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The Effectiveness of the Cure Violence Approach in Latin America and the Caribbean

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May 2025

CURE VIOLENCE

The Cure Violence approach has been endorsed by leading organizations, including:

- World Health Organization
- UNICEF
- Inter American Development Bank
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Conference of Mayors
- Cities United



Cure Violence Global

Who We Are

Cure Violence Global (CVG) pioneered a groundbreaking public health approach to reducing violence over 20 years ago. By treating violence as a contagious disease—spread through exposure and able to be interrupted—CVG introduced a model that has since been widely adopted across the U.S., transforming how communities address violence.

CVG views violence through an epidemiological lens, as a learned behavior that can be interrupted. It trains trusted local partners and credible messengers to detect and interrupt conflict, guide high-risk individuals toward safer behaviors, and promote healthy social norms.

Scientific evaluations—independent, multi-year, and multi-site—have shown 40–70% reductions

in shootings and killings in the most affected communities in both the U.S. and Latin America. In some areas, violence drops by 90% and retaliation killings stop completely. Evaluations also show increased community safety, employment, and education outcomes, and shifts in attitudes about violence.

For the past 15 years, CVG has expanded its work throughout Latin America, partnering with local organizations, governments, and international agencies in countries such as Honduras, Colombia, Mexico, and El Salvador. These programs have reduced violence, built local capacity, and supported long-term community health and safety.

Now is the time for global investment in public health strategies for violence prevention. CVG is ready to help communities achieve meaningful, measurable impact.

The Cure Violence Approach

The Cure Violence model is based on the World Health Organization's approach to reversing the spread of infectious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis, and cholera. The model applies three proven epidemic control strategies to stop violence. Trained, culturally appropriate workers interrupt the transmission of violence, prevent its future spread, and transform community norms.

The model has been successfully replicated in diverse settings, proving its effectiveness across a variety of communities, cultures, and ethnic groups.

CREDIBLE WORKERS

Public health outreach strategies regularly employ workers who share the same background and come from the same neighborhood as those who need to be reached—in this case those most at risk for violence. Cure Violence sites hire violence interrupters and outreach workers who already have the trust of community members and are able to influence and change behavior.

THREE STRATEGIES

1 Detect and Interrupt Potentially Violent Conflicts.

Violence interrupters are a new category of health workers who prevent violence by detecting and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community and following up to ensure conflict does not reignite.

2 Identify and Treat Individuals at the Highest Risk.

Outreach workers help to steer those at the highest risk away from violence by talking in their terms, discussing the costs of using violence, and helping them to obtain support and social services (e.g., education, job training, drug treatment) to foster long term changes to behavior and in life course.

3 Mobilize the Community to Change Norms.

Workers engage community leaders, local business owners, residents, faith leaders, and particularly individuals at high risk, to shift the message, expectations, and norms around violence for the long term.

Cure Violence in Latin America & the Caribbean

Cure Violence Global (CVG) works with partners across the world to implement effective approaches for reducing violence. The Cure Violence approach has been implemented in more than 100 communities and independently evaluated more than 20 times, with each evaluation showing large, statistically significant reductions in violence.

CVG partners with UNICEF, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and others to provide local organizations across Latin America and the

Caribbean (LAC) with comprehensive training and technical assistance to implement the Cure Violence approach.

In 2012, partners in Puerto Rico implemented the first Cure Violence program in the LAC region, followed by Honduras in 2013. The success of these programs paved the way for the approach to be implemented across the region, including in Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago.

CVG LAC TIMELINE

- 2012** Loiza, Puerto Rico, USA
- 2013** San Pedro Sula, Honduras
- 2014** Juarez, Mexico
Kingston, Jamaica
Montego Bay, Jamaica
- 2015** Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
San Salvador, El Salvador
- 2016** Chihuahua, Mexico
Rosario, Argentina
Santa Fe, Argentina
- 2018** Mexico City, Mexico
Cali, Colombia
- 2019** Corozal, Honduras
Culiacan, Mexico
- 2021** Choloma, Honduras
Rivera Hernandez, Honduras
- 2022** Sambo Creek, Honduras
- 2023** Tegulcigalpa, Honduras
- 2024** Montevideo, Uruguay
- 2025** Santiago, Chile
Tijuana, Mexico
Guerrero, Mexico

CVG SITES IN LAC



The Impact of the Cure Violence Approach in Latin America and the Caribbean

CITY (COUNTRY)	YEAR	MAJOR FINDINGS	OTHER FINDINGS	RESEARCH BY
Culiacan (Mexico)	2023	90% reduction in killings	1,234 conflicts mediated	Mas Vida
Cali (Colombia)	2020	32% - 74% reduction in killings	95% reduction in youth killings	ICESI University (Alvarallice, Cali)
Port of Spain (Trinidad)	2018	45% reduction in violent crime	39% reduction in shootings	Arizona State University (IADB)
San Pedro Sula (Honduras)	2018	94% reduction in shootings	80% reduction in shootings	Cure Violence Global
San Salvador (El Salvador)	2017	64% say violent behavior reduced	61% say there was a reduction in shootings	Save the Children
Loiza, PR (USA)	2016	58% reduction in killings	38% reduction in total crime	Southern Hemisphere Consulting

COLOMBIA

Cali

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Abriendo Caminos
- **Sites (50+):** Citywide
- **Dates:** 3/2018 - present
- **CVG TTA:** 2020 - 2022
- **Partners:** Fundación Alvaralice, Ciudadana de la Alcaldía de Cali

In 2018, the Cure Violence approach was launched in Cali, initially focusing on the neighborhoods of Charco Azul and the informal settlement of Comuneros. Following strong early results and a rigorous evaluation showing significant reductions in shootings and killings, the program expanded through partnerships with local government and businesses. Today, the initiative operates citywide in more than 50 communities, supported by over 100 trained violence interrupters.

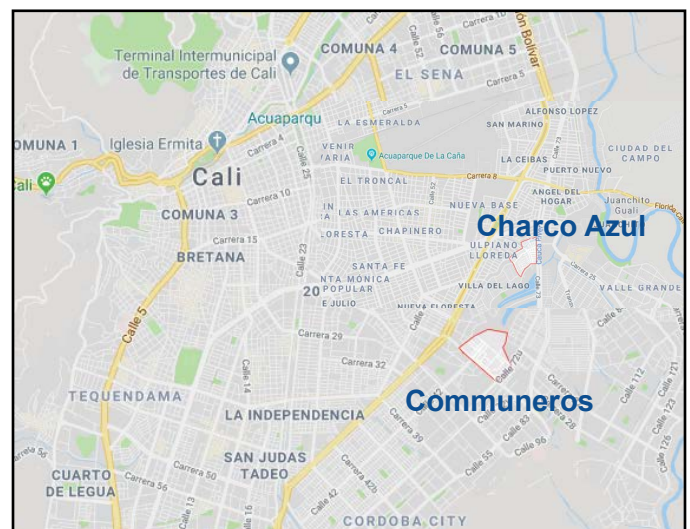
2020 EVALUATION

Led by C. Leon, Instituto Colombiano de Estudios Superiores de Incolda

The initiative was grounded in a detailed analysis of crime data from the National Police's Crime Observatory, covering a range of offenses including homicides, personal injuries, sexual and domestic violence, threats, theft, and arrests, all sorted by neighborhood and spanning from 2010 to 2019.

The evaluation of the program revealed promising results. In Charco Azul, homicides fell by 47%, while Comuneros saw a 30% reduction in the intervention area. These decreases in lethal violence coincided with active engagement from the community, as 307 high-risk youths voluntarily joined the program—178 in Charco Azul and 129 in Comuneros. Importantly, 40% of these participants returned to school during the program period, a sign that the initiative not only helped reduce immediate violence but also fostered long-term behavioral and social change.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Cure Violence approach can be effectively adapted to the Colombian context, particularly when supported by localized crime data and targeted at communities



Cure Violence Impact Cali, Colombia

74%

Reduction in Killings (Charco Azul)

32%

Reduction in Killings (Comuneros)

with high concentrations of youth violence. The reduction in violent incidents and the reintegration of young people into educational systems highlight the program's dual impact: addressing both the symptoms and root causes of violence. The Cali experience contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting community-based, public health-driven violence prevention models.

EL SALVADOR

San Pedro Masahuath

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Seamos Uno
- **Sites (4):** Divina Providencia 1, Divina Providencia 2, La Tequera y Los Novillo
- **Dates:** 2015 - 2017
- **CVG TTA:** 2015 - 2017
- **Partners:** Save the Children, Creative Associates Asociación Para Los Derechos Humanos De La Niñez

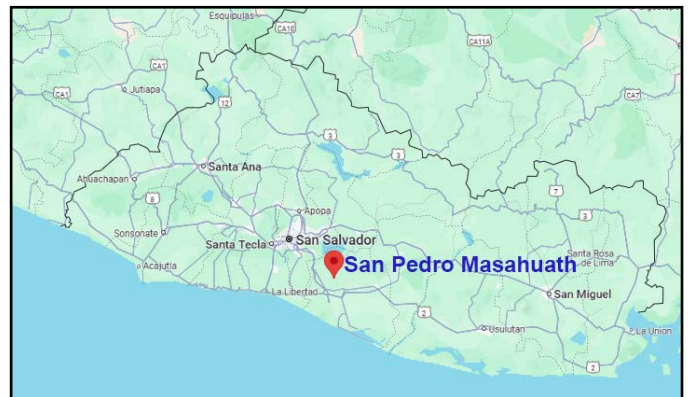
The Cure Violence approach was implemented in San Pedro Masahuath in three phases: pre-implementation, introductory, and full implementation. Early efforts focused on staff training, violence trend analysis, and relationship-building with high-risk individuals. In the next phase, staff mediated conflicts, introduced nonviolent alternatives, and organized community events to build trust and visibility. Full implementation began once strong community relationships were in place.

2017 REPORT

Led by L. Medoza, Save the Children

Researchers evaluating the "Interrupting Violence in El Salvador" project found that it demonstrated strong cost-effectiveness and relevance by directly addressing social violence in vulnerable communities. Their findings show that, through the work of violence interrupters, over 150 violent incidents were successfully mediated, saving lives and promoting nonviolent conflict resolution alternatives. Survey data revealed that 64% of respondents reported a reduction in violent behavior over the past year. Although official statistics reflected a decline in crime, researchers noted that community perceptions remained influenced by nearby violence and persistent fear, emphasizing the broader psychosocial impact of violence in the region.

The evaluation also found that the project effectively empowered children and adolescents—those most



Cure Violence Impact San Salvador, El Salvador

64%

Reported Violent Behavior Decreased

vulnerable to violence—by fostering a culture of peace and promoting their rights. Researchers highlighted the project's comprehensive, evidence-based approach, which integrates civic coexistence and community resilience. They also noted the importance of collaboration with local institutions like churches, ADESCOS, and municipalities in strengthening conflict mediation and supporting long-term sustainability. The work of APRODEHNI and Save the Children was reported to be respected by both community members and gang affiliates.

HONDURAS

San Pedro Sula

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Barrio Positivo
- **Sites (7):** 7 zones in Chamelecon
Additional program in San Pedro Sula and Other parts of Honduras
- **Dates:** 4/2013 - present
- **CVG TTA:** 2012 - present
- **Partners:** UNICEF

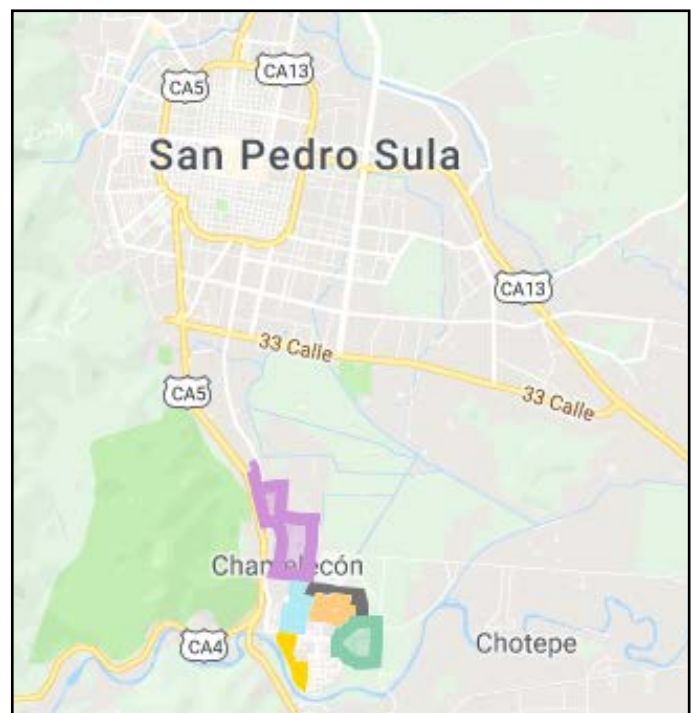
Cure Violence Global began working in San Pedro Sula in 2012 with a series of assessment visits to explore the model's fit for the local context. The program officially launched in April 2013 with intensive staff training. By 2015, it had expanded to seven zones with 10 staff members and began incorporating broader community engagement strategies. Today, the Cure Violence approach operates in multiple areas of San Pedro Sula, as well as in several other cities across Honduras.

2016 REPORT

Led by C. Ransford, Cure Violence Global

Implementation of the Cure Violence approach began in three areas of Chamelecón in April 2013. From April to December 2013, these three sites experienced a total of 150 shooting incidents. During the same period in 2014, shootings dropped by 80% to just 30 incidents. Zone 3 saw the largest reduction in magnitude, with 58 fewer shootings—an 87% decrease. Zone 1 experienced the greatest percentage drop, with shootings falling from 25 to zero, a 100% reduction. Zone 2 also saw a significant decrease, with 27 fewer shootings, representing a 64% reduction.

In January 2014, implementation expanded to Zones 4 and 5. Across all five sites, from January to May, shootings dropped by 94%, from 89 incidents in 2013 to only five in 2015. Zone 2 achieved the most dramatic improvement during this period, with a 100% reduction—30 fewer shootings. These results highlight the substantial impact of the Cure Violence model in reducing gun violence across multiple high-risk areas of San Pedro Sula.



Cure Violence Impact San Pedro Sula, Honduras

94%

Reduction in Shootings

MEXICO

Culiacan

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Más Vida
- **Sites (7):** 10 de Mayo, Lázaro Cárdenas, CNOP, Huizaches, Toledo Corro, La Costera, and Alturas del Sur
- **Dates:** 8/2019 - present
- **CVG TTA:** 2019 - present
- **Partners:** UNICEF, FICOSEC, Leafglen Foundation, Parques Alegres

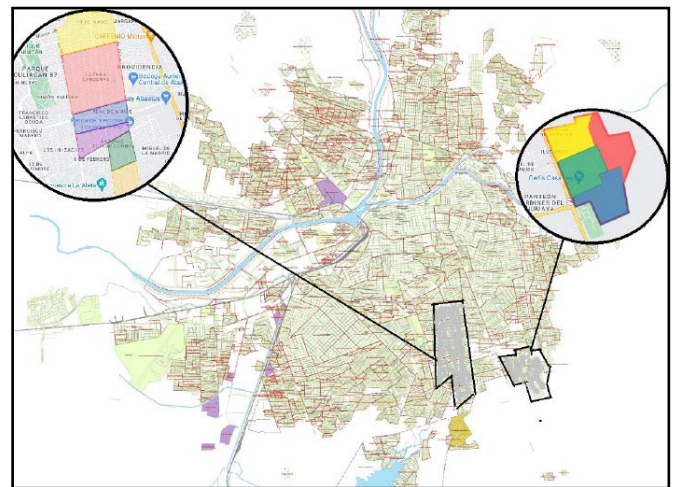
The Cure Violence program launched in Culiacán in August 2019 under difficult conditions, including community skepticism and limited access due to ongoing violence. Despite early management challenges, Cure Violence Global established strong local leadership and built trust with residents. Over time, the program gained robust community support and has made meaningful progress in reducing violence.

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2022 Annual Report for Más Vida, a violence prevention program in Culiacán advised by Cure Violence, highlights significant progress in reducing violence within its intervention zones. In the original area of operation, only three homicides were recorded throughout the year—representing a 90% reduction in killings compared to previous years. This marked a historic low and served as a strong indicator of the program's effectiveness.

Midway through 2022, the program expanded to the Alturas del Sur neighborhood. In the first half of the year, this area experienced five homicides, but following the program's introduction in July, only two homicides occurred in the latter half—one of which was deemed non-intentional. Throughout the year, Más Vida conducted 1,234 conflict mediations, directly contributing to the de-escalation of violence.

The program also engaged 3,300 direct beneficiaries and reached more than 11,500 individuals indirectly through a variety of community-building efforts, including trust-building activities, sports clinics, and collaborations with local partners. Data from the report shows a steady decline in intentional homicides across program areas compared to previous years, reinforcing the program's positive and sustained impact on community safety and peacebuilding.



Cure Violence Impact Culiacan, Mexico

90%
Reduction in Killings

1,234
Conflicts Mediated

PUERTO RICO

Loiza

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Acuerdo de Paz
- **Sites:** Citywide
- **Dates:** 1/2012 - 2016
- **CVG TTA:** 2012 - 2016
- **Partners:** Taller Salud

The Acuerdo de Paz program in Loíza was created in response to a tragic shooting in 2009 during a youth basketball clinic that claimed the lives of three teenagers. Deeply shaken, the community mobilized, and local organization Taller Salud reached out to Cure Violence Global for support. After studying the model and presenting it to residents, the community agreed it reflected their needs. Taller Salud led the successful adaptation and launch of Acuerdo de Paz.

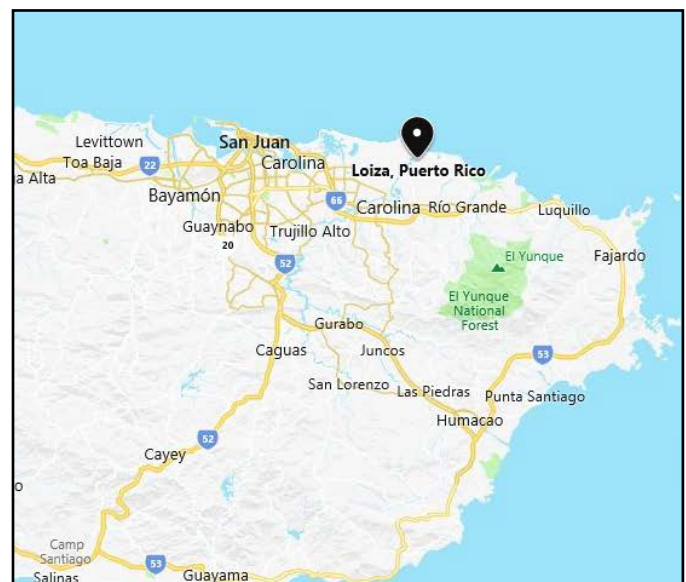
2016 EVALUATION

Led by D. Niña, Southern Hemisphere Consulting & Development Services

A mixed-methods evaluation was conducted in Loíza, to assess violence and the adaptation of the Cure Violence model, using both quantitative and qualitative data, including community surveys. The study was carried out in four phases.

The evaluation also included a detailed analysis of conflict mediations in the community. Most conflicts occurred in Parcelas Suárez, Yukiyú, and Tocones, with mediation efforts peaking in the months of May, March, April, and July. The majority of mediations were conducted in-person or in small groups, often involving only one to three individuals.

Key outcomes of the evaluation included a reported 58% reduction in killings—from 43 in 2011 to 20 in 2012—and a broader decline in overall crime from 469 reported incidents in 2011 to 292 in 2012.



Cure Violence Impact Loiza, Puerto Rico

58%

Reduction in Killings

38%

Reduction in Total Crime

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Port of Spain

PROGRAM

- **Name:** Project REASON
- **Sites (16):** Beetham Estate, Belmont, Eastern, Port of Spain, Eastern Quarry, Gonzales, Laventille, Marie Road, Mon Repos, Morvant, Never Dirty, Picton, Port of Spain Proper, Romain Lands, Sea Lots, St. Barbs, Upper Belmont
- **Dates:** 7/2015 - 8/2017
- **CVG TTA:** 2015 - 2017
- **Partners:** Ministry of National Security

In 2015, the Ministry of National Security launched Project REASON, a local adaptation of the Cure Violence model, to address violence in 16 communities in the Port of Spain area. The program began deploying staff in July and officially launched in September, marking a new step in the country's efforts to prevent violence using a public health approach.

2018 EVALUATION

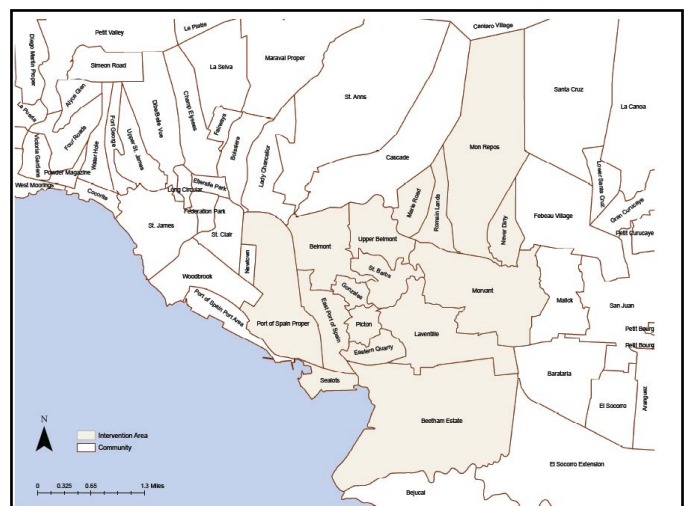
Led by E. Maguire, Arizona State University

A comprehensive, mixed-methods evaluation of the Cure Violence initiative was conducted from July 2015 to August 2017. The evaluation included a quasi-experimental impact evaluation using a synthetic control method and interrupted time series analysis, as well as quantitative findings on changes in participants' behaviors and attitudes, a national survey, and a cost-effectiveness analysis.

One year after the launch of Cure Violence programming, the violent crime rate in the treatment area was 45.1% lower than in the comparison area. Two years after the launch, the violent crime rate in the treatment area was 44.9% lower than in the comparison area.

Calls to police for murders, shootings, and woundings decreased in the treatment area by 22.6% and increased in the comparison area by 10%, a statistically significant difference.

The time series for the analyses ran from January 2010 to September 2017 and the results showed a



Cure Violence Impact Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

39%

Reduction in Shootings

45%

Reduction in Violent Crime

clear pattern in the data, a statistically significant reduction in monthly shootings of roughly 38.7%.

Cure Violence was found to be effective in reducing fear of crime in the treatment communities with a small to medium effect size.

Findings from the cost-effectiveness evaluation showed that Cure Violence cost, on average, approximately \$3,500 to \$4,500 for every violent incident it prevented.

PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ACROSS LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

2021 REPORT

Led by M. Connolly, UNICEF

The report details the adaptation and implementation of the Cure Violence Global (CVG) model in Honduras through a partnership with UNICEF. This initiative aimed to address not only armed violence but also the deeply rooted gender-based violence (GBV) affecting communities in cities such as San Pedro Sula, Choloma, La Ceiba, Sambo Creek, and Corozal between 2019 and 2021. The approach maintained the foundational public health framework of Cure Violence while modifying its operational components to incorporate gender sensitivity, aiming to interrupt cycles of violence and shift harmful social norms.

The adapted model included five core components: violence interruption and conflict mediation; personal commitment to risk reduction and behavior change; community education; training and technical support; and data collection with ongoing monitoring. These components were deployed by community-based workers trained to act as credible messengers, many of whom had lived experience and deep social ties within the targeted areas. Their role was essential in identifying high-risk individuals, mediating potentially violent conflicts, and supporting participants through goal-setting and social reintegration.

A key innovation in the adaptation was the model's integration of a gender lens. The team developed specific methodologies to identify and interrupt GBV-related incidents, including domestic violence and femicide risks, while recognizing the potential danger of traditional mediation strategies in certain GBV cases. In these instances, emphasis was placed on risk reduction, referral to institutional support, and rights restitution rather than conflict resolution between victim and aggressor. Community education efforts targeted prevailing gender norms, using art, sports, and public events to reshape local attitudes toward women, masculinity, and violence.

Overall, the project demonstrated that the Cure Violence model, when adapted to include a



Cure Violence Impact Gender-based Violence Choloma & San Pedro Sula, Honduras (2020-2021)

724

Violent Incidents Against Women Interrupted
(abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, exploitation)

501

Lives Saved

52

Women and Children Relocated

gender perspective and supported by strong local partnerships, can effectively reduce GBV and community violence. The initiative not only prevented violence but also contributed to cultural transformation, empowering women and shifting community norms toward non-violence and gender equity. The experience in Honduras provides a strong case for the model's relevance in addressing complex social issues beyond traditional forms of armed conflict.