Original article

Family Violence in Mexico. A Proposal for a Participatory Methodology for Social Intervention and Development in a Semi-Rural area of Cosío, Aguascalientes

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Abstract

Family violence is a serious structural health and social problem in Mexico. There are important precedents for intervention to address this situation in social work and communication, for development and social change. However, after a literature review, it was identified that there is little dialogue and collaboration between them. Participatory-action-research principles were the basis for integrating both fields and generating methodological proposal. Therefore, this article aims to share the experience gained in designing an intervention methodology that consisted of two participatory workshops, one for men and the other for women. Both achieved raising awareness of the causes and consequences of family violence so that the participants would develop communication products with messages on alternatives to resolve family conflicts for themselves and other people in their community. Although this methodological proposal arose from a broader research project, this text focuses on its description and results. The initiative was carried out in the municipality of Cosio in the State of Aguascalientes, Mexico, which shares several characteristics with other regions, such as its colonial past, men's migration, the presence of machismo, and religious conservatism. Therefore, this methodology can be implemented in other contexts and, at the same time, be analyzed, discussed, and improved.

Keywords: Domestic violence; Social Worker; Communication and Development; Participatory research; Methodology.

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Violencia Familiar en México. Propuesta de una metodología participativa para la intervención y desarrollo social en una zona semi rural de Cosío, Aguascalientes

Resumen

La violencia familiar es una grave problemática estructural de salud y social en México. Existen importantes antecedentes de intervención para atender esta situación en Trabajo Social y, además, desde la Comunicación para Desarrollo y el Cambio Social. Sin embargo, después de una revisión de literatura se identificó que hay poco diálogo y colaboración entre sí. Los principios de la Investigación-Acción-Participativa fueron el fundamento para integrar ambos campos y generar una propuesta metodológica. Por ello, el objetivo de este artículo es compartir la experiencia del diseño de una metodología de intervención que consistió en la impartición de dos talleres participativos, uno dirigido a hombres y otro a mujeres. Ambos lograron generar conciencia sobre las causas y consecuencias de la violencia familiar para que las y los propios participantes elaboraran productos comunicativos con mensajes sobre alternativas para resolver los conflictos familiares para sí y otras personas de su comunidad. Si bien, esta propuesta metodológica surgió de una investigación más amplia, este texto se centra en su descripción y resultados. La iniciativa se situó en el municipio de Cosío del Estado de Aguascalientes en México, que comparte con otras regiones varias características, como su pasado colonial, la migración de varones, la presencia de machismo y conservadurismo. Por tanto, se considera que esta metodología puede implementarse en otros contextos; y a la vez ser analizada, discutida y mejorada.

Palabras clave: Violencia doméstica; Trabajador social; Comunicación y Desarrollo; Investigación Participativa; Metodología.

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Summary: 1. Introduction, 2. Methodology, 3. Findings, 4. Conclusion, 5. Bibliographic references.

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1. Introduction

Family violence is a problem that has historically been present in different contexts. This research was carried out in the northern municipality of Cosío, Aguascalientes, Mexico; this town has an arid, steppe-like climate and borders the state of Zacatecas. Its origin lies in the social, political, and economic logic of the haciendas in colonial times, and it currently is one of the four poorest municipalities of the eleven in the state. Rising family violence in this context is linked to factors such as unemployment, limited educational opportunities, social welfare inequalities, and migration.

According to the Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia (2007) domestic violence is

> the abusive act of power or intentional omission aimed at dominating, subduing, controlling, or assaulting in a physical, verbal, psycho-emotional, patrimonial, economic, or sexual manner any member of the family inside or outside the family domicile, regardless of whether it may produce injuries. (p. 6)

This is the central problem that motivated the proposal of an intervention methodology based on Social Work (SW) and Communication for Development and Social Change (CDSC). As will be argued, both fields of knowledge and practice can dialogue and complement each other. Based on this, this article aims to share the design of a participatory methodology, which aims to generate more excellent knowledge and understanding of the issue and, at the same time, contribute to reducing family violence.

This social problem is pressing throughout Mexico, according to data from the Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (SESNSP, 2024) in the first nine months of 2023 there were 220,291 reports of family violence crimes, which represents an increase of about 6.5% over the same period last year.

The national reality regarding family violence is replicated in the state of Aguascalientes. In the first three quarters of 2023, there were 2,426 reports of family violence crimes (SESNSP, 2024). In addition, there were 162.8 reports of family violence crimes per 100,000 inhabitants, which is very close to the 167.9 reports of the national rate.

The Banco Nacional de Datos e Información sobre Casos de Violencia contra las Mujeres (BANAVIM, 2022) indicated that, from January to October 2022, Aguascalientes registered a total of 41,876 cases of family violence. The most prevalent types of violence identified were psychological, followed by physical, economic, sexual, and patrimonial.

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Likewise, Medrano (2023) pointed out that in Aguascalientes, family violence has grown by 32% when comparing 2023 with 2022. The SESNSP's monthly report reported 1,629 complaints for crimes of this type between January and June, which is almost 400 more than in the same period last year. These figures show an upward trend in the number of complaints each year.

The crime traffic light[1] Provided by SESNSP (2023), Aguascalientes averaged 269.5 monthly complaints during the first nine months of 2023. March was the month with the highest number of complaints. In addition, Aguascalientes, Jesús María, San Francisco de los Romos, and Pabellón de Arteaga were the municipalities with the highest number of incidents, with 1905, 207, 124, and 71, respectively. Therefore, this state generally appears in red on the family violence scale.

Regarding the municipality of Cosío, there were 21 reports of domestic violence crimes in the first three quarters of 2023. This represents a decrease of about 22% compared to the same period last year. However, this decrease can be attributed to an anomaly: 12 complaints were received in May 2022, significantly higher than the monthly average of 3 complaints from January to September 2022 (SESNSP, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that although data regarding complaints is a valuable approximation of family violence in Mexico and Aguascalientes, it only shows part of the problem since most cases are not reported. Therefore, there is an underreporting or black figure. According to Molina-Rico and Moreno-Méndez (2015), understanding why "many women do not report and continue in a violent relationship requires identifying and understanding which coping strategies victims and survivors use" (p. 1000). The authors cite different classifications of coping strategies for family violence. For example, Lazarus and Folkman (1988) classify these strategies as confrontational coping, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, acceptance of responsibility, escape avoidance, problem-solving, and positive reappraisal.

Consequently, Molina-Rico and Moreno-Méndez (2015) conclude that reporting is not among the first coping strategies for family violence.

> Women indicate that they reach out to institutions such as police or Family Welfare only in extreme situations. Moreover, even when institutions make women aware of their rights, they often feel re-victimized due to inadequate protection and support. (p. 1003)

Therefore, it can be inferred that reporting does not correlate with the decrease or increase in cases of family violence since many cases go unreported. However, the official data provide a starting point to highlight that the situation of domestic violence in Mexico and Aguascalientes is even more pressing than these figures reflect.

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[1]   A crime traffic light is a tool for measuring national crime reduction.

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Social Work (SW) and Communication for Development and Social Change (CDSC)

Family violence is a serious phenomenon that has been prominently addressed by law, family medicine, and psychology. Rodríguez-Franco *et al.* (2009) conducted a bibliographic and bibliometric review of psychology studies on domestic violence and concluded that in recent years, more than 2660 articles have been published in various countries. However, the research that has been carried out within sociology, pedagogy, communication, and social work is also relevant.

This methodological proposal aimed at contributing to the eradication of family violence was based on SW and CDSC, both with interdisciplinary fields that, in turn, link with other disciplines, methodologies, and intervention strategies to respond to problematic situations and needs of individuals, groups, and communities in specific contexts.

SW is a professional profile that emerged in the late nineteenth century and began its rise in the early twentieth century, as concerns about human welfare and quality of life appeared. It can be understood as

> A profession and a scientific discipline that allows us to visualize contexts, analyze problems, recognize socio-historical and economic factors that place groups at a disadvantage, and, as a result, propose actions for care and support within a framework of respect, autonomy, and human rights. (Castro-Guzmán *et al.*, 2022, p. 32)

The profession's potential to address social problems lies in its emphasis on research to identify and describe realities through data collection in different fields of study (institutions, individuals, families, groups, and communities). Social workers use methods, instruments, and professional techniques to systematize information adequately and develop a social diagnosis of people's needs. Furthermore, social work interventions are grounded in methodologies that uphold professional and ethical standards, prioritizing the dignity and needs of communities.

Family violence has been addressed by the Social Sciences, which has contributed to its understanding and reduction. Among these, SW has stood out for its human approach, commitment, and social responsibility towards this problem; these professionals research and propose intervention programs and projects to assist families affected by this social and health issue. A literature review on Social Work interventions for family violence showed that these interventions are characterized by having an impact from the institutional setting, primarily focusing on orienting, educating, accompanying, guiding, and listening to victims of violence, particularly women. In addition, prevention is an important function of SW (Álava-Barreiro & Veliz-Pincay, 2018; Merediz, 2012).

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Furthermore, intervention strategies focus on families that have suffered a violent act inside and outside their homes. The treatment involves different phases, including preventive, socioeducational, sociotherapeutic, and legal stages (Charry-Higuera, 2014; Navarro-Bulgarelli, 2019; Santana-Hernández *et al.*, 2015).

Gumucio-Dagron (2012) defined Communication for Development and Social Change as a process in vulnerable communities or groups alongside those without a voice or who have little space or opportunity to express their opinion. This communication allows people to express their feelings about different scenarios of their daily lives, collaborate on projects or programs, and take ownership of them, which in turn leads to strengthening community and even national capacities.

Tufte (2024) argues that, throughout its trajectory, CDSC has been distinguished by its paradigm of participation, which emerged from Latin American approaches to social and community, educational, and scientific work. For more than two decades, this approach has included new voices and perspectives in an interdisciplinary manner, situating itself as a field that generates knowledge with a practice-based orientation. It examines the dynamics of power, culture, agency, and communication within institutions focused on social development while respecting the proposals of individuals and communities.

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The issue of family violence has also been addressed by CDSC, primarily through interventions in communities, as indicated by the literature review. Studies such as those by Lasso-Urbano (2021), Ramos-Maldonado (2016), and Sandoya (2020) have focused on enhancing community organization in the face of any situation of violence through reflection, dialogue, action, and collaborative work. A notable aspect of CDSC is the media's active role in disseminating information, empowering communities, and fostering social development; for that reason, community radio has played a key role.

CDSC has also provided support for women victims of violence, as evidenced by the work of Ketterer-Romero *et al.* (2017) and González-Nápoles *et al.* (2013), who offered workshops to these women. Based on Participatory Action Research (PAR), they generated dialogue spaces to listen to the women, understand their needs and desires, and then provide them with knowledge to share what they had learned with other women. CDSC has focused on families as well; Durand-Rill *et al.* (2014) implemented a community reflection and action workshop as an intervention strategy to eradicate domestic violence. The strategy was based on dialogue to recover experiences and life stories and generate encouraging messages.

Most studies on violence using the CDSC approach have been carried out in Colombia and use PAR. These studies inspired the initiative of the methodological proposal presented here. Based on them, it is argued that SW can be complemented with the communicative principles

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and methodologies of CDSC, as both fields share the epistemology of PAR, which is centered on the participatory action of community members.

Therefore, this proposal establishes that Social Work and CDCS are fields that can nurture each other; in this proposal, they are applied to address the problem of family violence in a marginal and semi-rural sociocultural context. In SW, interventions are usually carried out through workshops, programs, or projects that include the use of various didactic materials. CDSC provides the possibility of using diverse communicative products such as photography, participatory video, radio, community journalism, cinema, critical reporting or documentary, fanzine or e-fanzine, theater (inspired by Boal's approach, as well as soap opera or edutainment genres, among others.

CDSC encourages people to engage in dialogue by creating these products to generate content that expresses their voices. The messages included are developed in a participatory manner and shared with peers, groups, and communities to enhance the intervention strategy. Additionally, the content is produced according to the sociocultural contexts of the communities as it emerges from their perspectives. It is worth noting that these communicative materials have evolved due to the advent of digital technologies.

Despite the digital divide and lack of access to the Internet, some communities have expanded the possibilities of content production and its dissemination capacity through socio-digital networks.

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SW and CDSC coincide in their purpose and work dynamics since they bring together groups, families, and communities to reflect on their needs, enhance their ability to make decisions, and advocate for themselves. Consequently, this process empowers them.

Therefore, SW dialogues with CDSC through a shared interest in seeking alternatives and innovations to promote expression and dialogue among various social actors. SW has ample experience in addressing social problems, while CDSC has expertise in managing communicative resources to broaden the scope of intervention initiatives.

So far, this introduction has presented the problem of family violence and highlighted how SW and CDSC have generated intervention strategies to address this situation. Based on the literature review, these two fields have had little exchange. Therefore, the following section proposes Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a point of convergence from which a methodological proposal was designed to address family violence. The initiative comprised two workshops, detailed in the following section, which can be replicated.

Subsequently, the results obtained from these workshops are shared, and the article concludes with reflections on the scope and limitations. Primarily, however, it emphasizes the

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human experience of sharing family conflicts and desires with the women and men who participated in the study.

2. Methodology
A participatory approach

The main objective of this article is to share a methodological proposal based on PAR to nurture the practice of SW. This approach has its roots in the educational and community work experiences of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda. One of Freire's (1970) main premises was that vulnerable people possess the necessary tools to change their realities to achieve integral well-being. From this, Freire carried out several adult education projects in the popular and poor sectors. This inspired a tradition of community work in semi-rural areas to identify, alongside participants, knowledge, attitudes, qualities, and strengths that would enable them to improve their lives.

Fals-Borda (1986) contributed to this premise by concluding that social actors seeking solutions to their social problems could produce knowledge about their diverse realities. Thus, the researcher establishes a different relationship with research participants, initiating a dialogue to understand and solve a situation mutually.

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PAR is defined as "the ethical-political and epistemological stance that links practitioners of participatory action research with vulnerable populations through processes of knowledge production" (Merçon, 2021, p. 39). Loewenson *et al.* (2014) highlight the following as its most relevant principles:

- Those usually called objects of research are active people capable of reflecting on the problems they experience, being primary sources of data and information, and generating knowledge about these situations.
- The researcher's role is to facilitate a process of community empowerment, wherein individuals actively participate in decision-making regarding actions to be taken for change.
- PAR understands research as an integral activity where the researcher is not separated from the researched, nor is the production of knowledge separated from the capacity to intervene and improve the reality of a community.

In this methodological proposal, it is argued that SW and CDSC share PAR's epistemological stance. Therefore, they can complement each other. SW has extensive experience serving the population's marginalized and/or vulnerable sectors. CDSC contributes to developing dialogue-based initiatives, a communicative process that begins with attentive listening to participants. The idea is not to generate a linear process in which vertical or

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unidirectional information is transmitted but to consider all perspectives and voices. In addition, CDSC proposes using various activities and media as triggers for these expressions.

Based on the above, in the proposed participatory workshop presented in this article, the coordinator assumes the role of accompanying and motivating participants horizontally in a process that concludes with a self-evaluation. During this process, activities and didactic materials are organized to generate knowledge, capacities, and skills that can prompt critical thinking, allowing participants to transcend the workshop and achieve social change. Unlike other research logics, it is not a matter of applying an instrument to obtain data on people but of learning about the experiences of women and men as active and participatory subjects.

The design of the workshop started from a common core, but then the need arose to generate two different workshops with content and activities tailored for each gender. Two workshops were given to two groups in June and July 2023. The first challenge was to choose who would participate and in what setting. Options were sought among local institutions and organizations in the municipality of Cosío, and the Municipal Government offered a space through its Public Services Department by inviting women and men who worked in that instance in cleaning tasks in public spaces. The Municipal Multipurpose Auditorium was offered as the space to hold the workshops. A key factor that ensured attendance was that participants could attend within their working hours as a training course. The workshops included four sessions of two hours each, for eight hours. The objective was to promote actions to eradicate family violence by sensitizing women and men of the municipality of Cosío about the causes and consequences of family violence and, through dialogue, providing them with information and empowerment to generate communicative strategies for social change.

The men and women who participated in the workshops lived in rural communities in the municipality of Cosío: Refugio de Agua Zarca, Soledad de Abajo, Refugio de Providencia, Santa María de la Paz, El Salero, La Punta and La Esperanza. The participants were excited to participate in this initiative, especially the men, who were grateful to be offered a workshop, as these are usually only for women. Both groups were very willing to engage in individual and group activities. Additionally, they always participated in expressing their reflections and discussing their life experiences.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the workshop participants.

Workshop	No. of Participants	Age Range	Married	Divorced	Single	Average educational level
First Workshop for Women: Do we look prettier when we are silent?	26	25 to 67 years old	24	1	1	Primary
Second Workshop, for Men: Who is in charge of the house?	16	25 to 70 years old	14	1	1	Primary

Source: own elaboration.

Each of the four workshop sessions is described below to share the experience so it can be replicated in other contexts and to motivate the appropriation of this proposal or the design of others.

First session. Introduction to the topic of Family Violence

This session began with the workshop facilitator's presentation to the participants. In addition, it was made clear that the information provided by the participants would be treated confidentially, meaning that their data would be anonymous. Then, the workshop's objectives were explained, as well as the contents and activities that would be addressed in each session. In doing so, efforts were made to motivate participants and ensure they attended all sessions.

Subsequently, audiovisual support was used to present the rules applied throughout the workshop. Essentially, there were four rules, which stated that participants should be responsible for their actions and words in front of the group.

The approach was that they would be free to express what they thought, felt, and wished, but always with total respect for other participants. On that account, they were encouraged to use expressions such as "I think", "I have an opinion", or "I feel" to distinguish that these were personal matters to be shared and not statements imposed on other members. Another agreement was that they were committed to recognizing, valuing, and respecting the ideas, feelings, and proposals of others. The invitation was to listen with empathy, try to understand, and place themselves in the situation of whoever was expressing themselves without interrupting. The last rule involved explaining what gender-based prejudices consisted of so that people could be alert and avoid them.

The next activity was an icebreaker game entitled "My Name Is, and I Like" (Ramírez-Miranda, 2014) to help participants get to know each other. To do this, they were given a name

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tag to write their name on and put it in a visible place so that all participants could remember and address the person by name. Afterward, they were invited to sit in a circle and introduce themselves with their name and something they liked about their daily life.

The following activity consisted of conducting a diagnosis of their perceptions of family violence, which was achieved through a written questionnaire or the recording of a voice message for those who found it challenging to write. Thus, they reflected on whether violence is present in their family lives and, if so, in what form. The following questions were used as triggers: What is my current mood? How do I feel about my family? What is my relationship with my partner, wife, or husband? What is the relationship I have with my children like? In general, what is the relationship I have with the members of my family like? Do conflicts arise in my family? Are some of these situations yelling, teasing, or even physical aggression? How do I handle these situations in my home? Is there trust between my family and me in telling them about any situation happening to me? Finally, do I feel like my family understands and supports me? If not, why not?

Another activity entailed presenting family violence with audiovisual support, defining the concept and its typology, and offering examples. Additionally, statistical data about family violence perpetrated by men against women in Mexico was presented (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos [CNDH], 2018).

During this presentation, participants were encouraged to share their views on the content and to discuss whether they had personally experienced any of these types of violence. Subsequently, case studies representing various family violence situations were read aloud to assess their understanding of the topic. Participants were asked to identify the type of violence depicted in each case. The responses were then shared in a group discussion. At the end, they were asked to reflect on the following question: "Looking back on my personal history and daily life, do I see any of these types of violence in my own life or the lives of my loved ones?".

The subsequent activity involved presenting the causes and consequences of family violence (Saldaña-Ramírez & Gorjón-Gómez, 2020). Participants were first asked to share examples of causes and consequences they were aware of. Then, the causes and consequences identified in the literature and their implications were presented. Doubts were clarified, and all participants were asked to comment on their experiences related to the topic. Based on these discussions, they proposed actions to mitigate triggers that could lead to violence.

The final activity of the first session consisted of watching a video on the cycle of violence (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres [INMUJERES], n.d.) that depicted family violence scenarios from Mexican soap operas.

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Table 2. First session. Presentation and introduction to the topic of family violence.

Specific objectives	Activities
Workshop participants will: - Learn about the program and its objectives. - Become integrated in**to** the group through an icebreaker game. - Generate a diagnosis of family violence in Cosío. - Identify the different types of violence that can occur in a family environment. - Understand the causes and consequences of family violence to counteract its likelihood and occurrence.	1. Introduction of the workshop facilitator. 2. Presentation of the workshop agenda. 3. Presentation of workshop agreements and commitments. 4. Icebreaker activity to introduce participants. 5. Participant reflection on personal experiences of family violence. 6. Completion of a written questionnaire or voice message on family violence. 7. Presentation of the definition, types, and examples of family violence. 8. Discussion of the causes and consequences of family violence. 9. Exploration of the cycle of family violence.

Source: own elaboration.

Second Session: Causes and Consequences of Domestic Violence

This session began with a visual presentation on gender and masculinities. This was followed by questions on how participants understood the concepts of gender, stereotypes, and gender roles. Examples were then offered to clarify any doubts.

The second activity revolved around gender stereotypes (Secretaría de las Mujeres, 2023). Two tables were shown, illustrating the attributes or characteristics assigned to women and men. It was explained how this is a result of social construction and, therefore, arbitrary.

Then, a space was provided to analyze and discuss the content of each list. The question followed this: What happens when gender roles and stereotypes are eliminated, ignored, or not followed?

For the third activity, in the workshop directed at men, the topic of fragile masculinity was presented (Pizarro, 2007). Participants were questioned about their knowledge of the subject and asked to express their opinions. Subsequently, a video was shown to sensitize them to the topic. This was complemented by a dynamic in which they were invited to share their experiences of fragile masculinity, which implies that they are denied the right to express their emotions and admit their vulnerabilities.

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In the women's workshop, the topic of toxic femininity was addressed (Schrader, 2020). Participants were questioned about their knowledge of the concept and encouraged to express their opinions. Next, they were given a presentation on this complex problem, in which women neglect their mental, emotional, and physical needs and accept negative behaviors from others to maintain their affective bonds. Participants delved into the toxic femininity that occurs when a woman focuses on serving others at the expense of her own needs and rights.

The definition and repercussions of toxic femininity were presented through a video to sensitize participants on the issue (Emociones con voz, 2023). This activity was complemented by a dynamic in which women sat in a circle to share their life experiences in this regard. They were constantly reminded to listen carefully to each intervention and show respect without judging.

In the men's workshop, the fourth activity addressed the justifications men express when they commit violent acts against women by reviewing a list of shared ideas. Additionally, exercises were carried out for anger management and violence prevention (Campos-Guadamuz, 2007). The first exercise was titled "¿What makes me angry?" and asked the following questions: What situations frustrate and anger men the most? How do you handle them? Participants were encouraged to recall situations they had experienced with their partners to motivate their answers.

The second exercise was entitled: "Stop and Breathe". The aim was to guide participants through different breathing exercises they could apply when identifying anger-motivated behaviors. The following exercise, "Time Out", was a technique to stop violent behavior and help keep anger from turning into rage. In this exercise, the facilitator shared a sheet with the participants that included recommendations for cases where men realized they were starting to get angry. In such cases, they should take a "time out" and do an activity they enjoy, such as listening to relaxing music, physical exercise, or walking, among others, that would bring them peace.

The next activity for the women involved presenting the definition of self-esteem. A video illustrated the types of self-esteem, its consequences, and the benefits of strengthening it (Anmusica, 2015). This was followed by an exercise titled "I recognize what I am and what I am worth". In this exercise, women were asked to write ten

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outstanding positive qualities or characteristics about themselves on paper and to share them with the group.

The sixth and final activity of the second session involved analyzing the lyrics of popular songs close to the participants' cultural context. Two classic ranchera songs were chosen: "Rosita Álvarez", sung by Antonio Aguilar and written by Felipe Valdés Leal, and "El teniente Arnulfo", also sung by Antonio Aguilar and written by Narciso Zapata Torres.

"Rosita Álvarez" tells the story of Rosita Álvarez, whom Hipólito murdered because she refused to dance with him at a public event. The song suggests that she was responsible for her death for rejecting him. "El teniente Arnulfo" recounts the story of the death of two men who humiliated each other by staring at one another. The song justifies this act of violence as a display of bravery. Both songs were played to encourage participants to reflect on their lyrics and the underlying messages they convey.

Table 3. Second Session. Causes and consequences of family violence.

Specific objectives	Activities
Male workshop participants will:	1. Visual presentation and discussion on gender and masculinities.
Become aware of gender stereotypes and roles so that they can identify beliefs that justify violence against women.	2. Analysis of gender stereotypes and roles. 3. Shared experiences on fragile masculinity (Workshop aimed at men). And toxic femininity (Workshop aimed at women).
Women participants in the workshop will:	4. Activities to reflect on men's most common justifications when committing violent acts and anger management by men (Workshop aimed at men).
They should be able to value themselves and develop their self-esteem to face situations of violence and adversity positively.	5. Presentation of self-esteem and recognition of qualities (Workshop aimed at women). 6. Content analysis of popular songs.

Source: own elaboration.

Session 3: The CDSC and communication products

This session involved three activities. In the first activity, a presentation on CDSC was shown (Gumucio-Dagron, 2011; Tufte, 2024). Participants learned about this perspective, which puts into practice knowledge, activities, and sustainable and participatory messages to contribute to solving sociocultural problems such as inequality, gender inequality, education, violence, and promoting human rights.

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The second activity presented a catalog of different communicative products or messages. While there is a great variety, some require more extraordinary skills. Therefore, those that could be produced by the participants, considering their knowledge, skills, and resources, were chosen. The selected communicative products were socio-digital network campaigns, storytelling, fanzines, participatory fanzines, participatory photography, journalism, radio, and theater. All these alternatives hold a community approach, meaning they are made from the context and experiences of participants' sociocultural context and are primarily aimed at this same audience.

For the third activity, women and men were invited to design and produce a communicative message based on the content reviewed on family violence. Once produced, the purpose was for participants to share their messages with others to promote awareness of the issue. They were encouraged to broaden their knowledge of the topics covered in the workshop by consulting the Internet, magazines, newspapers, books, or other resources. To do so, they could count on the support of family members, such as their daughters, sons, or friends.

They were given the freedom to choose the type of communicative product and content and whether to create it individually or in a team. In the latter case, they were expected to organize themselves to reach agreements and make decisions. When they chose which communicative product they would carry out, they were instructed to do it as a final task, outside the workshop sessions, so that they would have more time and the support of their families. The women were organized into seven teams: six teams of four members and one team of two. Their communicative products were as follows: three teams produced fanzines, three did storytelling, and one did participatory photography. In the case of the men, three teams of four members were formed, one of three, and one decided to work individually. Three teams designed fanzines, one did storytelling, and the man who decided to work individually designed an awareness-raising video to be shared with other men.

Table 4. Third session. CDSC and the Production of Communicative Products

Specific objectives	Activities
Workshop participants will:	1. Presentation of CDSC perspective.
	2. Presentation of a catalog of possible communication products to be produced.
Learn about the CDSC perspective and examples of communication products they could produce to share the knowledge they learned about family violence.	3. Collaborative design and realization of a communicative product.
Develop positive messages to eradicate family violence through the creation of communication products to share with other women and men in their community.	

Source: own elaboration.

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Session 4: Presentation of the communicative product and evaluation of the participatory workshop

In the closing session of the participatory workshops, women and men were invited to a plenary session to voluntarily share their communicative products—a collective reflection accompanied by team presentations. In the case of the women, only three of the seven teams were willing to present their messages. The first team made a fanzine containing cutouts and phrases they wrote, some of which were taken from websites. They illustrated the topics of gender equality, types of family violence, and *machismo* with images and examples. The fanzine concluded with different phrases to combat or eradicate violence.

The second team chose to narrate the story of one of the team members through storytelling. They shared their experience in creating the product. They requested that the information be kept anonymous and shared only with other women, not men, participating in the workshop. The third and final team presented a fanzine with drawings on gender equality and the different types of violence.

Among the men, the participant who worked individually was the only one who exhibited and visually projected his communicative product. He recorded a video at home with the help of his daughter. It portrayed him performing different domestic activities and directing awareness-raising messages to men regarding equality in doing domestic work and how to support women in violent situations. The other teams only handed their communicative products to the facilitator and commented on the satisfaction and knowledge gained from the collaborative elaboration process.

After the presentations, the workshops concluded with a social gathering. The facilitator thanked the participants by offering refreshments, which became a pleasant social occasion.

In this session, the workshop was evaluated through a group interview. Several questions were asked about various aspects of the workshop, primarily its influence or impact on participants' knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, and solutions to violence that may occur in the family environment. Additionally, participants were asked to provide recommendations for improving the workshop's performance. Finally, they were given an informative pamphlet detailing different institutions and guides to identify alternatives for addressing family violence.

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Table 5. Fourth session. Presentation of the communicative product and evaluation of the participatory workshop.

Specific objectives	Activities
Workshop participants will:	1. Presentation and reflection of the finished communicative products.
Collectively reflect on family violence by sharing communicative products and the lessons learned by putting them together.	2. Evaluation of the workshop. 3. Social gathering,
Evaluate the workshop.	

Source: own elaboration.

3. Findings

Knowledge regarding family violence was generated through the workshop, which will allow for a better understanding of the problem and, therefore, more successful interventions. One of the main results was the understanding that the causes of family violence, and violence in general, are rooted in their sociocultural context. In the case of the semi-rural towns of the municipality of Cosío, it became clear that women and men still live with the consequences of a colonial past where the economy was based on the hacienda and most of its inhabitants had little access to education, job opportunities, and social mobility.

This context contributes to frustrations and family problems, predominantly men's migration to the United States. On the other hand, a strong Catholic and patriarchal tradition prevails, where women live under the control and gender mandates of their partner or family, as well as of the entire community. Women expressed that they are harshly criticized if they challenge gender mandates and roles.

Participants experienced psychological violence in its many forms. Women commented that sometimes being scorned, humiliated, or ignored is even more painful than being beaten. They also admitted that, in the face of their husbands or partners' physical force, they most often resorted to psychological violence. For example, they might choose not to speak to them. This revealed that one of the prevailing problems among couples and families is the lack of communication, and in contrast, emotions and conflicts are often handled through violence.

Unfortunately, they reported experiencing various types of physical violence, as well as sexual violence; this is aggravated by men's addictions to alcohol and drugs. Violent acts such as forced sexual intercourse and taking out various male frustrations on women are normalized. On the men's side, they admitted that the gender roles imposed on them, such as needing to be providers and womanizers, also imply violence, which in turn generates greater violence. Women, especially men, expressed that the workshop allowed them to understand that it is

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possible to manage couple and family relationships differently. However, given the unequal relationship between genders, it was clear to the men that they were key to initiating change.

4. Conclusions

This section shares the achievements and limitations of the application of the methodology proposed in this article. The purpose is for it to be replicated and improved in other contexts of social work professionals. The participatory workshops aimed at men and women in the municipality of Cosío were innovative in motivating participants to listen to each other, share experiences about the violence they have experienced and perpetrated, and thus reflect among themselves. The objective of creating a horizontal and participatory space characterized by mutual respect was achieved, which led to the successful implementation of workshop activities.

One achievement was the men's positive attitude toward the workshop; they explained gaining a new perspective on violence and learning how to address family problems better. Above all, they were able to understand their partners better and become more empathetic. They also commented that they were pleased to have been invited to this project, given that the institutions usually offer activities for women, but much fewer are directed at them.

The methodology proved to complement the practice of SW, as it offers resources to create an environment characterized by equity that fosters dialogue. In addition, communicative products can facilitate sharing family and couple problems in a trusting space. Therefore, the workshop is innovative because it is not based solely on transmitting information from one person to the participants, inhibiting their participation. On the contrary, this approach allows for more significant interaction, sharing ideas and experiences, and searching for solutions.

These workshops led, especially in the case of the men, to reflections on their violent behaviors and the realization that they create more significant conflict. They proposed solutions. In the case of the women, they recognized that many of the situations they experience should not be normalized and that the violence they suffer should be acknowledged. By sharing their individual experiences, they formed a collective that can support each other. They all understood that it is possible to have greater self-esteem and, in a non-conflicting way, to set limits to improve their relationships.

In the evaluation of the workshops, participants expressed that the information and activities generated reflection and awareness regarding the violence experienced within the family. It also allowed them to identify types of violence and deploy strategies to eradicate them.

On the other hand, it is necessary to consider specific areas that can be improved. For instance, participants mentioned that four sessions were insufficient; they would have liked more time to reflect and discuss. In addition, it is advisable to broaden the explanation of how to create

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each communicative product. An alternative could be making a handbook that could be used as a didactic resource to provide participants with more information on spreading these communicative products. Another recommendation for future workshops would be to design a follow-up plan to evaluate the workshop and assess whether the contents and the intervention resulted in changes in personal and family life by reducing violence.

This experience is shared to contribute to the eradication of family violence based on women's and men's proposals. In addition, the role of SW professionals in facilitating awareness and action processes is made clear. As well as how this task can be nurtured from other fields of study and practice, as was the case with CDSC.

A series of recommendations and suggestions are included for training social workers and future studies, to end this text. Intervention proposals at present should be directed toward excluded groups. Regarding family violence, it is advisable to work with men since, according to the state-of-the-art, very few interventions have been carried out with them. Another recommendation is to combine multidisciplinary work with other professions to strengthen SW interventions; this paper recommends that they take the opportunity to work from the perspective of CDSC.

Creativity and innovation are important when implementing a workshop; therefore, the workshop should be participatory and horizontal to establish dialogue, exchange of experiences, reflection, and analysis among the participants. Achieving this can strengthen the skills and attitudes that social workers should have when working with individuals, families, groups, and communities, especially if they decide to collaborate with men.

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Authors' Contribution statement

Mireya Brillit López-García: research (thesis author), conceptualization, methodology, visualization, writing (original draft), writing (draft revision and proofreading); María Rebeca Padilla de la Torre: collaboration in conceptualization, formal analysis, research, supervision (thesis director), writing (original draft), writing (draft revision and proofreading).

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in the writing or publication of this article.

Ethical Implications

The authors have no ethical implications to declare in the writing and publication of this article.

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