

GUIDELINES TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTEGRAL PROTECTION PLANS WITH A FEMINIST APPROACH





PRESENTATION

The guidelines that are presented below comprise a summary of reflections and concrete and simple tools to elaborate integral protection plans for women human rights defenders (WHRDs).

This proposal is based on the tools that Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A. C. (Consortio Oaxaca) has used and adapted through different protection accompaniments given to WHRDs.

The methodological proposal retrieves experiences that have been built with other organizations with whom Consorcio promotes and coordinates WHRDs networks: the Mesoamerican Initiative for Women Human Rights Defenders¹, the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders in Mexico², and the Network of Women Activists and Human Rights Defenders in Oaxaca³.



- 1.- The Mesoamerican Initiative is driven by a partnership between Just Associates (JASS), Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y Equidad Oaxaca A. C. (Consortio Oaxaca), La Colectiva Feminista para el Desarrollo Local in El Salvador, the Central American Women's Fund (FCAM), and Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Guatemala (UDEFEQUA). More information available at: <http://im-defensoras.org/en/>
- 2.- National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders in Mexico gathers 225 defenders of 24 states from the country. It is driven by Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A.C. (Consortio Oaxaca), Red Mesa de Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez, and Just Associates (JASS). More information available at: <http://im-defensoras.org/categoria/network/mexico-en/>
- 3.- Is driven by Consorcio Oaxaca, currently gathers 147 WHRDs from different Oaxacan regions working as a network for self-protection, security, and self-care for WHRDs of the state of Oaxaca.



Build integral protection plans with a feminist perspective for WHRDs implies a reflection on different levels, that is permanently crossed by three fundamental aspects of protection:



1. Physical Security: protection of WHRDs' physical integrity as well as the physical information that they use in their travels, protection also of their offices, houses, and other physical spaces.



2. Digital Security: protection of personal and professional information that is stored in digital devices as well as protection of communications.



3. Self-care and Wellbeing: protection of emotional integrity and the physical and psychological impacts of the risks that WHRDs face.

In every stage of reflection, these three elements will always be present since they are interdependent.

Analyzing risks and building plans for WHRDs implies a differentiated view: the kind of risks and their impacts are different because of their gender condition and role.

The construction of integral protection plans with a feminist perspective is divided into two main stages:

I. ANALYZE PRIORITY RISKS

This exercise is developed through different steps. The logic of the analysis is no-linear, so to say, every step is interrelated with the others and can imply the return to previous ones and the modification of conclusions. The risks a WHRD face depend on the context, on her activities, and on the actors in her surroundings. All these aspects are dynamic and interrelated.

The work of analysis is in this sense continuous and the conclusions are temporal. From there the importance of doing this exercise periodically so conclusions could be the closest to reality as possible.



ANALYZE OUR ACTIVITIES

- Which are all defense and promotion of human rights activities the WHRD and/or her organization do?
- Some are more dangerous than others?
- Risks are about attacks on our physical and digital integrity, or are also emotional or burnout risks?



ANALYZE THE CONTEXT

- What are the characteristics of the economic, political, legal, and social context in which we work?
- Are there aggressors that are not state actors?
 - Are there struggles for territorial control?
- Qualify the psycho-social context: is there concern, fear, social frustration because of political violence context?
- How does this context affect the work?

MAPPING THE ACTORS

To map actors, identify all the actors that support or oppose your labor based on their level of support - opposition, and their level of power.

Be as specific as possible.

Who are the actors that can ATTACK us for our work?

How strong are our ALLIANCES with actors at a local, regional, national, and international level?



More
impact



Against

MAPPING
ACTORS

In favor



What is the chain of command? Is there any way to influence them? Which actors have more or less power?

How can we involve our allies? What kind of support could they provide?

Less
impact



SITUATE THE RISKS

Concepts:



Security Incident

An event out of the ordinary that affects the physical, digital, and/or emotional security of the WHRD and/or her family, organization, or her surroundings.

Threat

A threat is a security incident with a high impact on the physical, digital, and/or emotional integrity of the WHRD and of which it is more difficult to recover. Not all security incidents are threats, but all threats are security incidents.



Attack

An attack is a security incident with a high impact on the physical, digital, and/or emotional integrity of the WHRD and of which it is more difficult to recover. The attack is directly directed against the WHRD for the work she is doing.



Incidents, threats, and attacks against WHRDs often have a gender component being different from the ones that male defenders face.

The analysis needs to situate internal, as well as external incidents:



EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL INCIDENTS



- Surveillance and/or harassment
 - Wiretapping
 - Home trespassing
 - Death threat
- Defamation and slander on social networks
- Physical aggression
- Sexual harassment,...



EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL INCIDENTS



- Depression
- Couple crisis and conflicts
- Unsolved intra-organization conflicts
 - Having kidney problems
- Reiterative distraction issues
 - Insomnia
- Permanent back pain,...



Once the list of incidents for the last six months is done, we will order them by date and level, to be able to identify patterns and possible tendencies towards the future.

From there we can assess the risk:

Assess the probability that each type of threat could happen and determine the damage it can cause. The **probability** of occurrence, as well as the **impact**, is then determined.



Based on all the security incidents that have happened to us, we assess the probabilities; and considering the conclusions of previous stages: the balance of the actors' map, the preponderant elements from the context, and the type of activities we do, **we prioritize 3 risks.**



II. ELABORATE INTEGRAL PROTECTION PLANS WITH A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis

Risk formula:

$$\text{RISKS} = \frac{\text{THREATS X VULNERABILITIES}}{\text{CAPACITIES}}$$



Facing a risk, we can work to decrease the impact as well as the probabilities that it happens. In this sense, the objective is to increase our **capabilities** and decrease our **vulnerabilities**.

We look into transforming our vulnerabilities using our capacities available and generating new measures.

From there and to be able to reach an integral plan to reduce the risk, we need to define which **resources** we need, who are the **people responsible**, and which **deadlines** we need to implement these measures.

Risk	Vulnerabilities: What vulnerabilities you have that you need to pay attention to, to decrease the risks?	Capacities: What knowledge, skills, resources, or practices you already have to protect yourself from that risk?	Measures to be taken: For each vulnerability, considering the existing capacities, what other measures should you take?	Resources needs: What economic, time, work, or other resources are needed to be able to implement this measure? What steps have to be taken to achieve it?	People Responsible: Who is responsible for the implementation of the measure? Yourself, someone else in the organization, your support network?	Deadlines: How long should it take to implement the measure?
Office trespassing	Office in a risk zone	There is a video intercom, a surveillance camera, and an electric fence	1. Map the neighborhood locating trustful neighbors with whom it will be possible to have agreements on monitoring and emerging responses	Time, prioritization, and define who will make follow up	A and B	1 month
	Everybody is authorized to open the door, there is no control system		2. Establish a protocol to control who enters the office, as well as for opening and closing of the office	Time, prioritization, and define who will make follow up	C and D	1 month
	There is no backup nor safeguarding of the information		3. Establish a monitoring protocol: verify the cameras are recording, define who will review that,...	None	E	15 days
			4. Map available information and make a plan for backup and safeguarding of information	Economic resources (purchase of furniture and hard disks,...) time, and external advising	F	1 month
Burnout risk	Work under high stress	There is a solidary therapist available to work supporting the team	1. Organize a therapeutic accompaniment space	Prioritize and schedule the activity moving resources available (therapist)	A	1 month
	Lack of clear definition of schedules, there are no limits		2. Formalize work schedules and vacation time as institutional policies	Prioritize and schedule this activity	B and C	1 month
			3. Use different phone numbers and emails for work and personal use	Time and prioritize it	D	15 days

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Consortio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y
la Equidad Oaxaca A. C.
Pensamientos, No. 104, Col Reforma, Oaxaca,
México C.P. 68000
contacto@consorciooaxaca.org.mx
(01 951) 206 6578

Coordination
Emilie De Wolf
Yésica Sánchez Maya

Design
Ivette Lizcano MOLOstudio