



Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.

## **“NOW I KNOW IT’S VIOLENCE”**

Lessons learned implementing the HIAS curriculum model: involving adult and young men to prevent of violence against women, girls and adolescents in Colombia and Ecuador.



Funding provided by the  
United States Government



HIAS, 2022

# CONTENT

- 03 Presentation.
- 04 Curriculum model.
- 05 Lessons learned.
- 09 Process of change for men.
- 10 Main changes identified in men during this process.
- 12 Learning from the work with refugee and migrant men.
- 14 Recommendations.

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### *“NOW I KNOW IT’S VIOLENCE”*

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# “NOW I KNOW IT’S VIOLENCE”

Within the framework of HIAS’ regional strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean to mitigate, prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV), HIAS has developed the strategy involving men seeking their commitment in preventing GBV in humanitarian contexts. During 2022, HIAS implemented, through its offices in Colombia and Ecuador (and previously in Panama), the curriculum model: involving adult and young men to prevent violence against women, girls, and adolescents, as part of the actions of the regional project to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, financed by the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).

The curriculum model for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) was developed jointly by the HIAS regional area on Gender and Gender-Based Violence, with support and collaboration from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), in association with civil society organizations in Colombia, Panama and Venezuela. It was validated while working with groups of young and adult men in 2021. The curriculum model is a conceptual and methodological tool for direct work with men and masculinities, used by HIAS and partners globally and adapted to the specific contexts where we work. It is based on feminism, adopts an intersectional perspective, and includes a gender transforming approach by creating a space for reflection and exchange with refugee, displaced and migrant men, and host communities. It is based on a jointly developed theory of change and focuses on three types of violence: early and forced marriage and unions, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence.

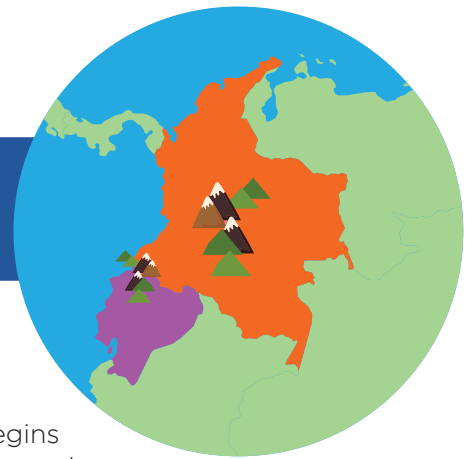
## Purpose



The purpose of the intervention is for men to reflect on their power and privilege, to understand how power is related to violence and how it affects their relationships and communities. The theory of change foresees, as an expected result, that the participants change their awareness, attitudes, beliefs and actions in relation to social norms and gender-based violence. These changes, in turn, will lead to the central objective of the curriculum model: to reduce the risk of male violence against women, girls, and adolescents in emergency situations.



The curriculum model was implemented in Colombia and Ecuador, between September 2021 and June 2022, with the participation of a total of 262 young and adult men, aged 18 to 60.



## Curriculum model

The curriculum model includes 10 sessions, with weekly meetings. It begins by framing and understanding violence against women, girls and adolescents, as a result of unequal power relations between genders. This process includes that participants acknowledge the privileges and benefits enjoyed as men in the social gender system. It then goes on to examine the three forms of violence against women, girls, and adolescents prioritized by the model understanding them as manifestations of an unequal distribution of power.

All of the above implies discussing the stressors contributing to the violence and the possible consequences for women, families, and communities. Through the curriculum, participants explore the needs of survivors of violence, and the available and accessible services in each context. Lastly, the curriculum invites and encourages participants to identify ways of becoming allies and own their responsibility towards women, girls, and adolescents.

### Main points

- ✓ **Power inequality** as a root cause of violence is distinguished from potential triggers.
- ✓ **Violence is understood as a choice** and responsibility of the perpetrator rather than as a phenomenon justified by external or internal circumstances.
- ✓ Notions of masculinity are examined as participants explore ways to transform **their asymmetrical relationships** into more gender-equitable one.

The HIAS curriculum model seeks to reduce the risk of male violence against women, girls, and adolescents in emergency situations and to encourage refugee, migrant and host community men to become allies in preventing gender-based violence.

COUNTRY	City	Groups	Number of men participating
Colombia	Cali, Ipiales, Pasto, Popayán.	9	117
Ecuador	Ambato, El Coca, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Huaquillas, Ibarra, Lago Agrio, Machala, Manta, Quito, San Lorenzo, Santo Domingo y Tulcán.	15	145

As a first step to implementing the curriculum model, a specialized Training of Trainers (ToT) was carried out. The training sought, for the facilitators in charge of the intervention with men, to experience first-hand the didactic tools and methodology of the curriculum model.

Forty-one people participated in the ToT: 15 professionals in Colombia (10 from the HIAS team and 5 from the local partner in Pasto, Hombres en Marcha) and 26 HIAS professionals in Ecuador.

# Lessons learned



“Now I know it’s violence” is the synthesis of the lessons learned implementing the HIAS curriculum model: involving adult and young men to prevent violence against women, girls, and adolescents in Colombia and Ecuador, during the period of 2022.

The results presented below arise from a qualitative methodology collecting the perspectives and

voices of all the participants: men, trainers, technical management staff, key people within HIAS and staff from the local partner in Pasto, Colombia, *Hombres en Marcha*.

To this aim, focus groups were created, semi-structured and written interviews were carried out, and execution was periodically reviewed.

## Implementation:

### Training of Trainers (ToT)

#### 01 Training of Trainers (ToT)

The training of trainers is strategic in the development of the model, the quality of its methodological design, and its execution. It provides the basis to be replicated in different locations.

#### 02 First-hand training

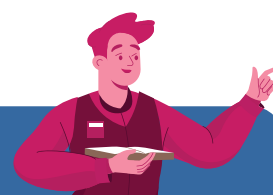
Undergoing the training first-hand allows facilitators to directly experience and take the approach and contents of the curriculum model to use later as a road map.

#### 03 Methodology

The training methodology provides additional tools to those provided in the model, making it easier for each professional to expand their repertoire and adapt techniques according to their expertise, to respond to the different needs of the groups.

#### 04 Technical skills

The training develops and strengthens the skills and technical abilities of professional teams, qualifying their functions and interventions for other settings and populations.



Aggressive man



Man who doesn't communicate

## Call for refugee and migrant men



### 01 Main challenges

Recruiting represents one of the major challenges forming the groups. Ignorance on the subject, lack of interest, mobility, and the lack of a stable job, made it necessary to duplicate efforts in terms of time and outreach strategies.

### 02 Alliances

Establishing alliances with local social organizations and those of refugees and migrants is key to expanding outreach and identify potential participants.

### 03 Allies

Articulating the call with allies, such as community leaders, has contributed to more effectively identifying possible participants and call focus.

### 04 Internal coordination

Internal coordination with other areas of the organization made it easier for the men, partners or relatives of the women who are part of the HIAS programs, to join the process.

### 05 Confirmation of attendance

In the call, and during implementation, it was necessary to confirm attendance with the participants at least a week in advance and reconfirm it the day before the meeting.

### 06 Word-of-mouth

A very effective strategy to consolidate the number of participants in the groups is word-of-mouth, where program participants invite other men to attend.

### 07 Social media

Using social media such as WhatsApp is key in establishing contact, providing information, and maintaining communication with the participants during the process.

## Program duration



### 01 Difficulties

The duration of the program is a challenge in the humanitarian context due to the precariousness experienced by the participants in relation to work; a situation expressed in the constant changes in jobs and activity and in the difficulty, for many men, of maintaining a stable schedule of participation.

### 02 Appropriate duration

Most of the men considered that the duration of the program was adequate. They saw it as very important in promoting changes in their lives, and, despite the challenges and work-related changes they face, they asked that the course and its duration continue.

## Content



### 01 Validation

The contents were widely validated and adjusted to the needs of each context, stimulating identification and appropriation by men, favoring the process of change and, ratifying sociocultural relevance.

### 02 Emphasis

The program emphasizes three types of violence. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence had a high impact on men, who evidenced new knowledge and strategies for change. In terms of child, early and forced marriage and unions, they clearly identify its effects on girls and adolescents and fully reject it as a cultural or survival practice.

**Man who bears all the burden**



## Facilitation



### 01 Human quality and dynamism

The work carried out by the facilitators was commended by the men and was highly valued for its humane quality, having provided a warm welcoming and accompaniment without judgment, solvency in the issues and, a dynamic methodology.

### 02 Specific knowledge

Although the work carried out by the women facilitators obtained significant results, it is agreed that the training processes should be carried out by men who have specific knowledge and are sensitive to the subject, as proposed by the model.

### 03 Safe space

The women facilitators began the process with some doubts concerning their role in the activity and in front of a group of men. However, in practice, these fears faded upon observing that the participants responded to the methodology and to the safe space for dialogue and exchange created.

### 04 Preparation process

Facilitating for men implies a dual process involving preparation of the subject and self-exploration. At these two levels, they must be trained on gender focus, masculinities and gender equality. More so, they must rethink their masculinity, reviewing their history, power relations, privileges, and the violence they have exercised.

## Methodology



### 01 Comprehensiveness

One of the greatest successes of the program is its methodology. Men highlight the comprehensiveness of the intervention, centered on the participants, with highly dynamic activities, different methods to promote reflection and collective learning, constant encouragement to participate, respect for individual processes and promotion of change.

### 02 Innovation

Introducing culturally relevant and operationally viable methodological innovations contribute to the consolidation of the model for working with men. For example, the use of bracelets was a symbol of the commitment not to exercise violence against women during the program.

## Articulation with Hombres en Marcha: local partner



### 01 Community-based

Having a community-based social organization with extensive experience and local recognition has been a key part in the process of designing the curriculum model. Together with HIAS, this qualifies the implementation of the program in its different phases, contributing to its adoption and territorial consolidation.

### 02 Strengthening capacities

Partnering with *Hombres en Marcha*, initially in the process of designing the model and later in the work with men in the territory, is a strategic action that allows for: double strengthening of capacities where efforts are not duplicated, resources are optimized, direct contact with communities, the issue is given a place in the local humanitarian context, and the conditions for program sustainability are generated.

**Man who doesn't respect differences**



## Adherence of men to the program



### 01 Dropout

The dropout levels in the curriculum model were low (10%) and most were a result of incompatibility with work schedules or a new job.

### 02 Safe space

Successful adherence of men to the program is attributed to the fact that it offers a safe space for reflection, exchange and mutual support, highly dynamic and respectful of their processes of change.

### 03 Transport

Providing financial support to cover transportation costs for participants is an appropriate strategy to facilitate access and reduce the risk of desertion.

### 04 Recognition

Consulting and arranging with the men the schedule for the sessions makes them feel recognized and generates greater adherence to the curriculum proposal.

## Lessons learned in changing the social norm: Starting change in men

Intervention of the curriculum model is based on the proposal of a theory of change as a process for reducing the risk of male violence against women, girls, and adolescents in emergency situations.

For this to happen, the theory invites men, as allies, to go through the three proposed dimensions: awareness, attitudes and beliefs, and actions; and from their personal change assume responsibility for their actions, choose not to use violence and denounce the acts of violence of others.



# PROCESS OF CHANGE IN MEN

## Participants' self-perception

Before the curriculum model	After the curriculum model
Sexist.	Machismo damages everything.
Has the power.	I unloaded the burden I was carrying.
Men are above women.	Women have equal rights.
Head of the family, provider.	We can both work.
Makes the decisions.	We make decisions together.
The man's opinion is the one that counts.	I listen and I learn.
I am strong and no one is better than me.	I think about my weaknesses.
Violent – Aggressor.	Respectful – Affectionate.
I can insult, mistreat, and hit women.	I don't need to see her as if she were mine. She isn't!
Bully.	Women are not objects.
Catcalling.	I know that street harassment is violence and a crime.
I ignored my partner.	Respectful communication with my partner.
I broke my wife's things.	Now I know it's violence.
Women provoke.	I reject violence against women.
I didn't get involved in couples' discussions.	I talk to men so they don't use violence.
Very harsh, moody and impulsive.	I feel calmer.
Very arrogant, haughty, proud.	I am at peace, I feel better.
Homophobic.	Gay people have equal value.
I have neglected myself as a man.	I think about what it means to be a man.
Very rough with myself.	Appreciate myself more as a man.
Didn't cry.	As a man, I do cry and have feelings.
Didn't take care of myself.	I must take care of my health.

**Man willing to share his load and receive help**



## Main changes initially identified in men during this period



The changes identified in relation to social and gender norms, in terms of awareness, attitudes, beliefs and actions of the participants, are not general, each man carries out his own personal work. However, it can be said that most of the participants experienced meaningful cycles of questioning and deconstruction of the normative model of hegemonic masculinity,

at different levels and intensities, during the process. Likewise, it is pertinent to point out that based on the experience, an initial stage of change has been mobilized in men and that the challenge for each of them is to sustain it, and for HIAS to articulate other strategies to achieve program sustainability. The initial changes identified in the participants are presented below.

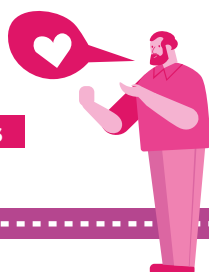
- ✓ **They recognized** women as subjects of rights.
- ✓ **They re-signified** the value of women as equals and their contribution to daily life, economically and in terms of care.
- ✓ **They identified** the different types of violence experienced by women and girls in migratory contexts and, the associated stigma and discrimination.
- ✓ **They understood** that they have been socialized in deeply sexist cultures, formed on the idea of male superiority, power over women, and they understand the role it plays in violence.
- ✓ **They identified** that the privileges they have received as men imply a workload for women and constitute inequality.

✓ **They generally and progressively rejected violence** against women and girls. One factor that emerged is that most of the men had witnessed violence towards their mothers from their fathers or stepfathers and this motivated them to not want to reproduce the behavior.

✓ In the area of sexual violence, one of the most significant impacts was that they recognized that **catcalling** is a crime and a violation of women's rights, when previously for the majority it was a normal and legitimate practice.

✓ **Intimate partner violence** represents one of the most problematic areas for men. Multiple risk factors, linked to migration and male subjectivities associated with the traditional model, show its wide naturalization.

Man who expresses his emotions



✓ Men found an **opportunity** for personal work when dealing with intimate partner violence, from accepting their ignorance of many women's rights, to being accountable for the violence they have perpetrated and undertaking actions to change. For example, asking for forgiveness and establishing new agreements within the couple like joint-decision-making. Other examples include the use of money and co-responsibility in parenting.

✓ Although most participants recognize that the **responsibility** for the violence they exercise belongs to each man, some argue that context also plays a role, and there were even those who shifted part of this responsibility to women, particularly in cases of infidelity.

***“One should guarantee that this violence does not occur, first in our homes and then with our families... help men not to be violent, be open to cooperation and listening”.***



Venezuelan man in Colombia

✓ Several men reported having carried out **effective interventions** in cases of violence against women. However, during the training, some men expressed resistance to becoming involved because they stated that women who have suffered violence sometimes return to the aggressor. Some also expressed not knowing what to do in these situations.

✓ The involvement of men in **domestic tasks** was one of the first areas to transform masculinity. With difficulty, they began to recognize their privileges and the imbalance of responsibilities in relation to women, as a result they assumed tasks such as sweeping, cooking, washing dishes, tidying the house, washing clothes. Co-responsibility began to be considered a dimension that benefits the family and a condition for building equality.

✓ **Fatherhood** is an area of potential change, men saw that by serving as providers they had disconnected themselves from their sons, daughters, and partners. Various men shared that they had begun to reclaim play, accompaniment, and care as a vital priority.

✓ Most of the men agree that it is in the **education** of sons and daughters, based on a model of equality and non-violence towards women, that sets out the possibility of transforming macho culture in the near future. Consequently, they opened spaces for dialogue concerning what they learned.

✓ The space for **self-care** had a high impact for most of the men. It went from being strange and even uncomfortable, to being something to look forward to in each session. Self-care was considered one of the most significant learnings during the process and they reported starting to do it in their daily lives to feel more liberated, relaxed, and de-stressed.

✓ Based on the methodology, the participants reflected and concluded that they have neglected themselves as men. They do not take care of their **mental or physical health**.

***“Look, just yesterday I saw a guy hitting a woman in a store, I saw it and I didn't accept it. If you see violence you have to intervene. I remembered we had talked about it in this course. So, I told the neighbor and they called the police. I was with my dad, the guy was beating her, we saw her when she was on the floor, he overpowered her, the lady defended herself. I sneaked in, looked at the guy and he looked the other way and the lady stood up. I went in and asked her, “Do you have any jackets?” and I asked her very discreetly, “Is everything alright?” and she fearfully said, “Yes, everything is fine”, but I saw she was all red and she said that nothing was wrong with her, that they were just playing. The guy stopped beating her, then the police came.”***



Venezuelan man in Colombia

## Learnings from the work with refugees and migrant men

✓ Working with refugee and migrant men in humanitarian contexts is **urgent** in face of the challenge of preventing violence against women and girls.

✓ Men do not have **spaces to talk** about their experiences concerning masculinity, power, violence, gender relations, their fears and problems, the precariousness of life and the risks that migratory contexts imply.

✓ At the beginning of the process, in some groups, the participants kept a guarded pose; through the experience that shield began to disappear and they became **freer and more sensitive** to themselves.

✓ Meeting with other men and the accompaniment of the facilitator transformed the program into a **safe space** for free expression, to let off steam, exchange knowledge and recognize in others common stories, and in themselves the opportunity to transform one's own masculinity.

✓ The **bond** established between all the men transformed the meetings into psychosocial support groups, networks of mutual support and friendship.



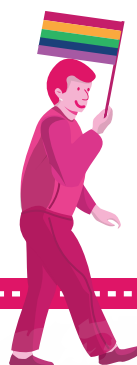
***“We need to have more support to form a network to change us, we need more men to come so that they assume a new world order regarding that old model of man, I have faith that this will change”.***



Venezuelan man in Ecuador

✓ In several of the groups, the men sought and proposed **continuing** a space for communication amongst themselves. An example is the group “*Socios para la Igualdad de Género*” formed in Tulcan - Ecuador, seeking to strengthen their bond and prolonging the program through events and activities such as cooking.

**Man who respects differences**



✓ The presence of men of **different ages** enriched the process and contributed to revitalizing group activities and stimulating generational exchange. Particularly, it is young men with their enthusiasm that encourage adult men to participate.

***“I work with potatoes and carrots, I run errands for a hardware store, I also unload cars. If I get home tired and the house is dirty, I no longer get aggressive like before, I go in quietly, I grab my little brush, I sweep, I scrub the dirty dishes. Because one scrubs, sweeps, and cooks, one’s manhood will not be taken away, as they say on the street. I have changed a lot and I see my wife differently”.***



Venezuelan man in Ecuador

✓ Many of the men evidenced that they were experiencing **stressful factors** such as, the precariousness of life, xenophobia, lack of access to decent work. These factors were reflected in their mental and emotional health, configuring a likely environment for violence. In addition to this, the demands of having to fulfill the role of providers, with the impossibility of guaranteeing basic conditions for their families, cause anguish and tension: “all that accumulates and creates a bomb” (Venezuelan man in Colombia).

✓ Men experienced different degrees of **understanding, awareness, and transformation**. Most of them reached a level of information and empathy regarding the three prioritized types of violence, others showed significant changes in rejecting violence and improving relationships with their partners, sons and daughters. However, these changes are not homogeneous and are not exempt from contradictions. Finally, it is pertinent to underline that the changes achieved during the ten sessions, although promising, require the permanent work of men and institutional accompaniment to face violence and years of sexist socialization.

***“I thank the entire group for giving me the opportunity to express myself, to listen to myself, to know that not only I am going through an overwhelming situation, that there are several of us going through the same thing. Coming to the workshops, I have learned that women are the same as us, they also have rights. I was a despot who did not know what it was like getting a woman’s opinion; I thought that my opinion, that of men, was the one that mattered. Now I know that women are equal to men and are worth the same. This group has been a great support for me. Now I think I can change my life and I wonder why it is that we men are the ones who cause harm. Many times we look for the blame in them, but we don’t stop to say: “Why am I doing this? I’m doing it the wrong way”. I think, it would be good if all organizations had a group like this to help us men step into women’s shoes”.***



Venezuelan man in Ecuador

**Men who understand that women and men are equal and have the same rights**





## Recommendations

1

***Strengthening the regional strategy involving men and boys to prevent gender-based violence.*** Develop a comprehensive approach to masculinities and the prevention of violence that gathers progress made implementing the model and scales it transversally to the organization's program development, including children in the process.

2

***Develop an educational communication strategy to promote and position the program.*** As a result of the challenges presented by the calling, we recommend developing written and audiovisual material illustrating the program experience, its achievements, and the opportunities it offers men. Also, have a presence in local media and develop distribution materials to form groups.

3

***Maintain implementation and manage program sustainability over time.*** Developing a program of this nature, at the regional level, is an organizational achievement that was reaffirmed by men asking for the space to be maintained and the number of groups and duration increased. We recommend carrying out a second version with new groups and consider opening a second level for men who are emerging as allies and express interest in making replicas.

4

***Exchange experiences and good intervention practices working with men and masculinities.*** We recommend enabling a space to exchange, at the national and regional levels, learning, innovations, and strategies gathered during the execution, whether successful or not.

5

***Strengthen territorial presence for joint action.*** The relationship with the public sector and social organizations is key. We recommend that, based on the identification of the needs of men and their families, alliances and articulations be made to expand men's access to rights and services. For example, in Tulcan, coordination enabled one of the participants to study an undergraduate degree through a scholarship.

6

***Maintain and expand the work with local implementing partners.*** We recommend sustaining the work with *Hombres en Marcha* in Pasto, and expanding with other civil society organizations in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

7

***Promote knowledge concerning the impact of working on masculinities with men to prevent violence in humanitarian contexts.*** According to the findings during implementation, there is both an opportunity and a need to generate knowledge about working with men in the humanitarian and emergency context, a topic that has received little attention in Latin America and the Caribbean.



- 8** ***Continue promoting the construction of a work program on masculinities in the humanitarian sector.*** We need to continue dialogue, exchange and discussion with other international and local organizations focused on humanitarian work, to address masculinities in migratory and emergency contexts and avoid duplicity and expand impact.
- 9** ***Provide support for the facilitation team during execution.*** Due to the intensity of topics addressed in the program, we recommend providing technical and emotional support for facilitators to ensure program quality and mental health of the team. In terms of this last dimension, we recommend strengthening care for caregivers.
- 10** ***Periodically carry out methodological training sessions for facilitators.*** We recommend that people who are going to accompany groups of men have access to methodological training as a step prior to implementation.
- 11** ***Produce teaching material complementary to the model.*** We recommend developing educational and methodological products to expand the resources for facilitators, such as tool boxes for men, preparing thematic workbooks, and more.
- 12** ***Maintain transport subsidy for the displacement of men.*** We recommend maintaining the subsidy and announcing in the call the existence of this contribution to facilitate access of men to the program.
- 13** ***Include a greater number of people from host communities.*** The participants recommend that more local men be invited to the program in order to broaden intercultural dialogues and understand the different scenarios for masculinity and violence against women and girls with the aim of prevention.





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