels each institution uses to communicate with other groups—private institutions, social associations or the public—as part of its institutional activity.
- **Advocacy**, public relations and education and sensitization of communications media.

The Campaign was designed to cascade through the various administrative levels, that is, from national level to its offices at departmental, district and municipal levels. By 2011, 12 municipalities and 16 departments (half the departments in the country) had committed to it. The Campaign adopted the motto of “Woman: You have rights. We are with you,” under which were produced: three television commercials with their respective radio audio tracks; six radio spots; an educational video and a video clip about Law 1257 of 2008; a video with the most significant figures about the GBV problem; five posters and five postcards.

The campaign included male spokespersons as presenters, public figures who placed their image and their voice at the Campaign’s service to transmit a clear message rejecting GBV and promoting women’s right to a life free from violence. Thus, the strategy incorporated the promotion of a non-violent masculinity, fostering a masculinity committed to change and to combating discrimination and challenging behaviors and beliefs that tolerate and perpetuate GBV. At the beginning there was resistance to this from the women’s movement, which argued that by choosing men as spokespersons, men were having their say again, instead of women. It is important to emphasize that this tension diluted, thanks to the positive attitudes of the spokesmen and the good media response to the campaign.
One of the most innovative aspects of the campaign was its emphasis on work within public institutions, for which a discourse of effectiveness, efficiency and the duties of the civil service was adopted. The campaign promoted the dissemination of knowledge about women’s rights and the obligations of public institutions under Law 1257 of 2008, informing, educating and raising the awareness of female and male public servants about the re-victimization they sometimes inadvertently inflicted on women through lack of knowledge.

The campaign established alliances with the private sector, using an approach of co-responsibility between State, society and business for combating discrimination and gender inequality. Action plans were implemented in 18 private companies in the areas of cosmetics marketing, development credit, design, art and fashion, transport, extraction of mining resources, universities, communication and technologies.

**REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: BUENAVENTURA—“NOT ONE MORE”**

The regionalization process of the Educational Communication Strategy started in Buenaventura on 25 November 2009, on the occasion of the celebration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, when the Programme joined in with the call made by local women’s organizations under the motto of “Not one more... because indifference is our worst ally and impunity its greatest enemy.”

For the Strategy’s design and implementation the Programme worked with women’s organizations and Town Council bodies participating in the Decent Treatment and GBV Prevention Working Group. Together they defined the strategies, design and content of each of the activities.

The Educational Communication Strategy in Buenaventura had as its objective “to inform the citizens of Buenaventura about and raising their awareness of the problem of GBV, with a focus on women’s rights, through mass and alternative communications media.” Later, in 2011, the Strategy broadened its field of action to the dissemination of the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for the Women of Buenaventura.

Three target populations were defined:

- **Women:** to promote in them the construction of an identity as citizens with rights, including the right to a life free from violence;
- **Men:** to inform them that violence against women is a crime and to urge them not to exert it; and
- **The communications media:** as allies to reduce social tolerance, through raising the profile of the problem and the dissemination and promotion of women’s rights.

The motto “Not one more” sought to send a clear message rejecting violence as well as demanding an end to impunity. The Working Group was unanimous that the campaign images should be in keeping with the social construction of Afro-Colombian
women and they should also demonstrate the possibility of building solidarity and care among women. The goal was to generate a positive valorization of Afro-Colombian women, thus questioning the racialization and hyper-sexualization which had been culturally constructed around them and which had come to justify sexual violence throughout the country. The image is of two women protecting one another and the logo is an open hand held upwards in a “stop” gesture.

The Social Tolerance Study provided input for the creation of the media items. A song “Not one more” was composed. Various media items were created (posters, postcards, radio spots and videos), including one specifically directed at men, and a particular item to raise awareness and recognition of trafficking as a form of GBV, jointly produced with the Inter-Institutional Committee to Combat Trafficking.

Social mobilization was a central component to the Strategy, promoting marches, demonstrations and public hearings, and artistic expressions such as film clubs and theatrical works. High media impact events were organized, such as a football match on the occasion of 25 November 2010 with the participation of ex-professional footballers from Buenaventura and members of the Colombian women’s national team, under the motto of “More football against GBV.”

The Programme built alliances—mainly with women’s organizations—that invigorated the Educational Communication strategy and gave it social sustainability. Public institutions actively committed to the Strategy and, if they did not provide financial resources, they provided human, technological, logistical, communication and dissemination resources to support the activities. The private sector joined in through local communications media (mainly radio), which undertook to publicize the “Not one more” strategic actions; provide information on women’s rights, Law 1258 and the ways women survivors could get help; present GBV-related news items from a women’s rights approach; and prevent violence against women by encouraging reporting and using non-sexist graphics and written and spoken language.

REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: CARTAGENA – "HEY, MAN! DON’T BEAT THE BEAUTY"

In Cartagena, the Educational Communication Strategy of the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence was structured around the Action Plan 2009-2011 of the local Public Policy “Women of Cartagena in full Enjoyment of Our Rights”. With regard to the prevention of GBV, this Plan contained the following actions:

- Awareness sessions on GBV and mass dissemination of Law 1257 of 2008;
- “Districts free from GBV” competition;
- Prevention of prostitution, trafficking of women and sexual exploitation; and
- The “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty, because this woman is respected” programme.

The Programme’s four actions turned on joint work with Cartagena institutions, the Participation and Social Development Secretariat, the Women’s Affairs Group Coordinator and women’s organizations.

An Inter-Institutional Communications Workgroup was formed with the aim to develop a campaign:

- Culturally sensitive and suited to the characteristics of the population of Cartagena;
- That incorporated the content and results of the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of GBV;”
- Focused on three target groups: women, men and communications media; and
- Using mass and alternative media and interpersonal communications initiatives.

The central motto of the campaign was “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” in the voice of famous Caribbean music singer Joe Arroyo. In the beginning, both the campaign message and the choice of a man as spokesperson generated unfavorable reactions from women’s organizations, which had not been consulted on this matter. Nevertheless, the campaign’s excellent reception from Cartagena society eventually eliminated any reservations.

10 “Oye, men, no le pegue a la negra, que esa negra se me respeta”
Later, in order to reach poorer neighborhoods, the Communications Workgroup decided to use champeta music, as something for which the community had ownership and which was particular to Cartagena. And so “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” moved from Joe Arroyo’s salsa to a champeta rhythm in the voice of Viviano Torres, designated as the new spokesperson of the campaign. To publicize the campaign, various media items were developed (posters, postcards, six radio spots and two videos), which were widely disseminated by local communications media. Alternative communications were also used, such as invisible theatre, puppets, new technologies and the mobile discotheques known locally as u6.

The campaign is also an excellent example of inter-institutional coordination. The Programme and Cartagena Town Hall established a permanent alliance. The administration demonstrated openness, and several departments committed human, technological or logistical resources, as was the case with the Transport Secretariat, Secretariat of the Interior, the Institute of Recreation and Sport and the Citizen Culture Programme. The National Police made available to the campaign a permanent 30 minute weekly slot on its station. The private sector joined in via non-violence pacts. At the same time, the Cartagena Strategy was in keeping with the Colombian State “Woman: You have rights” strategy and with the “Nothing Justifies Violence against Women” Programme strategy.

6. Progress and Results

The Educational Communication Strategy of the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence aimed to contribute to reducing the Colombian population’s social and institutional tolerance to GBV. To assess its impact, and that of the Integral Programme as a whole, the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia” will be re-run by 2014. Its results will provide evidence-based data on the extent to which the Strategy has succeeded in bringing about transformations in the beliefs and practices of the Colombian population towards violence against women.

Nonetheless, in the absence of hard data about its impact, indirect evidence does exist pointing to the Strategy having led to significant cultural and institutional changes. In the interviews held to write this document, greater awareness of the forms of GBV and of the obligation to respond to them was reported on the part of public institutions; as well as an increase in intentions to report by women survivors of violence and a better response by Family Police Services participating in the Programme.

Turning to the Programme’s immediate results and outcomes, the following are worthy of note:

- The creation of the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to prevent Violence against Women in Colombia;
- The regionalization in 2011 of the “Woman: You have rights” strategy with a view to its being implemented nationwide. Twelve municipalities, 16 departments (half the departments in the country) and 13 private sector companies signed up to it;
- The raising of awareness of the communications media and public opinion to the GBV problem, as reflected in the more than 800 interviews, press releases and publications.
made during the Programme’s implementation, as well as in the strategic alliances established with various communications media, especially with Caracol TV;

- The mass dissemination of the “Nothing Justifies Violence against Women” campaign, via:
  - The production of seven radio spots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence) using the voices of famous national figures from the world of entertainment, which were broadcasted on 600 community stations across the country by agreement with the Ministry of Communications, on 25 Cadena Caracol stations via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office and on 35 commercial stations on a paid basis;
  - The production of two television commercials (on the social sanctioning of aggressors and the consumption of alcohol as a justification for violence) and their broadcast on eight regional television channels, via the Television Commission’s Civic Code; and on 20 broadcasts a day by Caracol TV via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office;
  - Three posters and 10,000 copies distributed and used at 100 bus stops and on billboards located at high traffic areas; 100,000 postcards in three different designs distributed at restaurants, hotels, theatres, motels and at public events nationwide;
  - A free press strategy with considerable exposure in the press and on radio and television, which started with raising expectations around the campaign launch and was attended by 40 communications media. From September 2011 to March 2012, the free press strategy ensured the Campaign’s presence on 130 radio, press and television items (34 per cent local media and 66 per cent national media) which, had they been arranged on a paid basis, would have incurred a cost of nearly US$400,000;
  - Citizen mobilization, in the form of cultural actions and citizen brigades in Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá.

- The formulation, within the framework set by the National Commission for the Regulation of Advertising in Colombia, of technical specifications for gender-sensitive advertising to be incorporated into the Code of Advertising Self-regulation issued by the Commission.

- The mobilization of a broad range of institutional actors at national and local levels, women’s organizations, communications media and international cooperation to work in a coordinated fashion.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

**Approach:** The approach used to structure and implement the Strategy, under the organizing principle that it should contribute to changing the patriarchal culture that was at the heart of the problem of violence against women, facilitated the taking of decisions on the how, where, what and with whom.

**Inter-institutional:** The processes of inter-sectoral dialogue and consensus, in spite of taking up much time and coordination effort, made it possible to join forces, establish institutional processes and create ownership on the part of all the actors involved. Linking all the actors in the process (institutional bodies, women’s organizations, mixed organizations and communications media) enhanced the Programme’s recognition as agent and interlocutor, while at the same time clearly placing GBV on the public agenda and in social debate. The permanent, free-flowing dialogue between the actors opened new channels of communication, coordination and support to define common objectives for citizen mobilization and collective lobbying.

**Evidence-based:** Basing the design of the Strategy on the results of the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia” facilitated the construction of key messages that challenged the deepest-rooted and most change-resistant beliefs and prejudices that normalized, downplayed and legitimized violence against women. Moreover, approaching institutional bodies with statistical data and qualitative evidence provided a technical case that facilitated the engagement of decision-makers.
Adaptation to context: Communication starts with understanding the setting, from the macro-structure to micro-spaces. The use of culturally sensitive messages, which acknowledge and celebrate territorial and ethnic identity, is an essential prerequisite for understanding, reflection and transformation. The participation of local actors and, especially, local women’s organizations and local communications media, is essential to draw the attention of local territories to the communication strategy.

Masculinities: Engaging men to transmit a message rejecting violence contributed to the promotion of new models of non-violent masculinities, at the same time as easing the opening of discussion and gaining the attention of communications media. The tensions which originally arose from giving men’s voices center stage, rather than women’s, relaxed in light of the favourable social reaction to men coming out against GBV, when they were seen and heard not as aggressors but as part of the solution.

Civil servants: Carrying out campaigns within public institutions made it possible to set up clear mechanisms for information, awareness-raising and training on the responsibilities of institutions towards the prevention of, response to and sanctioning of gender-based violence. Involving civil servants as agents for the communication, transmission and transformation of social patterns, meant that administrative units were less resistant to change and to the transformation of mind-sets and practices that tolerated GBV.

Media agenda: Generating information and new understandings of GBV produced a significant reaction on the part of communications media. Carrying out actions with high media impact in a short period of time made it possible to place and keep the GBV issue on the media agenda and encouraged institutions publicly to take up positions on the problem.

Community mobilization: The use of alternative communications media and social and citizen mobilization around the rejection of violence against women were key factors in reaching different sections of the public and securing their involvement. The sustainability of the process lies in consolidating and broadening this community base. In the case of Colombia, support for the Integral Programme ended when the process and social base supporting it were still being consolidated. More time and continuation of the financial and coordination support would have been needed.

Public-private alliances: Corporate Social Responsibility is an area to be explored as it lowers costs and, if the results are positive, reduces institutional resistance. The alliances the Programme established with various communications media, especially Caracol TV, contributed to significantly broadening the Programme’s reach at no extra cost.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

To guarantee the sustainability of the Communication Strategy, the Integral Programme placed an emphasis on the design and approval of action plans by each of the stakeholders involved from the institutional, social and private sectors.

Moreover, the Communication Strategy created numerous communication items directed at different groups and contexts, which could be reused by other GBV awareness-raising, information and education strategies.

The main challenge for the sustainability of the processes triggered by the Strategy is a weakening of the original political will. Thus, in the case of Buenaventura, even though the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for Women provides for continuing the Educational Communication Strategy, this has not happened to date. In Cartagena, in spite of the Town Hall having included a “communication strategy for a life free from violence” within its 2012-2015 Action Plan, continuity has been difficult on account of administrative instability.

Regarding the possibility of replication, mindful that the cultural matrix which originates and perpetuates GBV is based on patriarchy, the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia,” its interpretive design, its
methodological approach and its measurement tools can be reproduced in other countries with a similar social and cultural environment, as was suggested in the “International Congress on Non-Sexist Advertising” held in Mexico towards the end of 2011 where the Programme was invited to give a presentation on its experience. The existence of the significant regional development of legal instruments for protection against gender-based violence means that the Strategy’s conceptual and methodological approach is relevant at a regional level and the Strategy could be reproduced in other neighboring countries.

Through a knowledge exchange mission with the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme on Gender in Brazil, the Brazilian programme has adapted the methodology of the Colombian study on institutional tolerance of GBV. The study served as an input for the Brazilian communication/advocacy strategy, which also focused on innovative aspects to fight against racial discrimination.