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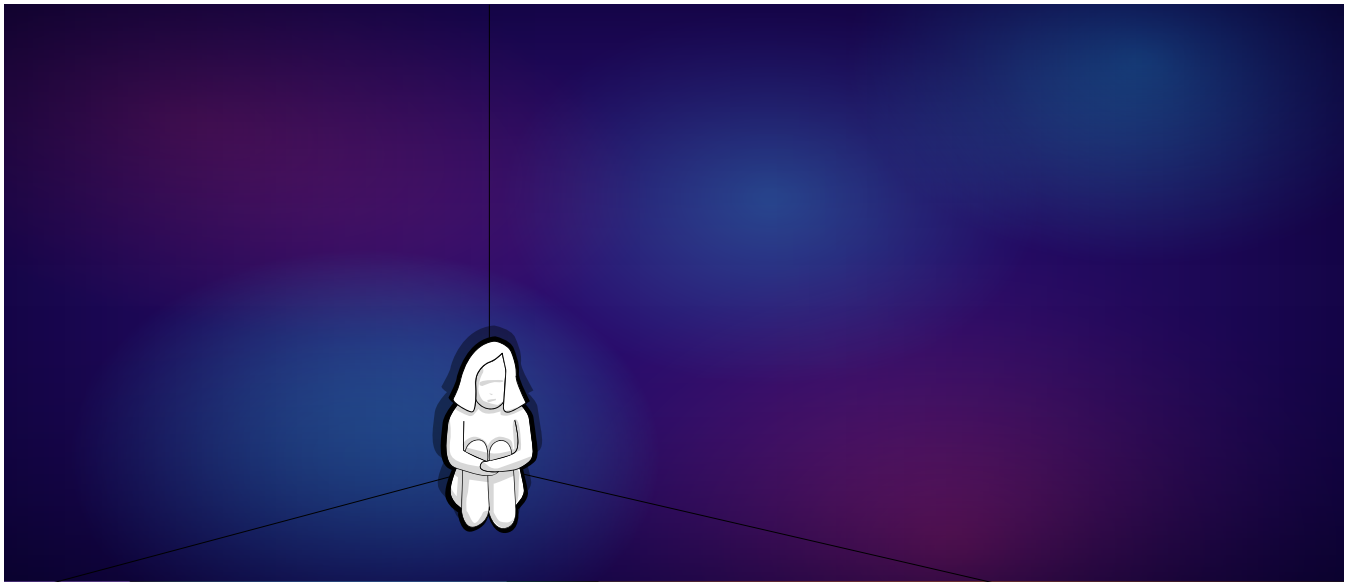


Women, Girls, and Data of Violence in Mexico:

What the State Doesn't See and Doesn't Address

THE CASE STUDIES OF JUÁREZ AND CHIHUAHUA

For decades, the municipalities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez have been in the public eye for their high crime rates committed against women and girls. Years of international and domestic recommendations, in addition to political pressure from organized local groups and organizations, have provided local governments with the necessary tools to roll out public policies that tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG).

From the wide-ranging entities involved in tackling VAWG that have been built in Juárez and Chihuahua, useful statistical data can be leveraged to create local prevention policies. However, the records containing data about violence continue to be affected by structural and particular limitations that stem from the processes of compiling, systemizing and analyzing such data, preventing it from being converted into quality statistical information.

This project highlights the limitations that local governments must overcome in order to create their own administrative records and to feed the national database that aims to systemize them: the National Database on Violence Against Women (BANAVIM). After identifying the obstacles found in the data compilation, systemization and analysis processes within local organizations, a series of specific recommendations were created to serve as a guideline for local government officials to better leverage the records they have already created, in addition to strengthen their processes of generating statistical data.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BANAVIM*	National Database on Violence Against Women
CALLE	Emergency Call Support Centers
CEAV	State Executive Commission for Victim Support
DIF	National System for Integral Family Development
DSPM	Local Public Security Office
FEM	Specialized Criminal Investigation Division for Female Victims of Crime for Reasons of Gender and Family Support
FGE	Chihuahua State Attorney's Office
LGAMVLV	General Law for Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence
MAM	Mechanisms for Women's Progress
AR	Administrative Records
SESNSP	Executive Secretary of the National Public Security System
SIPINNA	State System for the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents
SSA	Ministry of Health
UAVI	(Intra) Family Violence Support Unit
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

* The National Database on Violence Against Women, BANAVIM, is also referred to throughout this text as Database.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations addressed to organizations tasked with addressing VAWG:

- Ensure a minimum standard variable for BANAVIM in order to standardize information and guarantee exhaustive data. Specifically:

    1. Establishing and adding a minimum standard variables determined by the BANAVIM in terms of Administrative Records (AR), to reduce data omission within the Database.

    2. Using the same minimum standard to facilitate the exchange of information among government agencies, ensuring the standardization and intelligibility of the data being exchanged.

    3. Using minimum standard variables as the foundation for creating new AR, if and when necessary.

- Utilize the BANAVIM identifier (Unique Victim Record) to create a key variable to safeguard the data and identity of the victims.

- Promote training among officials in the areas of statistics and the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.

- Institutionalize good practices that are already implemented by staff at these agencies by adding an explicit component to gender perspective protocols and manuals.

- Repeat this practice to define, within the same documents, a clear and well-defined guide to information generation.

- Reassign budgets to local statistical departments and guarantee access to resources to help facilitate their operations.

- Socialize protocols and manuals – specifically those related to the monitoring and traceability of updated information and cases – in order to institutionalize the interoperability of the government agencies.

- Consolidate, through agreements, inter-institutional roundtables to collaboratively decide on goals, areas of responsibility, and reporting and assessment frequency.

Transversal Considerations

- Socialize the importance of generating this type of information within the operations and statistical departments in order to guarantee quality during the processes of compilation, systemization and analysis.

- Prioritize the generation of statistical information that addresses violence perpetrated against girls, in addition to addressing the lack of knowledge of the area and creating adequate prevention and support policies.

INTRODUCTION

In Mexico, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a crime that is on the rise, both in territorial and social terms. At the time of writing this article, 640 municipalities in the country have issued a Gender Violence against Women Alert (DAVGM), for which nearly 10 women or girls are murdered in the country daily[1]. To tackle the invisible pandemic that affects thousands of girls and women, the federal and local governments have promoted initiatives that focus on measuring and better addressing this phenomenon in order to design suitable public policies.

To guarantee that the design and application of these policies are underpinned by useful and quality data[2], it is necessary to examine the processes through which said data is generated. The objective of this report is to analyze the process of how administrative records are created in Chihuahua and Juárez, two municipalities that have played a key role in improving VAWG policies in Mexico[3].

Why administrative records?

As part of the *México Evalúa* Violence Reduction and Security program, we have emphasized the importance of working at a local level to generate situated knowledge and improve the quality of statistical data[4]. In this project, we engaged with several government agencies responsible for addressing VAWG in Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez, to document how the processes of data compilation, systematization and analysis impact the quality of Administrative Records (AR)[5] and, as such, their proclivity for providing useful statistical information for the creation of public policy.

The reports included in the AR and the statistical records upon which they are based, are more than just bureaucratic paperwork; they are sources of information that are highly valuable in understanding VAWG. If properly analyzed, they can reveal the causes, forms, and contexts of the violence suffered by girls and women in the country.

The confidential qualitative data found in these records is normally converted into data and graphs that underpin operational decisions and the accountability of the institutions in question. This means that they must show aggregate numbers of the service and support provided, which, for example, could be useful when requesting local budget increases or defining the priorities of operational programs. All government agencies that address the cases of women and girls are potential sources of AR and, as such, of information that is fundamentally important in understanding this phenomenon within a local context. The challenge, however, lies in how to convert this information into statistical data that can then be used to extrapolate patterns and trends, in addition to creating and reforming public policies that address the VAWG pyramid.

For example, some formats that are filled out when dealing with users of Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (MAM)[6] in Chihuahua, include variables that investigate details regarding the violent events. These, if

1 A 3.25% year-on-year increase, according to data from the Office of the Public Security System (SESNSP).

2 Quality data are based on international standards, and are validated, comparable and disaggregated. This means that they can be used to generate statistical information aimed at decision makers in the design and application of public policies (Echegoyen, 2003).

3 The reason for Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua becoming a benchmark for violence against women is the result of the media attention received by myriad local organizations and activists – many of whom are mothers or family members of victims of femicide – who have documented the cases of extreme violence in the region (Mendoza, 2019). Furthermore, the collective actions taken by these groups have helped move from "suffering to action", organizing themselves within international forums (e.g., the *Cotton Field* case at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights), national forums (e.g.,, *Primero la Justicia* and *Foro con madres*) and local forums (e.g., Gender Violence and Feminicide Audience) to position VAWG (especially femicide and violence) and the disappearances of women and girls within the public agenda (Ravelo Blancas & Querales Mendoza, 2016, p. 86).

4 Other *México Evalúa* projects that follow the same line includes the series on the criminal justice system entitled *Findings on a Local Scale, Faults at the Source* (2020): *Criminal Statistics Reliability Index* (2021), *Bases for a Metropolitan Police Intelligence Model: the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara* (2020), *Hot Spot Neza: Ten Thousand Blocks Policed by Neighbors* (2020); or the article entitled *Municipalities: the Rabid Dog of Public Security* (Le Cour, 2021).

5 These offer an account of the direct support given by different organizations to women and girls who have suffered violence and include reports covering psychological, legal and social work areas or statistical reports from public prosecutor offices (general or specialized).

6 MAM are Institute or Centers for Justice for Women (at a national and a local level) whose objective is to bring gender perspective into the mainstream in terms of creating public policies and promoting reforms and laws (National Women's Institute, 2021).

and when properly recorded, can help identify qualitative distinctions between different types of violence. If a woman is responsible for domestic work and her aggressor also lives within the domestic nucleus, the probability that VAWG persists is high. If we add social isolation and confinement stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic into the equation, we will have a MAM user who is at risk every day and needs on-going support.

However, if the information from the AR is only used for basic enumeration, then what we receive are figures that, although providing an idea about the scale of the problem, do not show specific patterns or trends regarding domestic violence. In Mexico, a tool already exists to compile all data relating VAWG and use it to take action in terms of criminal policies in this area. The National Database on Violence Against Women (BANAVIM) must then be useful in pooling AR and generating analysis that characterizes violence at a local level. Nevertheless, this tool must also surpass a series of barriers which we will describe in the next sections.

Therefore, the usefulness of the information compiled from the AR – and which is, finally, brought together in the Database – is limited in terms of how it comprehensively helps understand how women are structurally *vulnerabilized*[7] and, as such, how we can eradicate this violence. Our report asserts that statistical data can be used not only for purposes of enumeration. They must be properly converted into valuable information to document, understand and, ultimately, prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls.

As such, the following questions will guide our discussion: in Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez, which government agencies are involved in generating information regarding VAWG? What are the major obstacles facing data generation in municipalities and the cooperation that exists among them? What strategies have been implemented to tackle these challenges? How have federal efforts to address the challenges inherent in VAWG data been implemented in Chihuahua and Juárez?

The BANAVIM must then be useful in pooling AR and generating analysis that characterize violence at a local level.

In order to answer these questions, our activities, which focus on both municipalities, will culminate in the following 'products':

1. Diagnostics regarding the processes and guidelines for generating AR that help feed BANAVIM, the national tool designed to offer an approximation of the universe[8] of victims of violence against women in the country.

2. Guide containing specific recommendations that will help officials to consolidate their AR and better use the statistical tools they already have.

Why Chihuahua y Ciudad Juárez?

The state of Chihuahua is facing numerous challenges regarding VAWG. The municipalities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez are the target for more than 500 international recommendations[9], a series of national recommendations issued by organizations that protect human rights[10], and a further 51 recommended measures recently imposed by the DAVGM that have been made

7 Although the word *vulnerabilizado* is not defined by the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE), we use it throughout the original text in Spanish (and its English equivalent *vulnerabilized*) to denote its causative value. This is because the groups to which we refer – in this case in reference to girls – are not naturally vulnerable, but rather they have been placed in a situation of vulnerability. Vulnerabilized groups can also be referred to as "vulnerated" subjects or the object of "induced vulnerability" (Butler, 2017; Gelabert, 2021).

8 According to the National Commission for Victim Support (CONAVIM), the body that has coordinated BANAVIM since 2020, the Database is an approximation of the universe of aggressors and victims of gender-based violence in the country. CONAVIM recognizes that the total number of cases is more extensive than that reported in this database, but it apportions this under-reporting to "the lack of full integration of information from the 32 states" and to the lack of reports from women "who do not approach the government for support" (Ministry of State, 2021).

9 Some international organizations have issued recommendations for the state of Chihuahua and/or the municipalities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez including the United Nations – through several committees, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Committee against Torture, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - ; the European Council; Amnesty International; the International Federation for Human Rights; the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team; and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (CMDPDH, 2007).

10 Some of the national recommendations have been issued by organizations such as the National Human Rights Commission and the Special Commission for the Monitoring of the Advances into the Investigations of Homicides involving Women in Ciudad Juárez (CMDPDH, 2007).

because of their high levels of femicide and institutional and social impunity[11]. This highlights the gravity of the problem, but also shows the focus that numerous institutions are placing on this context of violence. Furthermore, both municipalities have been designing, creating, and bolstering institutions to cope with VAWG in all its forms.

The institutionalization of measures to tackle VAWG in Chihuahua and Juárez is far ahead of that found in other municipalities throughout the country. The focus on strengthening institutions has been made possible thanks to the accumulated know-how shared with (and by) groups of the same women who are the target of this criminal behavior. According to statements from our interlocutors[12], organizations that work to address VAWG have become more professional. They brought the gender perspective found in their services and AR into the mainstream mainly because their staff directly collaborate with or are part of the women's rights movement in these municipalities – within feminist groups, civil society organizations or academia. This leads us to believe that there is an increased awareness of this area that allows government officials to do their work and not only ensure the dignified treatment of the general public but also search for the best ways in which to address VAWG and its complexities.

Despite these efforts, and despite having wide-ranging infrastructure in place to tackle VAWG in municipalities comprising inter-disciplinary groups offering specialist support, there is still much to do to consolidate the complex process of measuring and addressing violence. This is not a simple challenge. According to data from the Executive Secretary of the National Public Security System (SESNSP), in the state of Chihuahua, during 2021, the rate of investigations opened per 100,000 inhabitants for the crimes of femicide, domestic violence, and rape increased compared to previous years by 45.32%, 17.70% and 16.30%, respectively, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. **Comparison of Femicide, Rape and Domestic Violence Rates between the Municipalities of Chihuahua and Juárez** (2019-2021)

Crime Rate in the State of Chihuahua	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Variation (PV) between 2019 and 2021
Femicide	1.48	1.52	2.21	45.32%
Rape	29.43	27.84	34.64	17.70%
Domestic Violence	284.85	290.85	331.29	16.30%

Source: Created by authors based on SESNSP data from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

A statewide trend is also reflected in the municipalities of Chihuahua and Juárez, given that the rates per 100,000 inhabitants, in almost all these crimes, increased compared to 2020, as shown in **Table 2**.

These figures, which, in almost every case, reflect an increase in the number of crimes that can be associated with violence as a result of gender, highlight the urgency of analyzing these numbers more closely to discover what they are hiding with regard to the local context. Furthermore, given that the crime rates recorded by the State are based on the opening of new investigations, we are just beginning to get an overview of the problem. Although there are some victimization surveys that uncover information that the State is unaware of[13], there is not a full panorama that

Table 2. **Comparison of Femicide, Rape and Domestic Violence Rates per 100,000 Inhabitants between the Municipalities of Chihuahua and Juárez** (2019-2021)

Crime	Crime Rate in Chihuahua (per 100,000 inhabitants)				Crime Rate in Juarez (per 100,000 inhabitants)			
	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Variation (between 2019 and 2021)	2019	2020	2021	Percentage Variation (between 2019 and 2021)
Femicide	1.84	1.62	2.21	20.10%	1.6	2.52	2.23	39.37%
Rape	36.01	32.79	33.28	-7.58%	32.33	31.58	46.29	43.17%
Domestic Violence	321.89	325.1	332.97	3.44%	374.16	399.77	483.28	29.16%

Source: Created by authors based on SESNSP data from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

11 August 17, 2021, the Ministry of State addressed the AVGM Requests filed by the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), thereby issuing a DAVGM in the following municipalities: Chihuahua, Ciudad Juárez, Hidalgo del Parral, Guadalupe and Calvo y Cuauhtémoc.

12 The following section includes further information about the methodology used in this project and the characteristics of the interlocutors involved in it.

13 For example, according to data from the National Public Security and Victimization Survey (ENVIPE), in 2021 the dark figure reported in the state showed that 92.8% of crimes were not reported.

enables us to characterize VAWG more accurately in the country.

As such, in this project, Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez were the starting points for understanding the structural challenges facing the generation of national and local statistics. The municipalities show that national statistical information generation strategies covering VAWG are not always aligned with local realities, to the extent that, on occasion, they can hinder day-to-day actions. This means that the systems, institutes or ministries that systematize records at a national level are requesting standardized databases from the local actors involved in compiling the information; however, given the diversity of government agencies tasked with compiling this information, the sheer number of AR they produce, and other characteristics that qualify the generation of statistics – such as uneven access to training or resources, for example – it is not always possible to generate reports as and when required.

A major case study that reflects this national trend is how information is reported to BANAVIM[14]. In Chihuahua, this national database is fed by numerous agencies that must overcome challenges such as disarticulated data and a lack of institutionalization, which make following this federal mandate impossible and obliges them to find alternatives in order to fulfil these requirements.

Below is the methodology that we elaborated for this research.

Methodology

This research is underpinned by:

- A **documentary analysis of the legal framework**, regulations and operating manuals of the organizations that feed data into the BANAVIM in Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez.

  This task has a dual purpose:

  1. **To identify the guidelines for the process to generate statistical information regarding VAWG.** This allows us to understand how to prioritize information – which data to register in the AR or not –, what are the requirements for these records and the legal frameworks that guarantee its quality.

  2. **To compare data generation processes in both municipalities and their respective regulations**, in contrast to the information compiled from interviews, to identify good practices that can be replicated in other government agencies in Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez, as well as in other municipalities throughout the country.

- **The conducting and analysis of 15 semi-structured interviews and roundtables**[15], carried out between October 2021 and January 2022 among local government officials and decision makers who, based on their own experience, allowed us to document the ways in which national and local VAWG policies are executed within this sphere. This has enabled us to understand the experience of those who know the most about the records, in addition to documenting structural limitations that impede the work they do.

  To better engage with our interlocutors, we used a multi-method strategy that includes two types of sampling – selective and snowball – based on a sampling frame of the total number of organizations generating VAWG data.

  We also included Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), an analytical methodology that forms part of the Canadian institutionalization of the gender perspective. GBA+ aims to highlight social, economic and cultural factors that affect the efficiency of government initiatives and sheds light on systemic inequalities suffered by vulnerabilized groups.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the major limiting factor that we faced: the period of political transition in October 2021 in the state of Chihuahua (given that the majority of institutions that record data on the BANAVIM depend on the state) and in the municipalities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez.

End-of-year administrative affairs, electoral campaigns and changes in administration have an impact on research like this, which is why it is necessary to contextualize the way in which these can affect the work performed by government officials:

14 Another example of the disparity between national mandates and what happens at a local level is the General Law governing the Rights of Girls, Boys and Young People, which includes a Comprehensive Protection System for the Rights of Girls, Boys and Young People (SIPINNA) that captures data in a unique information system; however, it does not provide its Local and State Systems with a tool to systematize the information, nor does it provide them with any budget to do so. This case study is relevant to this research because local SIPINNA also contain significant data about violence against girls that is not standardized in this or other statistical tools.

15 The interviews and roundtables were undertaken via digital platforms as a result of the social distancing policy in place stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In certain cases, it was impossible to establish a dialogue directly with the corresponding authorities given that some posts were (or still are) yet to be filled.

- The end of the year and the design of the 2022 Budget led to significant workloads in these government agencies, and it was not always possible to conduct all the interviews we would have liked. When establishing a dialogue became complicated, we researched the processes in place at the institutions for generating AR through publicly available information, limiting the data analyzed to that found in these channels.

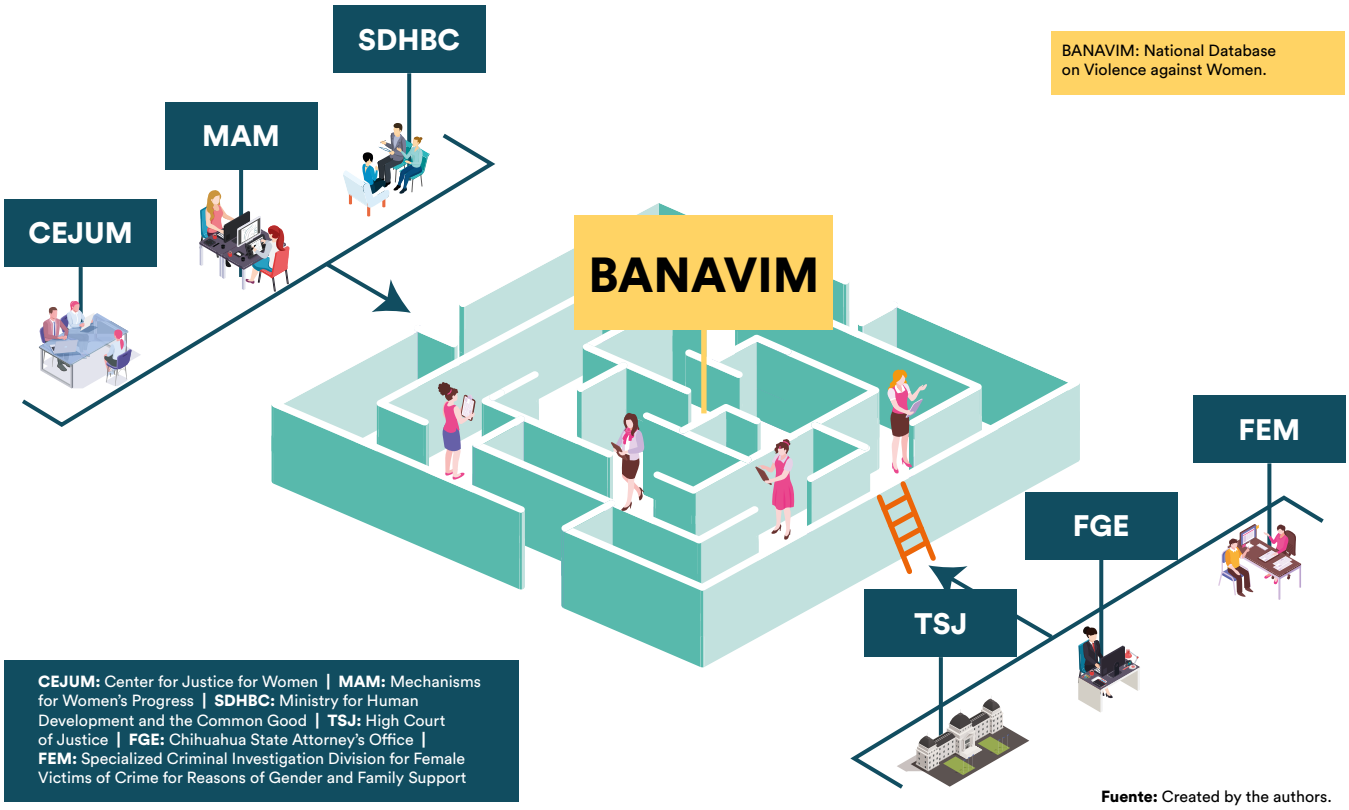
- Even when we were able to establish contact, certain information could not be confirmed given that some of the projects being coordinated – such as from the Ministry of Health, for example – had been halted during the political transition process, as a result of the delays outlined in the previous point. Although some of these were most certainly reactivated – according to our interlocutors – uncertainty surrounds the continuity of others, an element that, in itself, could affect the duration and, ultimately, the quality of the data.

I. STARTING POINT: THE "UNIVERSE" OF DATA

In Mexico, the national plan to systematize data about VAWG is part of the General Law for Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (LGAMVLV). This law states that the Attorney General's Office (FGR) and the 32 states must create public records that feed into a unique system that compiles public records about both criminals and victims and helps define policies to prevent and punish crimes (Article 29, Section 23). According to this law, the information compiled by federal and local bodies can be systematized and analyzed within one repository, and, although each body reports its data to other agencies, the Database must ultimately include all information pertaining to cases of VAWG in Mexico.

As can be seen in **Figure 1**, according to the LGAMVLV, the Database aims to be the 'final destination' for the data recovered from the AR in the organizations that support women and girls in Mexico. These authorities also report information that must be systematized and

Figure 1. **Data Generation about VAWG in Chihuahua according to the National Plan**



Fuente: Created by the authors.

analyzed by others; for example, the bodies draft reports for their agencies or national counterparts – e.g., Local Women's Institutes. However, in order to comply with the law, BANAVIM must always be the repository for all data regarding cases of VAWG as its objective is to compile the "universe of victims of gender-based violence".

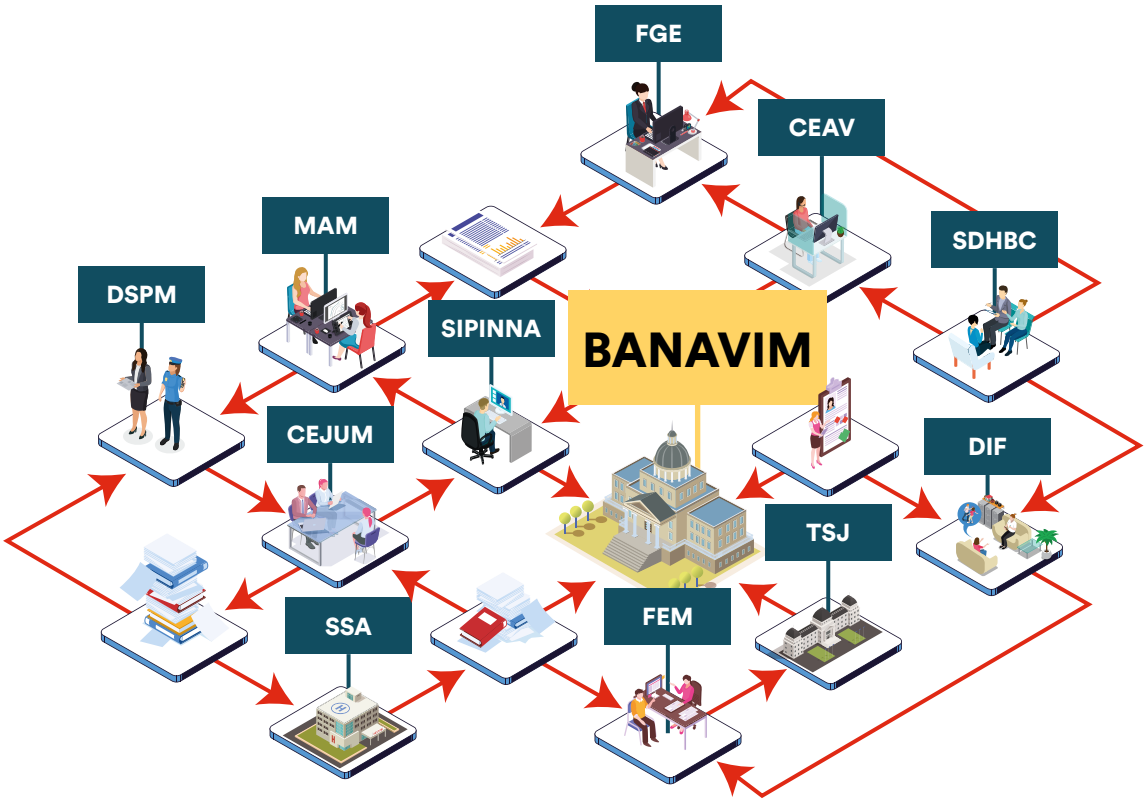
Nevertheless, in order for the Database to truly serve as the final destination in the labyrinth the data about women and girls who have suffered violence in Mexico must navigate, it must follow two fundamental principles:

- All instances involved in actions covering the prevention, support, sanctioning or reparations for the damages caused as a result of VAWG must record data on the platform.
- All instances must have access to the tools necessary to do so adequately and opportunely.

The first principle is violated by the fact that the law establishes that the National System for the Prevention, Support, Sanctioning and Eradication of Violence against Women and its State Councils are the only instances tasked with feeding data into this platform, without taking into account other authorities that generate relevant information about VAWG, such as the Ministry of Health[16], which has data about sexual and domestic violence, and the State System for the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Girls, Boys and Young People (SIPINNA), which has data about girls who have been sexually assaulted. The second principle is also infringed given the series of structural difficulties (discussed in more detail later) that impede organizations from recording information completely.

So, in practice, BANAVIM represents, for the moment, one more factor in the complexity of generating information at a municipal level. Far from being the final destination for all records of VAWG, one can glean more from the AR that these authorities must generate.

Figure 2. **Data Generation about VAWG in Chihuahua**



Fuente: Created by the authors.

16 The Ministry of Health (SSA) compiles data regarding child abuse and sexual abuse through two actions codes stipulated in NOM 0471 – to comprehensively address BGA – and NOM 046 – to tackle sexual and domestic violence against women.

On the other hand, obtaining a complete overview of the agencies that report to BANAVIM is resulting to be complex. The publicly accessible data in the Database do not show this information, but, according to data from the National Transparency Platform[17] and corroborated in our interviews, the agencies that report to BANAVIM in Chihuahua are: the High Court of Justice, the Ministry of Human Development and the Common Good (SDHBM), the Specialized Criminal Investigation Division for Female Victims of Crime for Reasons of Gender and Family Support (FEM), the Center for Justice for Women (CEJUM), the Chihuahua State Women's Institute and the FGE, each of which has an account used to access the platform; however, according to the 2021 Report relating to AVGM requests in Chihuahua[18], there is a total of 138 accounts on the Database. Although the Report does not specify the agency which the 138 users are from, we are only certain which bodies feed the Database is not clear at a municipal level, which, in turn, weakens the public response to the violence perpetrated against women and girls.

At a local level, Chihuahua is a clear example that, when reporting data to national bodies, federal-level institutions tend to monopolize data analysis and systematization, undermining coordination with the municipalities. This means that municipal bodies are generating the data to be included in a national database, but in the majority of the cases this data is first being centralized and systematized at a state level. For example, FGE compiles information from its agents in a number of municipalities and this data is then reported to the SESNSP, which is why the State Attorney's Office (FGE) is ultimately responsible for the final stages of the process to generate statistical data. However, there are projects that have successfully and actively involved municipal bodies in systematizing and analyzing data, helping achieve a data compilation cycle that involves those people who are working *in situ*.

SINCE 2010,
the year in which the Database began operating,
the tool has not been systematically fed by local agencies,
NOR HAS IT BEEN USED
to generate statistical analysis.

One example of the generation of statistical information that involved local bodies is the standardized information system that compiles data for the SESNSP. To feed this common database, the Emergency Call Centers (CALLE) and the local Control, Command, Communications, Computing and Quality Centers (C4 or C5) feed it standardized information through a specific software. Like the 911 emergency call system, BANAVIM, from its design, was supposed to be a tool to allow all organizations working in VAWG areas to capture - using the same format and place - data about the victims, cases, protection orders and aggressors. Its purpose was to integrate a database that collects data on VAWG and functions in a similar manner to 911, in terms of allowing municipal bodies to feed it with the data they compile, while the agency tasked with coordinating BANAVIM could properly leverage said data by periodically systematizing, analyzing and publishing it.

However, since 2010, the year in which the Database began operating, the tool has not been systematically fed by local agencies, nor has it been used to generate statistical analysis. The authorities first report their information in their own AR, which are then recaptured on the Database platform, or they resort to double entries – entering what is requested by BANAVIM and then entering what is useful for their everyday work. This means that the authorities prioritize their own formats over those designed by BANAVIM because the former allow them to generate statistics and assessments that meet their needs, while those of the Database are time-consuming and bear little fruit. As such, and although the Database has undoubtable virtues, it has not been designed and adapted to the local context, and vice versa.

As an example of the challenges facing the Database in terms of consolidating a sole and exhaustive source of data, it is important to highlight the fact that between 2010 and 2021, the state of Chihuahua has generated a total of 32,726 new files concerning VAWG – these include gender-based crimes, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, kidnapping or femicide. In the interim, and since 2015 – the year when the number of opened investigations into domestic violence at a national level began to be counted – the SESNSP has recorded a total of 82,272 files for the same crime. This difference highlights the serious underreporting of some 49,546 cases that are not recorded in the Database.

This means that, although it is impossible to compare the domestic violence files that BANAVIM has compiled (given that disaggregated crime statistics are not publicly

17 Based on a response by the Chihuahua State Ministry to an Information Request via the Transparency Portal (no. 0000400102420) made by UN Women.

18 A report published by the taskforce working on requests for Gender Violence against Women Alerts as a result of femicides in the municipalities of Juárez, Chihuahua, Cuauhtémoc, Hidalgo del Parral and Guadalupe y Calvo in the state of Chihuahua (2021).

available), by comparing just one of the many crimes that the Database should include, it is possible to estimate the wide-ranging underreporting of data in this tool. Furthermore, the Database should not only compile records regarding criminal investigations (as the SESNSP does), but it should also have more data stemming from the AR created by local bodies, prior to the cases going to trial. This would make it a more comprehensive database; one that truly showcases the totality of VAWG cases, no matter if these led to an investigation being opened or not.

The Database appears to embody the operationalization of a law that has, up until now, not truly become a functional system that guarantees the full articulation of this process. BANAVIM has been a tool that is fed by a federal mandate, but which has no real support structure in place. However, despite these limiting factors, the implementation of a database that serves as the sole repository for crime and victim statistics should be capable of helping public institutions dealing with VAWG in Chihuahua, Juárez and other municipalities throughout the country to overcome certain difficulties.

In order to understand these complications that, from a local perspective, have limited the use, scope and usability of the Database, below are a series of limitations that BANAVIM has faced since its inception.

Structural Delays

Structural problems are always the most complicated to address given that they stem from problems in the foundations of any public organization or statistical tool design. This is the case with BANAVIM: since its inception, it has been mired by issues.

The Database was created in 2008 as the result of a legal mandate, and it started operating until 2010 under the remit of the Ministry of Federal Public Security. From 2013, its administration was taken over the Ministry of State, and, once again, in 2021 it changed hands to become part of the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women (CONAVIM).

These changes in administration do not necessarily imply any institutional weakness – such as the lack of thoroughness in setting the obligatory and periodic nature of its records– if and when said changes in administration are handled with the right amount of due care. However, as reported by CONAVIM based on an assessment of the Database, these changes have made certain measures impossible, such as its institutionalization and the communication and publication of the information it contains[19].

Moreover, the Database has not been the most accessible system for states. Since it was created, BANAVIM worked in some states through information systems that operated as "mirrors" of the National Database within the State Databases, but the majority of these stopped working as a result of operational and management problems. Only three State Databases continue operating: in Sonora, Guanajuato and Veracruz[20]. In Chihuahua, the state always used the web platform to register information, and, according to BANAVIM's own administration, its use is different from that found in other states[21].

Finally, we observed a lack of parallel reforms to state laws corresponding to the LGAMVLV that guarantee the obligatory nature of the Database within criminal and civil codes at both a federal and state jurisdiction (Ramírez & Echarri, 2010).

Inaccessible and Aggregated Information

Disaggregated information offers access to better data regarding the characteristics of vulnerabilized groups and localized strategies to address VAWG. Despite the information that is recorded within the BANAVIM having to comply with certain disaggregation criteria (based on its User Manual), public data only include information about the total number of files, cases, victims and aggressors (men, women or unidentified), protection orders, and services offered. This means that the information published on the BANAVIM page ignores variables such as year, age (of both the aggressors and the victims) and type of violence, even though these are recorded by the bodies that compile the data, thereby limiting the potential usefulness of the data.

Furthermore, even if the information were to be systematized following disaggregation criteria, it would not be of any use unless it was accessible by decision makers and the general public. In fact, the Database must

19 The complex history and evolution of BANAVIM has been identified as one of the major obstacles to the Database, according to Evelyn Trasviña, coordinator of Studies and Research to Eradicate Violence Against Women at CONAVIM, during the International Forum of Statistics of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Children: Opportunities and Perspectives from the International Experience of UN Women (October 18, 2021).

20 Idem.

21 Based on the presentation at the Fourth BANAVIM Meeting (FGE, 2021).

report the information recovered on its platform twice a year[22]; however, for reasons we have not been able to fathom, the data is neither shared publicly nor shared with its users – i.e., the statisticians at organizations who have user accounts that feed the Database.

As such, there are no open databases nor statistical reports that allow us to understand (and much less analyze and use) this information. This national tool, if it were better institutionalized and leveraged, could summarize data that comes from a veritable labyrinth of local VAWG information. However, it is currently following the logic of creating records and fulfilling a national mandate without actually offering a tool to help understand this violence and be able to prevent it.

The lack of data disaggregation is also worrying specifically when focusing on girls. Although the Database should compile the "universe" of cases, it does not include disaggregated or specific information about children. Therefore, the statistics regarding girls who have been a victim of violence is invisible, especially in a country where 90% of rapes committed against minors happen within the family environment, and one in which only 10% of these crimes are reported (Barragán, 2021).

However, the Database could be useful ...

Within this institutional outlook, and despite its mandate, BANAVIM appears to not wholly fulfill its objective. We can see the duplication of efforts of those organizations that work to address VAWG. We believe that the approach which led to the design of this tool was correct, but (and as tends to occur in public policies that lack institutional strength), its implementation has been subpar.

However, we consider that BANAVIM has the features necessary to be a much more leveraged resource for generating AR by municipal institutions because of the following reasons:

It guarantees that statistical information about VAWG continues to be generated. BANAVIM has a virtue no other system does: it is a database created as the result of a national mandate. As such, its sustainability is supported by the LGAMVLV. This means that no changes in administration or staff turnover should put its permanence at risk. Furthermore, the Database is part of the Unique Criminal Information System – used to investigate criminal conducts and comprising more than 40 databases within the Mexico Platform (Castorena et al., 2021). As such, if it produced quality information, the Database would have to include comprehensive information about VAWG and bring the gender perspective in different federal policies, based on local efforts and actions.

To guarantee its effectiveness at a municipal level, the obligatory nature of registering data in the Database must be stipulated in local legal frameworks. In Chihuahua, neither the State Law for Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence nor the Chihuahua State Men and Women Equality Law – the two pieces of legislation that address VAWG in the state – specify BANAVIM in their articles, something which should be urgently addressed.

BANAVIM would set a minimum standard for data generation among organizations. The Database has already established a data capture format, a User Manual, and a series of modules with exhaustive variables. To drive its use, it would be useful to support the creation of minimum standards that guarantee the quality of the data found in the AR and the drafting of a standardized variable guide within the organizations. Both actions would offer the possibility to exchange information and knowledge among these organizations, which could help address the time and resources that we are currently seeing wasted.

As such, adjusting the AR of the organizations within a repository (such as the Database) that standardizes the information that has already been reported would help:

- The standardization of the information compiled by government agencies responsible for addressing VAWG.
- The mapping of these organizations to help those reporting information.
- The publication of the lessons learned as part of the statistic generation process.
- The collaboration among institutions to design and implement new strategies to prevent and address violence.

22 Article 38, Section 10 of the LGAMVLV. This Article does not specify through which channels the reports should be published.

II: DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS OF STATISTIC GENERATION IN CHIHUAHUA AND CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Now that we have seen the advantages and obstacles inherent to the Database, what happens when organizations that work with girls and women register their information on their platform? How do the compilation, systematization, and analysis processes affect their own AR? What happens when other organizations do not capture their AR there?

Chihuahua and Juárez are a clear example that the more awkward the knowledge of the cases, the more difficult they are to address and, of course, prevent. This means that information that is disarticulated, and even blind to certain types of violence, is being generated. For example, there is a systematic pattern of non-differentiated cases of violence perpetrated against girls, be this because the information has not been searched for or because the girls are only included in the AR in their role as daughters of a victim of violence. As such, the data production stage is a problem that warrants greater focus. In the following section, we will focus on the limitations within the compilation, systematization and analysis processes for the data found in the AR that organizations in Chihuahua and Juárez face when reporting to BANAVIM and other authorities, in addition to the practices that have proven to be effective for documenting and driving their usefulness.

Data Compilation and Systematization

The data compilation and systematization processes in the municipalities of Chihuahua and Juárez present the following areas of opportunity:

DESARTICULATION: Heterogeneity, Omission and Interoperability

1. Heterogeneity

The institutions within the state that report data to BANAVIM and that we were able to analyze have a proprietary information system that allows them to create AR, and this system is used before any other tool. We reviewed each of them.

The Chihuahua Women's Institute (*Ichmujeres*) rolled out its Integrated Information System (IIS) in 2016 to compile data about the services provided via its 11 Support Centers for Victims of Violence (CA- VIM) and 2 shelters, as well as to report the training sessions and workshops offered to officials from other bodies or to the general public.

Centers for Justice for Women make use of the Women's Support Information and Reception System (SIRAM), where they record, for example, psychological and legal support and social work activities undertaken at the CEJUM in Chihuahua and Juárez.

Finally, the FGE and FEM access the preliminary inquiries and investigations regarding crimes involving women and girls via their *Justicia Net* system.

Unfortunately, all these systems strive to create a body of evidence regarding their mandates and not necessarily focus on generating statistical information. For example, while the FEM registers information concerning protection orders and accusations, *Ichmujeres* registers more specific variables regarding the victim – such as migratory status, family members who are sick, or pregnancy status. As such, no standardized information is compiled given that the functions and support provided by these institutions vary depending on their administrative attributes.

This is why, even after finding important information to generate statistical analysis about VAWG, said data cannot be compared among institutions, limiting standardization both within and outside them and, with it, the possibility of generating solid statistics. If the data were compared and there was continuity, it would be possible to offer greater support to female users in the municipalities (investigating, for example, if support processes are long term) or even to identify regional crime patterns.

2. Data Omission

The information compiled by the information systems is also captured in BANAVIM. However, by accessing different data, the omission of data in the different modules[23] required by the Database platform is a common occurrence. This not only presents an obstacle to recording the data, but it also further complicates the exchange of information among the authorities.

23 The modules included in a BANAVIM file are: protection orders, medical services, aggressors, services and channeling, legal services, the consequences of violence, social work services, types and modes of violence, and the institution that is providing support.

A clear sign of the urgency of creating a standard that is shared by all institutions is that, in various organizations, the variable covering the services offered by age range or age is not registered (or is not made public) in the reports that are available to the general public. For example, the appendices of the *Ichmujeres* Procedural Manual include a series of formats in which one can find useful information for analyzing violence against girls. The appendices encompass a series of sections that must be completed by staff from the different areas, and all of these components include the variable of the age of the victim of violence. However, the public information shared via the transparency website[24] regarding the total services provided does not include any differentiation regarding age, meaning that we only have the total disaggregated number of women being supported by area and by form of violence. Although these records contain crucial information about how girls are being supported, the lack of transparency and quality in the data makes it impossible to understand.

In fact, girls represent an even more vulnerabilized group than adult women. According to the FGE[25], during the first three quarters of 2021, a total of 621 girls under the age of 17 were reported in Juárez as having been the victims of sexual crimes, 86.8% of whom were girls or teenagers[26]. In Chihuahua, there was a total of 475 cases, with 88.2% involving girls or female teenagers. In the majority of cases (85.8% and 89.4%, respectively), these sexual crimes were committed in the victims' homes. The report from the FGE includes the sex of the aggressor (most of whom were men) but does not include information about their kinship or relationship with the boys and/or girls, which would be useful in understanding more about criminal patterns and implementing preventive and comprehensive protection measures for children.

These figures are a brief approximation of the phenomenon, but they illustrate, firstly, that the majority of girls are sexually assaulted in spaces in which they should feel protected. Furthermore, even after generating statistical analysis regarding violence against minors, there does not appear to be any gender perspective given that not all the aspects that have further vulnerabilized this group are taken into consideration given the fact that they are dependents of people who, on a number of occasions, are actually their aggressors.

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3. Interoperability

The data that enables us to further understand VAWG, especially violence perpetrated against girls, is brief and is not a source of motivation to make full use of the little available data. Furthermore, the lack of a key variable to connect the data compiled from different institutions limits the follow-up process for cases. Although the systems presented earlier do have file numbers or identifiers for each case that allow them to be traced, they are not compatible with those from other authorities, and in some cases are not even compatible with those from other areas within the same organization.

In fact, there is a lack of connection among cases at both an interinstitutional and intrainstitutional level. This disarticulation and lack of standardization of the data impedes:

- The communication of the information among organizations that address VAWG, which could be useful in improving the services they offer and the AR they generate.
- The monitoring of cases at an intrainstitutional and interinstitutional level.
- The comprehensive compilation of data in BANAVIM.
- The communication of publicly accessible data.

24 Public information reported quarterly in the *Proactive Transparency* section of the Institute's website (2021).

25 Information regarding the Analysis of Crime Rates involving Victims who are Minors in the Municipalities of Chihuahua and Juárez (January-September 2021), compiled by the FICOSEC Citizen Observatory (2021).

26 We considered sexual abuse and rape in this summary; however, the FGE's report also includes the crimes of domestic violence and assault.

It is important to highlight the fact that these limitations not only hinder the bureaucratic processes associated with addressing VAWG, but they also lead to a loss of information that is invaluable when creating prevention policies. This means that although *Institution A* has useful information for helping victims of VAWG – women or girls who might also be at risk of being killed – it does not have all the tools to enable *Institution B* (which could implement prevention measures), *Institution C* (which could focus on the emotional health of the aggressors) or *Institution D* (which could punish and repair the damages caused to the victim) to access this information and, as such, simultaneously mobilize to protect women and girls.

Lack of INSTITUCIONALIZATION of the AR: Enforceability, Coordination and Professionalization

1. Enforceability of Data Publication

The LGAMVLV demands that States Councils and the National System publish information twice a year. However, it does not specific the enforceability of having minimum standards under which the processes of data systematization and compilation must be undertaken. It also does not provide further details about the compulsory nature of the records themselves. As such, capturing AR in the Database is an activity that is undertaken sporadically, and the information therein recorded is not validated in order to guarantee quality.

Nevertheless, according to the BANAVIM User Manual, there are modules and/or variables that must be captured in order to continue registering a case and to create a Unique Victim Record (UVR). This key variable is generated by adding numbers for the state, organization and the consecutive file number, in addition to a suffix for repeat cases. Although generating a file number to relate cases and victims is a useful practice for compiling and systematizing data, there are other fields that are not necessary, such as, for example, the CURP – which some organizations use as a key variable, while others do not even register it as it could compromise their commitment to protecting the data and confidentiality of victims.

As such, it is crucial to have a safe variable that not only identifies the case within the institutions but also among them. Although creating a file number for identification and follow-up purposes is a good practice, the information flow is hindered by files numbers that are not compatible among different AR.

2. Coordination among VAWG Institutions

It is important to state that both, the municipality of Juárez and Chihuahua, have shown interest in preventing the revictimization of women and girls who have suffered violence. For example, the formalization of CEJUM in the state (which was the first of its kind in the country) was based on the idea of centralizing the labyrinth of organizations that address VAWG. As such, the state and municipal CEJUM offer services that include, among others, psychological and medical support, social work and childcare in order to bring together actions that prevent and address VAWG in one space to simplify the filing of complaints.

However, within these spaces it is difficult to ensure compatibility among AR, given that each area falls under the auspices of a different organization. In January 2022, at the state-level CEJUM there were only four people who were directly involved in the Center's organization chart, while the rest were from *Ichmujeres*, FEM, judicial police, or even people from civil society organizations that work with MAM. All of these individuals have different formats for recording the services offered and/or cases of VAWG, and although coordination efforts have been professionalized to drive collaboration (by, for example, creating digitalized data systems), it is still complicated to generate standardized AR.

This is why the implementation of a minimum standard in these formats would enable a comparative analysis of VAWG cases, both for the traits of victims and the aggressors. Finding a common point would increase the possibility of creating disaggregated statistics, which are useful in generating data that goes beyond counting cases and focuses more on dealing with the dynamics of violence in Chihuahua and Juárez.

3. Professionalization

Within this overview, it is important to note that several of the institutions we were able to contact – and which report their data to the Database – have procedural manuals or protocols that govern their services and operations. However, these manuals and protocols do not always focus on data systematization and compilation processes. There is also a lack of professionalization of the officials in charge, which could be rectified by, for example, implementing strategic training programs to substitute isolated workshops.

Two types of training were identified: those focusing on statistics and the other on bringing the gender perspective into the mainstream. The former are of crucial importance

in helping staff hone their knowledge regarding data validation and the generation of statistical information that is useful in developing public policies and/or awareness. The latter are indispensable in ensuring that statisticians generate and analyze the information based on a sensitive and intersectional approach that avoids stigmatizing categories and takes into consideration the contexts in which girls and women are being vulnerabilized.

With regard to training in statistics, the scope of the project was unable to find guidelines that emphasize this area in all institutions. However, the Municipal Women's Institute (IMM) in Ciudad Juárez shows an example of a good practice: based on its own research, staff at the IMM identified the need to generate useful statistical information, which is why it now has a specific area dedicated to data systematization and analysis. Supported by the local government, the Institute is now designing a proprietary information system to allow it to publish indicators and, eventually, communicate information that is in the public interest.

Regarding the training on bringing the gender perspective into the mainstream, we found that the majority of the organizations have specialized staff, especially at MAM or FEM. For example, it is common for women in academia, who specialize in gender, to hold operational, research and administrative posts at MAM. However, staff turnover during changes in the local or state government, at organizations such as FEM, CEJUM or DSPM, undermines the guarantee of professionalization, as specialized staff tend to come and go every three or six years.

Finally, it is imperative to institutionalize training, given that, on numerous occasions, when there are trained staff, their knowledge and expertise are the result of individual merit, not a state effort. One of our interlocutors told us:

"At every organization there is, at least, a handful of specialized staff as a result of many people from civil society going into government; however, this is not an institutional practice".

Data Analysis and Communication

Through our diagnostics of the information generation processes in place in Chihuahua and Juárez, we observed that most of the limiting factors are found in the information compilation and systematization stages. This means that, while the AR are systematized in order to generate reports, they are not always analyzed by statisticians to obtain useful information for creating prevention and support policies.

We identified areas in which organizations can boost their capacity for analyzing information, allowing them to focus on a series of actions that have proven efficacious in driving interinstitutional cooperation and communicating information.

Data that is Only Used for Counting

The majority of the organizations that address VAWG have a staff deficit in the area of statistical generation. Although, as we have mentioned, some of them are focusing on consolidating their information, statistics areas tend to be just a few people who are tasked with handling all reports – and sending them to other state or national bodies, such as BANAVIM or SESNSP–, dealing with information requests, and drafting their own activity reports. The FEM is a clear example of this, as it only has one specialist in the statistics department who is tasked with all the aforementioned tasks. It is important to mention that this person has received gender and statistics training by their own volition, not as part of an institutional mandate.

On the other hand, in addition to the AR serving to record the support provided, when the data they contain are analyzed, this process is undertaken within the same state bodies that compiled them but using different systems. However, we have observed that this analysis rarely makes it back to the bodies that compiled the information given that, when municipal organizations report their systematized information and request feedback from attorney's offices, institutes, tribunals or ministries, they rarely do.

Despite these limitations, Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez have a series of local good practices in terms of collaboration among government bodies and civil society. Taskforces and interinstitutional committees have, for example, demonstrated themselves to be a space where communicating statistics can lead to successful public programs and policies. Such is the case of the Gender and Domestic Violence Prevention and Support Committee in Chihuahua, based on which the Intrafamily Violence

Support Units (UAVI) were created, not to mention their institutionalization within the DSPM. Furthermore, the Interinstitutional Roundtable for the Comprehensive Support of Teenage Mothers and/or Pregnant Teenagers Aged 15 or Under led to the creation of the State Group for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy, as well as driving continuous improvements to its activities. This roundtable, coordinated by SIPINNA, is an important space for addressing violence against children in the state and providing comprehensive support in collaboration with the SSA, the state DIF, *Ichmujeres*, FEM, the Chihuahua Youth Institute and other organizations.

We have also detected other success stores that, despite not stemming from these mechanisms, have driven interinstitutional collaboration. For example, the project entitled *Vínculos* was created during the lockdown and as a result of the social distancing measures stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The project, coordinated by SIPINNA, the state DIF, SSA and CALLE, has focused on responding to the growing wave of domestic violence in the state by rolling out a specialized protocol for 911 emergency calls made as a result of domestic violence against women or intimate partner violence.

By implementing this protocol, a comprehensive support process is initialized for female users, involving all participating organizations, which offer psychotherapy, legal advice, food parcels and support for substance abuse (it has not been possible to document the type of support being offered in the latter). SIPINNA's participation in this project has driven the focus on children who are the victims of violence, a necessary step given the comments made by one of the people involved in developing the project:

"[When answering 911 calls] there is no intentional search for girls, boys or teenagers. If you ask CALLE for the number of calls made by minors, they are going to say that there were none. That all the calls were prank calls. Evidently, the operators have an adult-centric bias. This is worrying as, in the best possible scenario, they are seen as secondary victims".

(Continues on the following column)

Despite the wide-ranging scope of this protocol in the year it has been operating, and despite having generated more than 100 VAWG files that are currently being investigated, the consolidation of this project could be compromised by political changes in the state as a result of the electoral cycle. However, the project has laid the foundations for tackling the constant data vacuum found in the AR in the state, in addition to focusing its attention on the way in which data about minors is generated: girls and boys are generally referred to as the daughters or sons of women who have been sexually assaulted, and it is unclear if they are also direct victims.

Lack of Institutionalization

The institutional uncertainty within which the *Vínculos* project is trying to grow is a further example of the discontinuity that affects successful programs in the municipalities and in the state. Despite the project continuing to be promoted by the SSA's Gender Violence Program, and despite the model having been favorably evaluated by international agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund[27], there is still no agreement or measure in place to ensure its continuity.

This uncertainty is the result of turnover affecting staff who were coordinating the projects and/or changes to the budget assigned for activities, limitations that are almost always caused by political changes stemming from the elections – held every 3 years at a municipal level, and every six years at a state level.

According to the project's coordinators, the lack of continuity not only leads to institution erosion, but it also puts the victims of VAWG at risk:

27 Presentation at the Exchange of Outstanding Actions and Good Practices implemented during the COVID Pandemic Forum (National Women's Institute, December 3, 2020).

"You are going to miss out on the opportunity of helping a sector that you have never really focused on before. The problem lies in the fact that a woman calls to report an incident that happened today, but it turns out that she was only assisted by Public Security, for example, who can only remove the aggressor. However, if there is no therapeutic element or legal support (which also isn't a guarantee of anything), at the end of the day, this person will call 4-5 times a year. The problem lies in the fact you never addressed it".

Furthermore, it is important to mention that if a project is paused – be it temporarily or definitively – this causes damage to the institutional memory. Both Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez have wide-ranging experience that has provided them with capabilities unique to the country. As feminist groups, civil society and activists who support direct and indirect victims of VAWG in Chihuahua have been saying for years, the institutional structure to eradicate violence already exists; it only needs to be attuned and consolidated (López, 2016). In a context in which VAWG continues taking the lives of the victims and those who defend them, Chihuahua and Juárez do not need to carry out a trial-and-error experiment, but rather they need to bolster their institutions and consolidate goods practices, a process we hope to contribute to through the following roadmap.

III. ROADMAP

Here are some specific recommendations and two general considerations for local organizations, emphasizing the use of tools they already have and creating a guide to consolidate the AR found in BANAVIM, which can also become statistical information used in other areas.

Compilation and Systematization

Data Homogeneity and Exhaustivity. *Creating and adding a minimum standard for the variables required by BANAVIM in the Administrative Records.*

The information contained in BANAVIM is comprehensive and is based on the context of women and girls (although only in their role as the daughters of those who are victims of violence). However, the Database platform does not allow information to be shared among organizations, which is why data is usually omitted in their records.

If there were a common format, the organizations could add variables to the formats they already have in order to:

- Reduce data omissions in BANAVIM.
- Share information among organizations through standardized criteria.
- Use the variables as a guide for creating new formats if necessary.

It is important to guarantee that the minimum variables include the victim's sociodemographic information – sex, age, ethnicity – and the type of relationship they have with the alleged aggressor. Despite the fact that the generation of useful statistical information in addressing violence against girls does not solely depend on differentiating them by age, greater efforts are required to consider the protection and restitution of the rights of girls, boys and young people. The information about age groups would help ensure more specific and rigorous analysis as we must take into consideration that there are violent acts that tend to be associated with different stages of a woman's life.

Interoperability. *Using the BANAVIM identifier to trace and monitor cases.*

Add the Unique Victim Record (UVR) to the organizations' own AR in order to ensure traceability and guarantee at the most opportune moment, that all victims have a unique file number at any stage of the legal process.

Professionalization. *Promoting the training of officials in statistics and gender perspective.*

Planning, from the design of organization charts and the profiles of the officials specializing in statistics and gender perspective to the integration of training mechanisms for all statisticians, in order to guarantee on-going improvements to the information generation process and the incorporation of gender perspective.

Institutionalization. *Integrating into the AR protocols and manuals: 1. An explicit component of gender perspective. 2. A clear and well-defined guide to information generation processes.*

First, in order to institutionalize good practices already being employed individually by the majority of officials at these organizations, in addition to raising awareness among staff regarding gender perspective, protecting the rights of girls, boys and teenagers must be taken into consideration.

The second would guarantee that those bodies that do not already have defined guidelines, implement a line of action for their data compilation, validation, systematization and analysis processes, as well as updating and communicating them in their own reports and those of others. Furthermore, this component must make explicit the enforceability of the data and the periodicity of the reports.

It is also recommended that agreements are designed and implemented among different bodies to drive training and leverage the expertise of each area and organization. For example, SIPINNA already has training that could be complemented and guided by the compilation of data and statistics that focus on girls, boys and young people.

Analysis and Communication

Consolidation of Municipal Statistics Areas.
Reassigning budgets for local statistics departments.

Budget problems limit access to resources in all organizations and at all levels of government. However, a budget analysis that focuses on creating reassignment strategies for statistics areas that require improved infrastructure and training would help earmark resources for more powerful servers, would drive the specialization of staff, and would lead to the creation of new AR – or the adaptation of those that hinder the proper systematization and analysis of data.

Interoperability. *Creating mechanisms that institutionalize interoperability among authorities.*

- Within government agencies: communicating protocols and manuals, specifically those relating to case monitoring and traceability, as well as updated information in order to ensure that all areas involved in any given stage of the statistical process are informed.

- Outside government agencies: consolidating, through roundtables, the goals, responsibilities, periodicity of reporting and joint evaluations, in addition to the possibility of reassigning budgets to develop the aforementioned projects. Also by forging agreements that outline the responsibilities involved in sharing information out with the organization, in order to ensure the recipient returns the analyzed statistical data.

Transversal Considerations

Communicating the role that statistical information has on the production of AR is urgently required in organizations that address and prevent VAWG. Those organizations that have specialist statistical areas promote data generation, but this knowledge must be shared with all areas involved in the processes of compiling, systematizing and analysis data in order to ensure its comparability, validity, periodicity and use.

It is also important to highlight that, even if operational limitations are overcome, we will still not have any data about girls, as these are not included in the records in categories independent from those of their mothers. This systemic problem arises from the first stage of the statistical process: in none of the organizations we observed were girls given their own place, not even in the data compilation process. And although in almost every case the age variable is taken into consideration, there is no further information that distinguishes the situation of a girl from that of an adult woman.

The institutionalization of projects and programs, in addition to the professionalization of staff, can be focused on guaranteeing the consideration and restitution of the rights of girls, boys and teenagers who are the victims of gender-based violence; this means taking into consideration those children who, although not the direct object of this violence, are in fact indirect victims as they are dependents of a woman who is suffering violence, be she their mother or not. This shows just how much work is left to do in order to include children as a priority element of statistical information.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The creation of a public policy is usually a reactive move: a problem or crisis arises, and steps are then taken to address it. In Mexico, the national response to VAWG, as a result of attempts to homogenize different contexts and realities, has become a problem at a local level. However, municipalities like Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez are testament to the fact that focused efforts can transcend the national response, in addition to showing how knowledge of local contexts will always play a fundamental role in addressing the causes of violence and developing strategies to prevent it.

First, the strengths of both municipalities highlight the close collaboration with civil society to produce specific information about local problems and provide a holistic response to VAWG. Second, the collaborative work undertaken among institutions to help guarantee the prevalence of public policies despite political changes in the municipalities and the state. If the sharing of information were not communicated in these spaces (committees or technical groups), it would not be disaggregated, systematized and/or analyzed.

However, there are still some aspects that must be improved, which, despite the fact that they are generally ignored from a national perspective, can be boosted through local actions in order to drive their application and consolidation. In terms of the major areas that must be worked on, we would highlight the urgency of developing projects to raise awareness among officials of the importance and usefulness of statistical information (to help us understand the VAWG phenomenon and localize it in order to drive prevention, support and punitive measures) above the production of AR (that only allow us to count the instances of support offered).

It is also imperative to consider girls as crucial subjects in preventing and addressing VAWG as they form part of the most vulnerabilized group, and also because addressing violence involving girls is an action of prevention in itself, helping ensure that these girls do not grow up to become women who are the victims of sexual assault.

The work we do alongside organizations that address VAWG in Chihuahua and Juárez is based on practices that can be replicated in other municipalities in the country, and, above all, it is a clear example of the roadmap for addressing the systematic violation of the rights of girls and women in México. Be it because of international and regional pressure or because of the insistence and hard work of civil society in the state, both municipalities have created strategies that drive accountability and better respond to the victims.

This is why they represent a strategic location for bringing other discussions to the table in order to measure, document, and positively impact VAWG. If we have to start somewhere, Chihuahua and Juárez are clear options for disarticulating acronyms and asking where – if not in the discourse - the data about girls is found in order to deconstruct categories that, although assumed to be natural in the majority of cases, are created through patriarchal and adult-centric biases, in order to, ultimately, better locate girls and women within their own contexts to generate statistical data that goes beyond mere numbers and focuses on information vacuums.

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