



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

21st Century

Producer: Gill Fickling
Script version: Final
Duration: (11'01")

NICARAGUA: ACTING AGAINST VIOLENCE

INTRO:

The sad truth about violence against women is that it's not just the emotional and physical suffering that destroys lives. The ability of millions of women around the world to participate as equals in their countries is also diminished. In Nicaragua groups of determined women and men are now taking to the stage and acting against the violence. (31")

VIDEO

RECONSTRUCTION OF WOMAN
BEING HIT

WOMEN PUT ON MAKE-UP: WARM-
UP EXERCISES; PRACTICE
HOLDING PURPLE CLOTH IN
POSITION, ETC

AUDIO

NAT SOT MUJERES DE SURESTE
DE LEON prepare for practice-
performance.

NARRATION

A harrowing enactment of violence....
but a reality for too many women. (10")

Here in Nicaragua, a group of
performers from one of the poorest
communities in the city of Leon mask
their nerves with laughter. This is their

last rehearsal before their debut performance. (16")

NAT SOT preparations

NARRATION

THEATRE GROUP CAPULLO
WARM-UP EXERCISES

Across the country, other theatre groups are also warming up for their show. (4")

NAT SND – (crank up sound of cicadas)

NARRATION

ACTOR PREPARING TO GO ON
STAGE – PUTTING ON MAKE-UP;
BREATHING EXERCISES; WARMING
UP

Here in a sleepy village in the hills of north-western Nicaragua, this group called Capullo are also about to perform for the locals. (9")

PERFORMERS GETTING DRESSED

Like the women from Leon, all these performers share a common goal - to bring public attention to one of the most serious challenges facing women and girls in the country today – the violence they suffer daily at the hands of partners or family. (16")

GRETHEL ON CAMERA

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

They aren't alone, and they need to break the silence and not allow themselves to be mistreated – we have the same rights as men! (9")

NARRATION

GRETHEL IN HER GARDEN

Grethel Enid Robleto is a member of the theatre group Women Of South East Leon who have built a play around their own personal experiences of violence. Grethel survived a nine-year violent marriage. (15")

GRETHEL ON CAMERA

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

He treated me badly, he used to hit me every day, he left marks on my head – I have a scar in my eyebrow that needed 18 stitches! And I didn't know where I could go for help. I felt trapped. (15.5")

GRETHEL WITH THEATRE PERFORMERS

NARRATION

Grethel recognizes how much being a part of the theatre group has helped her overcome her brutal past. (6")

GRETHEL ON CAMERA

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

Before I couldn't express myself like I can today - now I can talk, I can laugh ...// These plays have helped all of us women "promoters" overcome what we needed to overcome. (14")

GRETHEL IN THE BACK OF A
TRACTOR

NARRATION

Grethel and her companions see themselves as “promoters” rather than actors. Their goal is to spread the message that until the violence ends, women will never live as equals in their country. (11”)

GRETHEL ON CAMERA

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

That’s our work! To go out and to tell them they’re not alone, that they should break these chains – say no to the violence, don’t allow themselves to be mistreated or hit – not psychologically, not verbally. (14”)

GRETHEL IN CLASSROOM WITH
OTHER WOMEN

NARRATION

According to United Nations estimates, between a third to a half of Nicaraguan women have suffered violence from men at some time. And the country has the second highest incidences of domestic violence in the region. (14”)

Central America ranks among the most dangerous places on earth for women and the violence has been described as endemic. (8”)

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

All of us promoters, we’ve all suffered

violence , even when we started to get involved as promoters last year...some of us were still being mistreated by our partners but, now we can say we've left that all behind. (19")

DANIEL PULIDO WITH THEATRE GROUP

NARRATION

Daniel Pulido, an artist and director of the women's play, is also the organizer of the project to use theatre as a tool in the fight against the violence involving both womens groups and theatre groups from around the country. (15")

DANIEL ON CAMERA

DANIEL PULIDO (In Spanish)

Theatre is very dynamic, it's fun, so people know that when they see a theatre play, they're going to enjoy themselves. (6")

NARRATION

And once entertained, he says, the audience is more open to listen and reflect on the issues presented in these plays. (8")

DANIEL ON CAMERA

DANIEL PULIDO (In Spanish)

When a play works well, you get the audience to really concentrate, and people to some extent identify with the situation of the characters.

DANIEL ON CAMERA

It's a way of entering really deeply into the attitudes and the behaviour of

people. It's where you really need to start making changes.(18")

NARRATION

And making changes, he says is essential to eventually free women from the cycle of violence. (8")

UP NAT SOT theatre production

NARRATION

Until this happens, he says, there will never be true democracy in Nicaragua, which was fought for so hard during the 1970s and 80s. (8")

GV,S STREET SHOTS OF
NICARAGUA

DANIEL (In Spanish)

You can't talk about a democracy – a real or valid democracy – if there isn't equality and if the rights of women are not included in that system. (13")

DANIEL ON CAMERA

NARRATION

And this is why Daniel embarked on this project With support from the United Nations Democracy Fund, there are now ten theatre groups performing in their local communities around the country. All performances are followed by a discussion with the audience - like this animated conversation after group Capullo's play about a husband who torments his wife. (24")

RE-ENACTMENT OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE.

THEATRE GROUP ON STAGE

UP NAT SOT OF DISCUSSION

NARRATION

THEATRE GROUP PERFORMING

And after this performance by a group called Bosque Negro with focuses on incest and a father's brutality against both his daughter and his wife, the audience commended the play and confirmed that it sent a message that should be heard. (15")

VOX POP man (In Spanish)

MAN ON CAMERA

Too much violence, too much, by men against women. So we need to be aware of the Law that was introduced and defend the female gender. (12")

VOX POP woman (In Spanish)

WOMAN ON CAMERA

This is just what happens in real life – we women shouldn't keep silent, we have to speak out about what goes on both at home and outside (8")

NARRATION

And the young actor, Byron, aged 19, who plays the abusive father and husband feels it is important for his contemporaries to be aware of the issues. (10")

VOX POP Byron

It's important so that young people of

BYRON ON CAMERA

today can start thinking differently.

BYRON RE-ENACTING VIOLENCE

Because perhaps older people don't understand or don't want to change, but we young people who are still growing and starting out in life, we can see things differently and create a new world from this. (18")

NARRATION

SET UP IN OFFICE OF ALBA LUZ RAMOS

It's an approach that Alba Luz Ramos, President of the Supreme Court of Justice agrees with. (5")

ALBA ON CAMERA

ALBA LUZ RAMOS (In Spanish)

I think if children are able to open themselves to this issue, this will change their view of life and the paradigm that women are obliged to put up with violence, that it's a part of life and our destiny – is going to change. (16")

NARRATION

ALBA ON IN HER OFFICE

Ramos was involved in the introduction of a new Law in Nicaragua aimed at curbing violence against women, which came into force in June 2012. The law now recognizes femmocide, the murder of women by men as a crime and with 46 cases in the first three months of 2014 alone, some say such a law was overdue . Ramos explains the scope of a controversial law. (24")

RAMOS ON CAMERA

ALBA LUZ RAMOS (In Spanish)

It's a law against violence against women which addresses ALL form of violence, both in the public sphere and the private and // which covers the prevention, the penalties and the process of violence – it goes to the roots to eliminate violence not solely to penalize it because violence is a chain and if we don't break this chain, we're never going to achieve anything. (24")

GV'S POLICE SHOTS

NARRATION

Further, the Law stipulates that the police, who are often the first-call for women suffering violence must investigate any case of alleged violence against a woman. Before, police reluctance to intervene caused many women never to report the abuse, as Inspector Arlen Alvarez explains. (21")

ARLEN ON CAMERA

INSPECTORA ARLEN (In Spanish)

We're authorized to issue a Detention Order immediately on receipt of a complaint so long as there is proof.// For the women, they get to recognise the danger of NOT reporting, as we're going to follow-up, making visits to the woman, we're going to document the case, and we're going to prosecute. (17")

NARRATION

And this is exactly the theme addressed in Grethel and the women of South East Leon's play. Some of them faced discrimination and disbelief by the police when they tried to report abuse at home. Drawing on their own experiences, they wrote their play to highlight that such a police response is now unacceptable and against the Law. (21")

POLICE WOMEN

UP NAT SOT play Women of South East Leon

NARRATION

POLICE WOMEN ACTORS ON STAGE

And Grethel takes this message further than the stage. Accompanied by Inspector Arlen, who heads the local police unit tasked with tackling incidences of violence against women, they go to the home of a woman they understand to be a victim, to see why she hasn't filed a complaint against her partner. (20")

UP NAT SOT visit with Blanca

GRETHEL

POLICE WOMEN WITH VICTIM

Since she was 13, she's been abused, her husband has beaten her // Why has she put up with it for so long? Part of me understands, because I also lived

with violence. // What we want is to follow her case giving her support, visiting her // because she's not alone. The Law is there to support people like her. (20")

BUS JOURNEY TO THEATRE
FESTIVAL

NARRATION

And this is the message they will take to a national Theatre Festival, bringing together the groups and activists from around the country. (10")

UP NAT SOT carnival

THEATRE GROUPS PERFORMING

NARRATION

It's hoped that the word will spread and that the new Law will uphold the rights of ALL women in Nicaragua to eventually live free from violence and participate fully as independent citizens in their country. (15")

GRETHEL ON CAMERA

GRETHEL (In Spanish)

For us, it was one of the best experiences of our lives because the people applauded and said What a great play. (9")