

Empowerment, engagement and leadership through civil society.  
Side event hosted by UNDEF  
Commission on the status of Women  
Empowerment of women survivors of the armed conflict

First of all, I would like to thank all members of the panel for being here, and the United Nations Democracy Fund for inviting Corporación Opción Legal to this side event. We feel honored to be here in such an amazing company.

Corporación Opción Legal is a nonprofit organization founded in 1999 to give legal assistance to people fleeing the Colombian Armed Conflict. We focused on IDP's, on understanding the legal framework in which these population was legally protected and understanding the responsibilities adopted by the State and the very diverse actors that crossed the Colombian Armed Conflict. Given the understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of the internally displaced population, little by little Opción Legal widespread its lines of work, shifting from legal assistance to humanitarian work, today we work in education in emergencies, humanitarian engineering, land rights etc...

The empowerment of women survivors of the Armed Conflict project was conceived in two different, but very complementary, lines of work. On the one hand, to give legal assistance, our expertise, to survivors (understood also as victims of the armed conflict) with a gender approach and on the other hand, to strengthen communities through the development of capacities of grass roots organizations in the regions of Cauca and Caquetá.

During the implementation of the project, in partnership with universities in the two regions, we legally assisted more than 600 victims (women survivors and their families), we trained professors and students in the inner workings of rights protection, due diligence and gender approach. Also, we were able to work with a total of 7 women organizations of different sizes and capacities. These organizations today have women's rights and social justice advocacy plans, a direct relationship with the communities and the regional authorities.

Among other achievements, we were able to train survivors in technical aspects of managing nonprofit organizations, advocating for the achievement and granting of their personal and community rights and most gratifying, we trained women as Community Legal Managers (Gestoras jurídicas comunitarias). Today these women have had the opportunity of independently start legal processes with public and private institutions, diminishing transaction costs. In the end, these women today have a voice of their own. A voice that was taken away by the armed conflict, GBV within the conflict and a historic marginalization. Today these women fight for their rights in a strategic and autonomous manner.

All of this wouldn't have been possible without the assistance of the Democracy Fund. With this project, Opción Legal strengthened its legal assistance program with a gender approach, developed a very comprehensive set of tools and skills for the strengthening of social organizations (grass roots nonprofits) and, generated a brand-new monitoring and evaluation system. With the empowering women survivors of the armed conflict project, Opción Legal has deepened its values

of continuous growth and strengthening, very much needed in the new post conflict Colombian humanitarian environment.

Thank you

\*\*\*

Para la discusión:

1. Cifras de personas atendidas, temporalidad del proyecto.
2. Detalles del sistema de monitoreo y evaluación.
3. Cambios en el ambiente humanitario en Colombia – proceso de paz, “exit strategies” de algunas organizaciones que atienden emergencias complejas. Capacidades del estado Colombiano.
4. Framework para la atención de víctimas. CP 1991, Ley de justicia y Paz (2005), Ley de Víctimas (2011), Acuerdo de Paz (2016). ¿Estado de cosas inconstitucional? (T-025-2004)
5. Tener a la mano informe de monitoreo y seguimiento DCH
6. Historia de la COL (Ánfora, ACNUR, Atención a población desplazada, proyectos de asistencia humanitaria)