



WRV COLLECTIVE

WOMEN RESISTING VIOLENCE

PODCAST REPORT

2022

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OVERVIEW

Latin America has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide in the world. This incidence increased in frequency and severity during the coronavirus pandemic. In response to the limited systematic exploration of grassroots projects in addressing this violence in the UK, LAB members and academics at King's College London launched a new project with an international researcher on gender equality. This examined and celebrated grassroots campaigns and organizations that counter violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Latin America and among Latin Americans in the UK, in a podcast series, website, workshop, and book.

A core element of the Women Resisting Violence (WRV) project is a podcast focusing on women resisting in Brazil, Guatemala, and the UK. The podcast flips the usual focus on the causes of GBV prevalent in policy and charity podcasts, to focus instead on the lessons we can learn directly from women who have both suffered GBV and who are creating initiatives to fight against it from the grassroots up.

Crucially, the episodes are multilingual (in English, Spanish and Portuguese) and feature high-quality production with the aim of reaching as wide an audience as possible. They sensitively thread together the nature of a range of grassroots and advocacy initiatives and women's lived experiences.



A collaborative production, the podcast developed meaningful conversations around resisting VAWG and shared first-hand knowledge of addressing such violence internationally.

The podcast is a tool of resistance as it amplifies women's political and social agency. It is used as lobbying material, as a campaigning and communications tool, and as a teaching resource for community groups, NGOs, and students. It also has the potential to be used in sensitizing work with police around safe reporting for migrant women with insecure immigration status in the UK suffering abuse, and has supported some of these women's successful applications for asylum abroad.

The series was released over the international 16 Days of Activism Against GBV in November 2021, contributing to raising public awareness of a range of issues and survivor/women-led solutions. It has been downloaded in over 50 countries and was shortlisted for Best Documentary in the Amnesty International Media Awards 2022.

PODCAST EPISODES



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1

Episode 1: Mourning the 56 in Guatemala

focuses on the work of Ocho Tijax, a women's collective established in the wake of a tragedy in which 56 girls were locked in a classroom of their state-run children's home just outside Guatemala City and left to burn to death. 15 survived. Five years later no one has been sentenced for these crimes. Ocho Tijax cares for the girls' families and the survivors as well as fighting their case in the courts and supporting artistic campaigns to memorialize those who lost their lives. Available in English and Spanish, with a Portuguese transcript online.

3

Episode 3: Step Up Migrant Women

focuses on women resisting gendered violence in the UK. It includes testimony from a survivor of intimate partner abuse and state neglect, who now works on the Latin American Women's Rights Service's (LAWRS) and for the Step Up Migrant Women campaign that they lead to highlight the vulnerability of migrant women with insecure immigration status in situations of VAWG. It also features the work of Migrants in Action (MinA), a community theatre group dedicated to Brazilian women in London who have experienced gender-based violence. Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

2

Episode 2: Rio's Trailblazing Women's House

tells the story of the Casa Das Mulheres da Maré in the favelas of Maré in Rio de Janeiro, which provides education around gendered violence and support for those leaving abusive relationships in an area where the police refuse to intervene, together with a range of livelihoods and arts projects. It was also a lifeline for many during COVID when numerous favela residents lost their jobs. The centre provided work, created masks, and distributed food to starving families – and dealt with a huge rise in domestic violence. Available in English and Portuguese, with a Spanish transcript on our website.

4

Bonus episode: Listening to Women Resisting Violence

is based on an online roundtable discussion around the power of podcasting for social change, contextualizing the compelling stories of transformation and solidarity showcased in the Women Resisting Violence podcast. Available in English.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS



Produced by Louise Morris, the podcast's narrative centered on interviews with women activists, interwoven to portray their projects, campaigns, and lived experiences.

The sound design delicately mixed atmosphere from the women's spaces, live recordings from the theatre group's performances, and testimony from parliamentary hearings with music local to each organization, drawing the listener into the stories and adding context.

Narration from Renata Peppl in all three languages threaded the interviews together.

Music was provided by Guatemalan hip hop artist Rebeca Lane, musicians from the Maré favelas and WARA, a band whose music tackles the experiences of Latin American migrants in the UK.

Some of the interviewees provided dubbing in their second language; where this was not possible, we worked with non-professional dubbing artists from the same regions as the contributors and with a direct connection to the issues, to convey the sentiments of the interviewees authentically across three language versions.

4 WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

4 RESEARCHERS

8 EPISODES

3 LANGUAGES

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

50+ COUNTRIES

1,900+ DOWNLOADS

LESSONS FROM THE PODCAST PROJECT



- Podcasts are an engaging format to ensure that voices are heard, building empathy for people's experiences through the intimacy of listening. The WRV podcast is a means to listen to those affected by violence, a means to denounce that violence, and a way to record that memory for the future.

“ ***The podcast is an act of remembrance and it is a historical document.*** ”
– Stef Arreaga, Ocho Tijax, Guatemala

- Podcasts create an intimacy between speaker and listener that improves communication between victim-survivors as well as between affected communities and wider audiences.
- Podcasts give visibility to the everyday battles of women resisting violence, locally as well as transnationally.

“ ***This podcast internationalizes the fight of women*** ”
– Ana Rojas, dubbing artist Episode 3, London

- Podcasts empower in their ability to inform women and to allow women to speak to wider audiences.

“ ***[Contributing to the podcast marked] a breakthrough from being a survivor to being a voice for the community*** ”
– Gil Garcia, Step Up Migrant Women, London

British listeners drew parallels with issues in the UK (Grenfell fire, state/church abuses), and Carolina Cal of MinA Theatre, London recognised that:

“ ***the podcast connected our work with other organizations in and out of the UK. It has put MinA's work in a wider context, bringing visibility to the issues involving Brazilian women in the UK.*** ”

- Podcasts can be a means to affirm and grow communities by making links and sharing with other communities to further collective action. Working with women in Brazil, Guatemala and London, we built a network through the production process, where knowledge, experience and solidarity was shared.
- Multilingual podcasts are more accessible and impactful than monolingual podcasts. We managed to share the voices of those directly affected by GBV transnationally and to support solidarity and advocacy actions. The episodes have been heard in three languages and in 53 countries.

“ ***'We are not invisible!'*** ”
– Gil Garcia, Step Up Migrant Women, London

- Podcasts hold the potential to contribute to social change when used as a means to denounce human rights violations; they can be a tool to empower women and to affirm communities and collective actions. They are a new form of communication for advocacy and for grassroots women's organizations and have the potential to be used to influence social policies.

WRV supported members of one organization's successful claim for asylum in the US and is used by another grassroots organization as lobbying material to influence decision makers in parliament in relation to the Domestic Abuse Bill (now Act), as well as in training around the need to sensitize work with police around safe reporting for migrant women with insecure immigration status in the UK suffering abuse.

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Listening to those most affected is essential if we are to change the political structures and discriminatory practices that uphold violence and impunity and impinge on women's daily lives. The intimate nature of podcasting makes it an effective tool for conveying stories and ensuring they are heard.

“ ***We wanted to listen to women resisting violence; learn lessons from them; and find a way to feed into policy.*** ”
– Jelke Boesten, Professor of Gender and Development, KCL/WRV team

- There is potential for podcasts to make major inroads as a popular form of knowledge transfer among the marginalized moving forward. In fact, Latin America is the fastest growing region for podcast consumption (Grand Review Research, 2021).

“ ***Podcasting has a lot of potential and we need to know the best way of using this medium*** ”
– Catalina May, Las Raras podcast, Chile

- Podcast production is not always accessible to women's grassroots organizations, however, free apps and mobile phone tech makes recording and sharing audio digitally ever more accessible. For example, voice notes on Whatsapp are regularly used by the organizations involved to mobilize and advise. Knowledge about production techniques and storytelling must be shared with grassroots organizations and within international women's networks in order to promote podcasting as an effective tool for promoting their campaigns and supporting their work.
- Gendered and intersectional VAWG is the result of intersecting systems of oppression which perpetuate women's structural subordination and further disenfranchise rural and urban Black, Indigenous, migrant women and trans people. For any response to be effective, it must be intersectional.

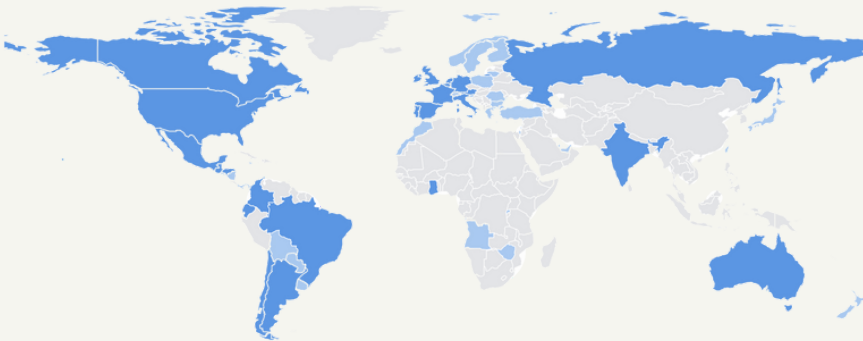
- Engaging with the arts and social media facilitates dissemination and international solidarity.
- Activities devoted to self-help, mutual support, and collective healing are vital and effective, but must be accompanied by sustained campaigning and advocacy work in order to raise awareness and influence policymaking.
- Women are often presented as victims of VAWG and our power for agency and social transformation is overlooked. Despite this, women at the grassroots are leading the way in the struggle for social justice. Their actions and strategies deserve upscaling into higher levels of policymaking.
- Feminist and women's rights organizations in alliance with social movements have documented the everyday forms of violence women endure. Their struggles have also exposed economic forms of VAWG that are often overlooked in official policy documents. They must be recognized as critical agents of change in mobilizing forces and actions towards the eradication of VAWG. Centering the voices of survivors who are working to mitigate VAWG, support others, and prevent GBV is essential.
- Listen to and believe women's testimonies of VAWG and use their narratives as reliable data to inform policies and legislation.
- States and civil society should listen to and learn from existing campaigning/advocacy and grassroots initiatives to address VAWG and fund mechanisms to capture innovative collective resistance strategies.
- Alternative forms of visibilizing the experiences of VAWG and women's resistance should be given greater prominence and used more effectively to influence policy. These include various forms of arts-based and memorializing initiatives, including the role of podcasts celebrated here.



PODCAST INSIGHTS

Top 10 countries where people listened (out of 53 countries in total)

United Kingdom
United States
Brazil
Spain
Mexico
Canada
Colombia
Guatemala
Germany
Argentina



Participants joined our 'Listening to Women Resisting Violence' webinar about podcasting for social change from Rio de Janeiro, Maidstone, London, Oxford, Manchester, Madrid, Germany, Brighton, Santo Domingo Chile, Mexico City, Chiapas, Granada Spain, and the USA.

“ I was delighted to hear so much great stuff being said about podcasting as a tool for not just communication but activism – I couldn't be happier to be involved. ”

“ Me ha encantado conocer este proyecto, esta forma de conectar y trabajar juntas. ”

Women Resisting Violence was shortlisted for 'Best Documentary Podcast' in the Amnesty International UK Media Awards 2002.

12 media articles were published about our podcast project

nacla

THE BRAZILIAN REPORT

SOUNDS and COLOURS

LATINO LIFE

the f word
CONTEMPORARY UK FEMINISM

SPUTNIK

Leros

LSE

KING'S
College
LONDON

brazzil
TRYING TO UNDERSTAND BRAZIL SINCE 1998

1,900+

Listeners

53

Countries

3

Languages



“ ...An important social document as well as a vehicle for change. ”



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Women Resisting Violence project was funded by the **ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA)** held at **King's College London** for a project entitled 'Women Resisting Gendered and Intersectional Violence: developing a podcast audio series to 'share best practice and influence policy-making', as part of a policy and practice fellowship between King's College London and the **Latin America Bureau**, and for which we are grateful. It received additional support from the **National Lottery Community Fund**.

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How to cite this: Women Resisting Violence Collective (2022) *Women Resisting Violence Podcast Report 2022*, Latin America Bureau and King's College London: London.



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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING
AND SUPPORTING
WOMEN RESISTING VIOLENCE



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