

IN MY SHOES

Study on Violence Against Girls, Boys,
Adolescents, and Women and the
Response of the Justice System



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PRESENTATION

I will begin my intervention by inviting readers to change their perspective to analyze, without prejudice, the present research contribution developed within the framework of joint and interinstitutional efforts that influence the justice system of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, led by International Justice Mission (IJM), and the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo”, through its Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (IICC), and the interinstitutional support and coordination achieved with the Judicial Branch (OJ); the Gender Committee of the Judicial Branch, and the Plurinational Constitutional Court of Bolivia.

I consider it important to make known – as will be evident through the pages of this research – the reality regarding all instances involved in addressing complaints of children, adolescents, and adult women who are victims of physical and/or sexual violence. Each case is substantiated before the Police, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Ombudsmen for Children and Adolescents and the Judicial Branch, among other instances, so the response of the justice system to protect these vulnerable sectors must be addressed in an institutional manner by the administrative and jurisdictional entities of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

However, the mission and objective of the effort that I am currently presiding over is to ensure that reflections, at an inter-institutional level, are carried out precisely based on actions reflected in works such as the present one, which not only highlights the positive aspects of each activity related to safeguarding women’s rights on equal terms, but also the weaknesses that exist in accessing justice.

It is relevant for the entire system to know people’s opinion about what they consider is being done well, average, or definitely poorly. The findings obtained will contribute to institutional decision-making given our current status. Knowing the time needed to wait for a judicial decision is an important step forward, taking as a starting point three or more judicial districts, among the many that make up the judicial map of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Contributing from wherever we are makes it possible to advance in the work of Confidence, as this report states. Breaking barriers and changing from within, not only at an institutional but at a personal level, is a challenge that we must meet to access justice with equal opportunities.

MSc. Karem Lorena Gallardo Sejas

*President of the Gender Committee Judicial Branch
and Plurinational Constitutional Court*

PREFACE

I proceed to write the preface of this invaluable and rigorous research that essentially undertakes the arduous task of making visible the painful reality experienced by a considerable number of girls, boys, adolescents, and women of Bolivia, who suffer physical and sexual violence, a scenario that implies the undisputed violation of their Human Rights (HR). Likewise, the study contributes significantly to knowledge production, being a substantial input for the design of public policies aimed at eradicating the extremely high levels of impunity present today, which can be analyzed as a symptom of a variety of state omissions and actions.

In 2022, in Bolivia, gender and generational-based violence (GGBV) has been exacerbated, with an increase of 9% compared to 2021. The high rates of physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women are alarming, therefore, there is an urgent need to address the root cause of the escalation of physical and sexual violence. Bolivia ratified international human rights treaties, committing to act in accordance with the principles and standards established at the international level.

The main purpose of the investigation is to measure the response of the Public Justice System (PJS) in cases of physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women in four municipalities: La Paz, El Alto, Sucre, and Cochabamba. To achieve this objective, four domains are defined: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence; Performance of the PJS in such situations; perception of Confidence in the PJS by PJS officials, and the Reliance in the PJS by the population suffering violence.

To enable the study, various organizations, institutions, and universities joined forces to carry out this research, therefore, they represent spaces of resistance given the extremely unequal social context. In this sense, I emphasize my greatest recognition for this and other contributions within the framework of human dignity to the *Behavioral Sciences Research Institute of the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo”* and *International Justice Mission* and the *Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontificia San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca*.

The study makes several specific contributions: it is clear that women experience higher levels of sexual violence compared to men, almost half of this type of cases occur at home or at school, and the perpetrators are usually family members or close friends, while men are more likely to face physical violence. This finding highlights the need for differentiated approaches to combat the problem, recognizing gender disparities in their experiences. On the other hand, a clear difference is revealed in the willingness to report and make an effective complaint between adolescents and adult women. This finding outlines the population's Reliance in the institutions part of the PJS. The lack of reporting in cases of violence can prolong abusive behavior, motivate arbitrariness by those who carry it out, hinder access to resources and support for victims; increase distrust in institutions, and underestimate the magnitude of the problem. It is crucial to raise awareness about the importance of reporting violence as long as barriers are removed and victims are ensured to feel safe when seeking help. The relevance of a supportive environment for people who have experienced violence is noted and specialized services recognizing and addressing the experienced traumatic events are required. Deficiencies are identified in the PJS's capacity to effectively address and resolve cases of violence, leaving many victims without proper access to justice, generating distrust and lack of protection. Additionally, the lack of established deadlines for the entire criminal process is pointed out, as it can cause considerable delays in case resolution and negatively impact people's lives.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, strengths and opportunities for change are identified, such as recent training initiatives for judges and prosecutors, attention protocols based on trauma-informed care, and more detailed legal characterizations with a gender approach. The importance of materializing the normative framework related to VAWC through concrete actions to promote effective punishment against perpetrators of violence and reduce its Prevalence is emphasized. The urgency of comprehensive reforms in the criminal system is highlighted, including greater sensitivity towards victims, adequate training for officials responsible for handling these cases, access to updated information and resources, as well as defined deadlines to ensure a timely and effective response.

It is emphasized that the fight against violence is the responsibility of society as a whole, although it is the Bolivian State that must lead this fight and protect those who are more vulnerable. The need to implement structural changes to strengthen the Justice System through the proper allocation and execution of resources, staff training, information to the population, and mechanisms of judicial control is highlighted. These reforms are essential to guarantee adequate protection and effective support to victims, as well as to improve the effectiveness and humanity of the criminal system as a whole. Additionally, the importance of immediate action strategies to assertively assist all people experiencing violence today, as well as preventive actions directed towards different groups of society, is highlighted.

In conclusion, I point out that, in all these years of addressing and investigating situations of violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women, as well as working with those who carry it out, I find it essential to conduct a study like the one proposed, especially because of the short-, medium-, and long-term impact in the lives of those experiencing violent situations, as it affects the whole of their lives, with marked revictimization resulting from obstructions in their access to justice and reparations.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CCJ: Judicial Control Notebooks

ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

IACHR: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

TIC: Trauma-Informed Care

CNNA: Child and Adolescent Code

CP: Criminal Code

CPE: State Political Constitution

CPP: Penal Procedure Code

DNA: Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents

EPCVcM: Prevalence and Characteristics Survey of Violence against Women

EPDVV: Population Survey on Prevalence, Reliance, and Vulnerability to Violence

ASO: Assessment of Survivor Outcomes

FELCC: Special Force to Combat Crime

FELCV: Special Force to Combat Violence

GAMC: Autonomous Municipal Government of Cochabamba **GAMEA:** Autonomous Municipal Government of El Alto

GAMS: Autonomous Municipal Government of Sucre **GAMLP:** Autonomous Municipal Government of La Paz **IDIF:** Institute of Forensic Research

IICC: Behavioral Sciences Research Institute

IITCUP: Institute of Technical Scientific Research of the Police University

IJM: International Justice Mission

INE: National Institute of Statistics

JAVCM: Investigative Court for Anti-Corruption and Violence against Women

LQAS: Lot Quality Assurance Sampling

NNA: Girl, Boy, and Adolescent

nc: Number of cases

nv: Number of victims

ns: Number of accused

ODK: Open Data Kit, (open-source mobile data collection platform that allows users to fill out forms offline and submit form data to a server when a connection is found)

WHO: World Health Organization

ONA: Online ODK Platform that enables offline data storage

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SIPPROINA: Plurinational System for the Comprehensive Protection of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents

SIREJ: Integrated Judicial Registry System

SLIM: Municipal Comprehensive Legal Services

PJS: Public Justice System

UFMS: Final Sampling Units (also called *clusters*)

USFX: Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontificia San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca

UPAVT: Unit for the Protection of Victims and Witnesses

UPM: Primary Sampling Units

VIO: Vice-Ministry of Equal Opportunities

VAWC: Sexual and Physical Violence against Women, Girls, Boys, and Adolescents

KEY TERMS

Accusation: Refers to the formal document through which a party, generally the prosecutor or plaintiff, has sufficient evidence to assert that the criminal act occurred and the defendant is the perpetrator. This document is the basis and marks the beginning of the next stage in the criminal process, the Oral Trial stage, as it establishes the grounds on which the accused will be judged and can defend him/herself.

Social Support: The presence and quality of emotional and practical support that respondents receive in their home and community.

Restricted Appeal: A recourse through which one of the parties requests that a decision issued by a Court be reviewed by another instance: appeal/cassation.

Conclusive Hearing: Culminating act; phase in which substantiated evidence is admitted, and exceptions and incidents are resolved as a preliminary stage to the oral trial, (eliminated by Law N° 586, in 2014).

Opening Order: Document issued by the judge to announce under which crime the accused will be tried and the date of commencement of the oral trial.

Physical Well-being: Access to adequate health care services tailored to the needs of victims, as well as access to services, such as, for example, the availability of economic resources to maintain adequate physical health.

Mental Well-being: Ability to regulate emotions and behaviors in challenging situations, considering the management of feelings such as anger or impulses to harm others, as well as the manner of relating and connecting with other people.

Reliance Gaps: Those who decided not to report or report criminal acts and abandoned criminal proceedings before their conclusion.

Quality: In the chapter on Performance of the Public Justice System in cases of VAWC, the term is used in reference to the set of actions planned to provide timely and safe attention to the victim throughout the case.

Gesell Chamber: Room or chamber that allows interviews with victims and witnesses, consisting of a one-way glass dividing the space into two environments, called observation room and interview room. The observation room has audio and video equipment for recording interviews, an intercom microphone, and furniture for the people observing the interview that will take place; the interview room, in turn, has an imperceptible microphone, a filming camera, and suitable furniture for the victims or witnesses participating in the event. Named after the physician, pediatrician, and psychologist, Arnold Gesell.

American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Conduct: Set of ethical principles and professional standards established by the APA, guiding the practice of psychology. It includes guidelines for confidentiality, informed consent, professional competence, harm prevention, scientific integrity, and other key aspects related to the research and practice of psychology.

Confidence in PJS Effectiveness: The quantification of the effectiveness of the Public Justice System (PJS) considers that its effectiveness should be evaluated as a whole, and not in a fragmented manner, through each of the institutions that comprise it. That is, not only is the general effectiveness of the PJS institutions analyzed when administering justice with regard to VAWC, but also whether they act in accordance with the law, carry out effective joint work, deter crime, and receive government support.

Confidence in PJS Efficiency: Efficiency is evaluated based on the correspondence between the results achieved and the existing working conditions. It is comprised of independence, timely response time, accessibility, government support received, and the overall efficiency of the PJS when administering justice with regard to VAWC.

Confidence in the institutional fairness of the PJS: Measured based on the dignified and non-discriminatory treatment that the PJS gives to WAC survivors of sexual and physical violence.

Comminatory: Action of a judge to apply a mandate that includes the order to present information, or action, in a case. It is applied in reference to the deadlines established in the CPP.

Judicial Control Notebooks: All physical documents: records, resolutions, and others, that make up the judicial files of the criminal process and are safeguarded in judicial offices.

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC): An approach based on the understanding of the impact of trauma, aimed at ensuring welcoming and pleasant environments and services for service recipients and staff.

CUD: Single Complaint Code. It is the number provided to track the case, both in the prosecutor's office and in courts, since the implementation of the Justicia Libre (Free Justice) system of the Prosecutor's Office, in 2020, (previously known as NUREJ).

Helsinki Declaration: Document adopted by the World Medical Association that establishes the fundamental ethical principles to be followed for medical research involving humans; including informed consent, assessment of benefits and risks, ethical design and review, privacy and confidentiality, supervision and follow-up, and access to medical care.

Verbal Complaints: Those made through direct statement to prosecutors or police authorities, allowing for a quicker opening of the case, compared to written complaints.

Written Complaints: Those presented through the intermediation of a lawyer and entered through a memorial or complaint.

Reliance in the Justice System: The degree to which victims are subject to the actions of the justice system for their protection, understanding Reliance as the victim's approach to reporting the crime to the PJS and subsequently remaining in the process until obtaining a firm and final resolution that concludes the criminal process initiated by them; with strictly necessary participation within said process. An important indicator of the social and legal recognition that individuals receive from the justice system and the rule of law, choosing the legal route over extrajudicial methods to resolve their complaints, or, in the worst case, doing nothing about an act of violence.

Willingness to Rely: Population that has not been victimized and affirms that they would report criminal incidents to the relevant PJS institutions if they were to experience them, and would remain in criminal proceedings until their conclusion.

Actual Reliance: Population that suffered VAWC and reported the crime, and/or remains in criminal proceedings until their conclusion.

Economic and Educational Empowerment: It is the ability of the victim's household to ensure a degree of economic stability that not only covers basic needs, such as food, clothing, and medical care, but also allows for unforeseen expenses and enjoyment of recreational activities. Additionally, it is the ability of the victim to access educational and training opportunities, identifying and overcoming barriers that may limit their academic or professional progress.

Preliminary Stage: Stage that begins when the complaint is received, whether verbal or written—in the prosecutor's office or in the FELCV— and ends with the rejection resolution or formal accusation.

Preparatory Stage: Computable from the date of formal notification to the accused until the date of the conclusive resolution, whether it is dismissal or accusation, with a maximum duration of 6 months.

Oral Trial Stage: Once the accusation is received in an Investigative Court, it must refer the case to a court or sentencing tribunal, depending on the type of offense.

Recursive Stage: Consists of the appeal, as the first instance of claims against the sentence, which is made before the immediate superior instance, that is, in the criminal chambers of the Departmental Court.

Assessment of Survivor Outcomes (ASO): Tool that assesses the progress of violence survivors on the path to restoration (also referred to as rehabilitation or reintegration).

Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS): Type of random statistical method for assessing the quality of a batch or subgroup, using a small sample and predefined criteria.

Snowball Sampling: Non-probabilistic sampling technique in which initial participants recommend other participants who meet the criteria of interest.

Prevalence: The Prevalence of violence is the percentage of women who have been victims of violence as part of the total population of women.

Bolivian Professionals at Service (PROBOS): Network of professionals, supported by IJM Bolivia, who provide free services to girls, adolescents, and women victims of physical or sexual violence.

Promptness (Performance): Ideal duration time, and compliance with the established deadlines for each of the stages of the criminal process, based on the mandates of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Abbreviated Procedure: Alternative and voluntary conclusion, applied without any pressure and supported by the CPE, to the criminal trial. For example, the accused's waiver of their right to an oral trial when the prosecutor, the accused, and their defense lawyer agree to bypass the oral trial and shorten the procedural path for a sentence to be issued.

Common Procedure: Path defined by the Criminal Procedure Code that includes the stages: preliminary, preparatory, oral trial, and appeal (if applicable), to obtain a sentence.

Legal Protection (Prevalence): Refers to the ability and Confidence of violence victims to access the PJS and exercise their rights.

Complaint: Document presented before the judge or competent tribunal with the aim of reporting criminal acts. A written request for the opening of a criminal proceeding at the request of the plaintiff.

Security (Prevalence): Refers to the safety and stability of victims in their homes, in terms of risk of loss and protection against dangers.

Sentence: Ruling of a court, of first instance, that concludes the oral trial.

Acquittal: Issued by a court when it concludes that the guilt of the accused has not been proven.

Conviction: Issued by the Court when it concludes that the accused is the perpetrator of the crime for which he/she was accused, corresponding to a sanction that may consist of deprivation of liberty in a penitentiary or a monetary fine, among others.

Accused: Person formally indicted of committing a crime who faces charges within a judicial process.

Survivor: Person who has experienced and overcome situations of violence, whether physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological.

Dismissal: Document prepared by the Prosecutor, when they consider that there is not sufficient evidence to ensure that the accused committed the crime for which he/she was accused.

Sustainability of changes in the Criminal Justice System: Perception of key stakeholders about whether positive changes have been noticed in the PJS, and if they consider that they will be sustainable over time.

Violence Against Women: Any act of gender-based violence that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, both in the public and private spheres.

Violence Against Girls, Boys, and Adolescents: Any form of violence against girls, boys, and adolescents —understood as individuals under 18 years of age, and in the text referred to as “adolescents”— inflicted by third parties who may be their parents or other persons responsible for their care, or with whom they coexist or maintain regular interaction.

Sexual Violence: Any sexual act, or the attempt to consummate it; as well as unsolicited sexual comments or insinuations, regardless of the relationship the perpetrator has with the victim.

KEY FINDINGS

This document presents a concise synthesis of the most significant findings derived from detailed analysis in the domains of Prevalence, Performance, Confidence, and Reliance. This compendium comprehensively addresses the results concerning the alarming Prevalence of violence, the inherent complexities in the Performance of the judicial system, the Confidence of PJS officials and non-officials in its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the willingness and need for Reliance in the PJS expressed by the victims.

PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN

Regarding the key findings in adolescents:

The research reveals an alarming Prevalence of violence among adolescents:

- 40% have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence throughout their lives.
- In the 12 months prior to the research, 16.58% were affected.
- Sexual violence affects 11.43% over their lifetime and 5.20% in the last 12 months.
- Physical violence affects 37.19% over their lifetime and 14.06% in the last 12 months.
- Prevalence is higher in adolescents aged 15 to 17 years (41.61%) compared to those aged 13 to 14 years (31.33%).
- As for sexual violence throughout their lifetime, higher Prevalence was recorded in females than males (5.60% compared to 4.20%, respectively).
- 44.4% of sexual violence cases have a family member or close friend as the perpetrator.
- The home is the place with the highest risk of sexual violence (56.2% for females and 33.3% for males).
- School is also a risk environment for physical violence (20.0% for females, 15.9% for males).
- Having experienced violence significantly increases the future risk of becoming victims again for 84.38% of adolescents. This ratio was highest in the municipality of La Paz (91.85%), followed by El Alto (87.6%). Sucre was the municipality with the lowest ratio (79.8%).

On the most relevant findings in adult women:

Adult women also face an alarming Prevalence of violence:

- In the last year, 10.07% experienced physical or sexual violence, and throughout their lives, 53.0% have suffered it.
- Physical violence affected 8.0% in the last year, and 48.3% throughout their lifetime.
- The Prevalence of different types of violence remains in the last 12 months, except for sexual violence, which decreases with age.
- 54.6% of women victims of violence are at risk of experiencing it again.

PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM IN CASES OF VAWC

Case Progress:

- It is possible to observe that between the preliminary stages and the beginning of the oral trial, in more than 30% of cases, the system provided no response.
- 58.9% of cases were rejected, and 8.1% did not receive resolution. Only 2.49% of cases obtained final sentences, and the remaining 9.2% are still in process.
- Average times in the initial stages of the criminal process exceed legal limits.
- Of the 13 sentences, three were under appeal, and of these three, one sentence was issued through an abbreviated procedure. Likewise, of the remaining 10 sentences, eight were final and did not file an appeal.
- In terms of progress, the biggest bottleneck is identified in the preliminary stage; however, although legal deadlines are exceeded in all stages, it is in the preparatory stage where cases take longer.

Timeliness in Process Stages:

- The average number of days elapsed from the complaint to the final sentence exceeds the legal deadline of three years.
- Only around 10 months of the three years established by Bolivian penal law are regulated. In all cases, when deadlines are regulated by law, average times exceed the stipulated. For example:
 - The average time to obtain a rejection resolution was 266 days, with one case taking over four years (1,585 days).
 - The issuance of sentences by common procedure takes an average of 186 days, and the average time from issuing the sentence to its execution is 32 days.

- There are, although few, cases that end in less time than established by law; these are an example of the possibility of optimizing times for execution in less than three years.

Quality in Case Management:

- Cases with final sentences are those that used the resources established in the CPP to provide better care and security to victims in their process.
- Protective measures were granted to 53.3% of victims, and 46% of the accused suspects obtained precautionary measures.
- Victims interact in the process an average of two times, although there are extreme cases with 12 interactions. Victims of physical assaults participated at least twice, while victims of sexual assaults interacted on average three times.
- Only 24 suspects were acquitted, of which 19 correspond to physical violence, two to sexual violence, and in three, the type of violence is not identified.
- It was determined that five out of eight suspects who entered oral trial had hearings suspended, showing an average of three suspensions per case.
- For five indicted individuals, there were changes, between 1 and 2 times, in the qualifications of the criminal type, transforming crimes from severe penalties to crimes with less severe penalties.
- More than 57% of officials believe in applying a trauma-informed care approach, but less than 48.1% actually do so.

CONFIDENCE PERCEPTION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

Confidence in the Effectiveness of the PJS:

- Confidence in the overall effectiveness of the PJS is low, with only 21.7% of respondents in El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre expressing Confidence.
- Officials perceive the overall effectiveness of the PJS at 33.3%, while for non-officials, it is significantly lower: 10%. Adherence to the law and effective joint work receive similar ratings, both at 23.3% of Confidence.
- 15.5% trust that the PJS is capable of deterring crime, and only 17.2% trust that the PJS receives the necessary governmental support.
- Among municipalities:
 - Although there are low Confidence percentages in the studied municipalities (El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre), El Alto shows greater Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS than the rest of the analyzed municipalities.
 - The control municipality (Cochabamba) has significantly lower ratings, even reaching 0% in crime deterrence.

Confidence in the Efficiency of the PJS:

- In terms of institutional efficiency, intervention municipalities show more Confidence than the control municipality, although all of them show low Confidence percentages. This criterion also extends to effectiveness and fairness.
- Despite low Confidence in all cases, the Judiciary is the most trusted institution, followed by the Public Prosecutor's Office, the IITCUP, the IDIF, the Police, and the UPAVT. In the control municipality (Cochabamba), the IITCUP receives the highest Confidence and the IDIF the lowest.
- The highest ratings are in the municipalities of La Paz (IITCUP, Police, and UPAVT), Sucre (IDIF and Public Prosecutor's Office), and El Alto (Judicial Branch); and the lowest in Cochabamba (IITCUP, Judicial Branch, and Police), El Alto (IDIF and UPAVT), and La Paz (Public Prosecutor's Office).

Confidence in Institutional Fairness:

- There is low Confidence in the studied municipalities regarding the fair, dignified, and non-discriminatory treatment provided by PJS institutions.
- In terms of dignified treatment, the highest Confidence was recorded in the municipalities of Sucre, towards the IDIF (45.5%); El Alto and Cochabamba, towards the Public Prosecutor's Office (44.4% in both); and La Paz, towards the IITCUP (41.2%). In contrast, the lowest ratings are in the municipalities of Sucre, towards the IITCUP (0%) and the Police (16%); in La Paz, towards the Public Prosecutor's Office (19.2%) and the Judicial Branch (20.8%); in Cochabamba, towards the UPAVT (16.7%), and in El Alto, towards the IDIF (22.2%).
- Regarding non-discriminatory treatment, the highest Confidence was recorded in El Alto, towards the Police (62.5%) and the Judicial Branch (44.4%); in Sucre, towards the IDIF (54.5%) and the Judicial Branch (43.5%); and in Cochabamba, towards the Public Prosecutor's Office (55.6%). In contrast, the lowest ratings are in the municipalities of Sucre, towards the IITCUP (0%) and the Police (16%); in La Paz, towards the IDIF (16%), the Public Prosecutor's Office (19.2%), and the Police (18.5%); in Cochabamba, towards the Judicial Branch (11.1%) and the UPAVT (16.7%), and in El Alto, towards the IDIF (11.1%).

Confidence in Positive Changes in the PJS and its Sustainability

- The majority perceives favorable changes in the PJS (56.9%), especially regarding legislative reforms made, and that these changes are sustainable (61.8%). However, they express a critical stance regarding the implementation and application of the law.

RELIANCE OF THE POPULATION IN THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

Willingness to Rely on the PJS:

- Nearly 95% of adolescents show willingness to report, and 89.03% are willing to remain in the system.
- 92% of adult women are willing to file a complaint, and 88.05% show willingness to remain in the system.

- Of 740 women who suffered violence in their lifetime, only 16.89% reported it, with Sucre being the municipality with the highest percentage (19.50%).
- Of 640 cases of adolescent victims, only 4.53% reported the aggression, with La Paz being the municipality with the most complaints (6.12%).
- In the last 12 months, only 4.68% of adolescents and 26.99% of adult women victims of violence decided to report it. By municipality and in the case of adolescents, no municipality has complaints exceeding 10%; however, regarding women, El Alto is the municipality with the highest percentage.
- Only 1 in 10 victims, who confided about their experience as a victim of violence with someone, received some type of service for their restoration.

Indicator Results on PJS Reliance Gaps

- Throughout their lives, 81.14% of adult women and 92.75% of adolescents did not file a complaint. The municipality where fewer complaints were registered is the control municipality (Cochabamba).
- In the last 12 months, 39.67% of adolescents and 34.42% of women remain completely silent about the violence suffered.

Results on Variables Associated with Reliance

- Adolescents are less likely to abandon processes in comparison with adult women who suffer violence in their lifetime and in the last 12 months.
- Only 25.7% of the sample of adolescents and women who suffered violence reported having some or much Reliance towards the PJS when deciding to file a complaint.
- Only 11.8% of cases are satisfied with the services received after accessing the PJS, with a higher percentage of satisfied cases among adolescents (15.2%).
- 59.70% of cases with TIC-based interactions remained in the judicial process, in contrast with cases without TIC, where only 30.80% remained in the justice system.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marcela Losantos Velasco

In 2022, Bolivia witnessed a troubling surge in cases of violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women, with over fifty thousand incidents documented. According to the report from the Public Prosecutor's Office, there were 39,535 cases of family violence, followed by cases of rape of an infant, girl, boy, or adolescent, with 2,593 cases; sexual abuse, with 3,348; rape, 2,899; and statutory rape with 1,718 (Prosecutor's Office, January 5, 2023). This data represented a total increase of 9% compared to 2021.

Reports reveal that, in the case of violence against girls, boys, and adolescents, corporal punishment constitutes 77% of these crimes, followed by sexual abuse (7%), rape of infants, girls, boys, or adolescents (3%), and statutory rape (3%) (Prosecutor's Office, 2023). At the same time, violence against women in Bolivia also presents alarming figures, as the country has one of the highest rates of femicide in the region (ECLAC, 2020). Additional statistics indicate that, in Bolivia, 75% of married women experienced some type of violence (INE, 2018), and almost half of those between the ages of 15 and 29 were victims of intimate partner violence.

The high incidence rates of physical and sexual violence affecting girls, boys, adolescents, and women (VAWC) not only pose a public health problem but also represent a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights enshrined in international law. Firstly, violence prevents the full enjoyment of the right to life and personal integrity, essential rights that all individuals should enjoy without restrictions. Exposure to violence leaves lasting physical and psychological scars, negatively impacting the health and overall well-being of victims.

Furthermore, violence also undermines the right to freedom and personal security, as individuals, especially women and girls, often live the rest of their lives in constant fear of being targeted for abuse. Gender discrimination inherent in many forms of sexual violence also contradicts the principle of equality and non-discrimination, fundamental rights for the construction of fair and equitable societies.

Consequently, there is an urgent need to address this phenomenon from a perspective of collective responsibility. In this context, the Public Justice System (PJS) plays a central role in addressing the issue, as it has the intrinsic responsibility of ensuring both the safety and pursuit of justice for victims, as well as of imposing sanctions on perpetrators to combat impunity in these types of crimes.

Although the collaboration of civil society organizations and the community is essential for an effective response to violence against these groups, it is the legal responsibility of the State and PJS institutions to ensure the right of vulnerable populations to live free from violence and guarantee their access to justice. However, deficiencies and gaps in the system's operations persist to date, demanding immediate attention to maximize its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. In this regard, Saavedra and Muñoz (2021) state:

“Every day, the population perceives, through the media or testimonies from acquaintances, that the administration of justice does not respond promptly to the demand for justice from citizens; that the judicial space is a scenario for revictimization, and that the judicial system seems to profit from people's problems. This perception of distance, confusion, and distrust is expressed in results such as those published annually by the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, whose indicator for last year establishes that Bolivia ranks 126th out of 127 countries, with the worst justice systems, only one place above Venezuela” (pp. 93).

The situation becomes even more concerning when it comes to the PJS's response to violence against children, adolescents, and women, as we must understand that the absence of a response focused on the specific needs and realities of victims, one that implements special measures to ensure effective, equal, transparent, and uninterrupted access to justice, amplifies the social and structural inequalities historically faced by these groups, with consequences ranging from the perpetuation of the crime to the death of many victims.

In this sense, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) stated that the institutional response of the PJS to VAWC in Bolivia is not timely; it questions the Reliance of the victims and generates further victimization; it lacks coordinated care routes, which are also poorly specialized and confusing most of the time, hindering the investigation process. All this contributes to: “[...] The susceptibility of the population in accessing and receiving justice, and it decreases the victims' willingness to rely on the PJS to obtain justice, as frustration and mistrust in justice tend to generate impunity” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2019, p. 69).

While these arguments reflect latent weaknesses of the PJS, they constitute evidence that encourages further exploration into the subject. In this sense, the objective of the present research is to understand the response of the Public Justice System (PJS) in Bolivia to physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women (VAWC). The research, composed of the study of four Domains, seeks to measure various aspects of this response, including the Prevalence of violence, the Performance of the PJS in VAWC cases, the perception of Confidence in the system by its own officials and professionals linked to it, and the level of Reliance of the population suffering violence on the PJS, i.e., the victims' willingness to go through the entire process to obtain justice.

The first study on the subject was conducted by International Justice Mission, as a baseline, in 2017, within the framework of its program to combat sexual violence against infants, girls, boys, and adolescents, which began in Bolivia in 2006. It revealed the difficulties, regarding access to justice, of victims of child sexual violence, based on the analysis of cases recorded over a period of ten years. The number of obstructed cases, the lack of mechanisms to ensure non-revictimization, the workload in the courts, and the lack of specialized attention were among the main findings (IJM, 2018). These results were contrasted in a final document prepared in 2023, which, while indicating progress, demonstrates the persistence in overcoming challenges such as lost and missing documentation in jurisdictional control notebooks, issues that not only occur in cases of sexual violence specifically but in cases of VAWC crimes in general.

A subsequent study on the State of Justice in Bolivia, developed by the Fundación Construir and other civil society organizations, concluded that there are serious barriers to access to justice for girls and adolescent women victims of sexual violence, especially due to the persistence in the penal regulations of crimes such as statutory rape, which invisibilize and camouflage the situation of violence suffered by many girls and adolescents in their

homes. Furthermore, it identified the absence of an intersectional and gender approach by the various courts, which restricts complexity in analysis and results in unfair rulings (Plataforma Ciudadana por el Acceso a la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, 2023).

Based on this state of affairs, the Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (IICC) of the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo” and International Justice Mission (IJM), with the support of the Council of the Magistracy and the Faculty of Law of the Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontificia San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca (UMRPSFXCH), joined efforts to measure the response of the PJS to physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women (VAWC), in four municipalities in the country: La Paz, El Alto, and Sucre, which are municipalities directly targeted by IJM intervention, and Cochabamba, which for the purposes of this research serves as a control municipality since no direct action is planned in that municipality. Thus, it will allow IJM to evaluate the effectiveness of its intervention when conducting future comparative studies.

The first chapter of this document is focused on measuring the Prevalence of physical and sexual violence in adolescent males and females, as well as in adult women, establishing distinctions for the Prevalence of violence in the last 12 months, in addition to Prevalence throughout their lives in different dimensions. The second chapter measures the Performance of the PJS in cases of VAWC based on three dimensions: 1) Progress of cases, from the preliminary stage to the final sentence; 2) Timeliness, understood as the time it takes to advance one stage to another; and 3) The quality of care provided by various PJS officials during the process, including the implementation of the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approach for sensitive care, meaning with an understanding of the trauma victims experienced before reporting the violence.

The third chapter presents data on the Confidence in the PJS held by its own system officials and other professionals associated with it, regarding its ability to apply the law equitably, fairly, and legitimately in cases of physical and/or sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women in the 2021-2022 period. Finally, the fourth chapter presents findings on the level of willingness of the population victimized by violence to rely on the PJS, that is, their willingness to go through the entire process from reporting to case resolution. It also analyzes the gaps and factors that facilitate or hinder this process. Finally, the conclusions are presented in the fifth chapter, in the form of calls to action.

The findings of the study seek to provide solid and specialized evidence for the generation of intra and inter-institutional actions and policies that allow for the improvement of care and response to victims of violence, incorporated both in the functioning of the PJS institutions themselves and in civil society organizations. Likewise, they aim to establish criteria for strengthening the PJS in Bolivia, with the objective of increasing its capacity to respond to violence by holding perpetrators accountable and facilitating the path to restoration, resilience, and safety for victims.

An additional purpose of this study is to provide a baseline for measuring the effects of future IJM interventions, alongside the government, to strengthen the PJS in the country. From the theory of change under which this organization operates, it is expected to support the strengthening of the PJS to enforce the law, deter criminals, and protect victims. IJM's theory of change is organized around four premises:

- 1) Justice System Strengthening, as it must, and can, be strengthened to enforce laws fairly and serve victims of violence.
- 2) Ensure PJS compliance of the laws.

- 3) Deter, prevent and stop current and potential criminals through the effective and visible enforcement of the law.
- 4) Protect people from violence, as a strengthened PJS enhances access to justice for victims of individual violence and provides protection for vulnerable people, while ensuring due diligence and best interests of children and adolescents are prioritized.

We hope that reading these pages will be call for action, both for the implementation of the necessary reforms in the PJS, as well as for increasing and improving the actions of civil society aimed at effectively reducing violence against the most vulnerable groups: women, girls, boys, and adolescents of both sexes.

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CHAPTER II

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

Alejandra Cámara
Leonardo Villafuerte Philippsborn

Bolivia is one of the 50 countries that founded the United Nations (UN) in 1945, and it subscribes to all its international human rights treaties and standards, both at the universal and regional levels, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Universal Rights of the Child (1959), the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the Declaration on Childhood (2007), to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women “Convention of Belém do Pará” (1994).

II.I.

BOLIVIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Within its domestic sphere, Bolivia gradually updated its legislation regarding the protection of girls, boys, adolescents, and women, primarily based on the State Political Constitution approved in 2009 (CPE, art. 15, 58 to 61) and in the aforementioned international legislation, and based on the recommendations and instruments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and others alike.

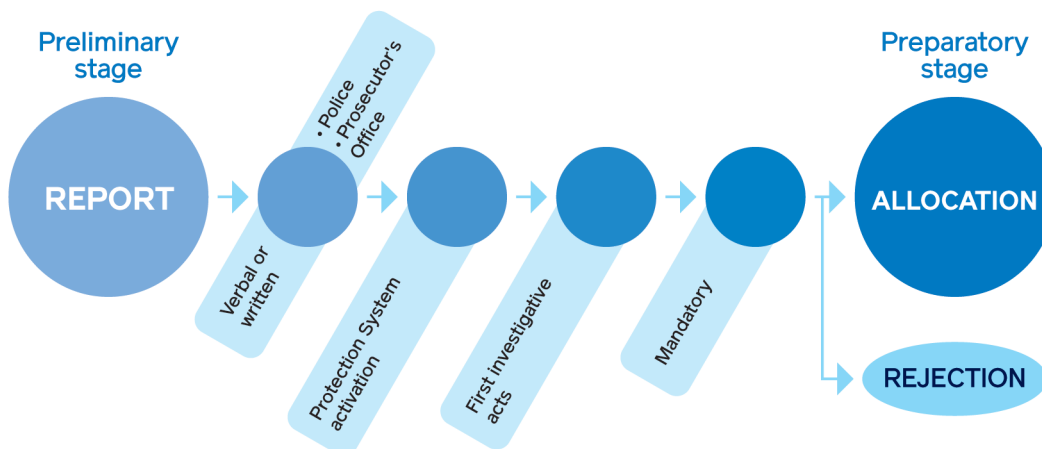
In this regard, laws 1768, the Penal Code, and 1970, the Code of Criminal Procedure, underwent numerous modifications concerning VAWC issues. Among them, one of the first was Law No. 054, on Comprehensive Protection for Children and Adolescents; subsequently, the Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence (No. 348, March 9, 2013), the Law to Streamline the Criminal Procedural System (No. 586), the Law on Expedited Criminal Procedure and Strengthening of the Comprehensive Fight Against Violence against Girls, Boys, Adolescents, and Women (No. 1173), with its amendment through Law No. 1226, and finally, the Law on Protection for Victims of Femicide, Infanticide, and Violations of Infants, Girls, Boys, or Adolescents (No. 1443).

All of these aimed to guarantee the protection of VAWC victims, redefining criminal offenses, reducing procedural deadlines, and complying with the standards of enhanced due diligence, recommendations, and obligations of the State with international Human Rights parameters. Similarly, in the case of children, legislation was strengthened with the amendment of the Family Code (Law No. 603) and, fundamentally, with the Child and Adolescent Code (Law No. 548).

In this context, it is important to explain that the law determines the stages of a criminal process, which begin with the complaint: Where, how, before whom, and the complaint-promoting instances that must accompany the process until obtaining a final sentence. It also mandates that, in cases of violence, deadlines are shortened, and the duty of [implementing] due diligence. The following are the four stages within the criminal process:

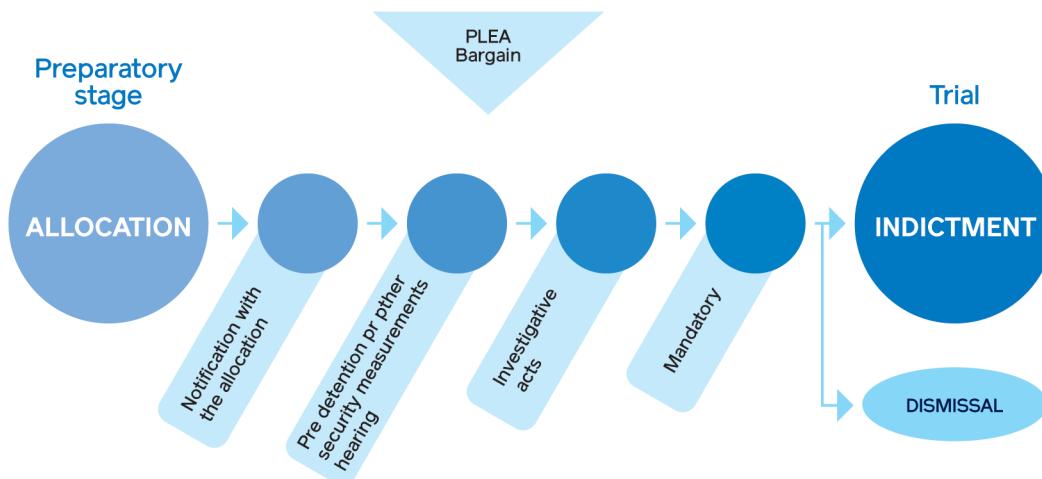
- 1) The first is the Preliminary Stage, which begins when the complaint is received, whether verbal or written –at the prosecutor's office or the FELCV–, and ends with the resolution of rejection or with the formal accusation. The timeframe established for this stage, according to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CPP), is 8 days. However, in extraordinary cases, this period can be extended to a maximum of 60 days (CPP, art. 300). If an accusation occurs, the case proceeds to the next procedural stage.

Figure 2.1. Flowchart from the Preliminary Stage to the Preparatory Stage (Complaint - Indictment)



- 2) Preparatory Stage: Computable from the date of formal notification to the accused until the date of the conclusive resolution, whether it is dismissal or accusation, with a maximum duration of 6 months.

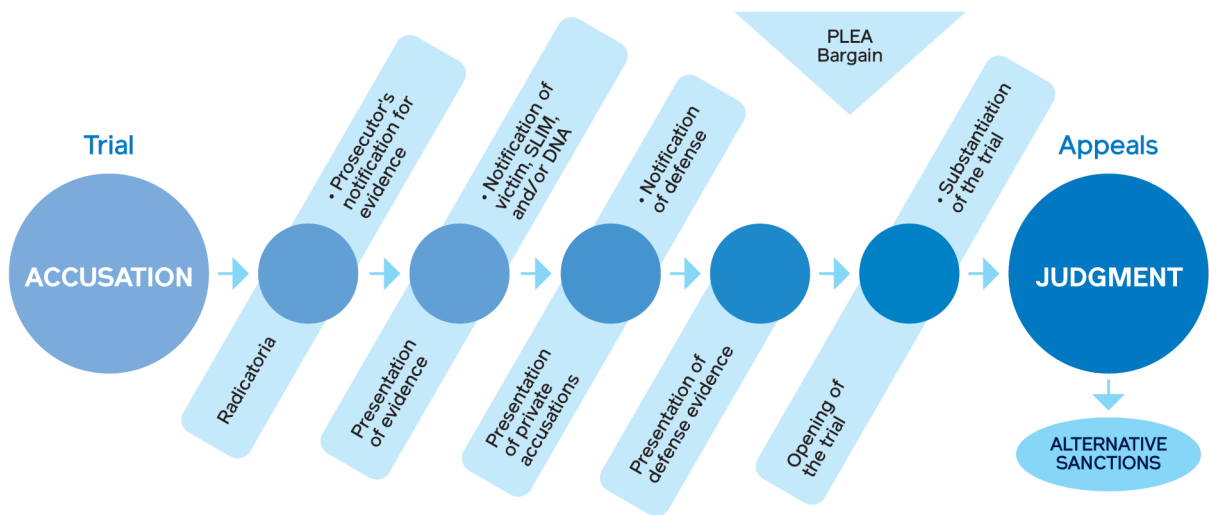
Figure 2.2. Preparatory Stage Flowchart (Indictment - Accusation)



- 3) Oral Trial Stage: Once the accusation is received in an Investigating Court, it must send the case to a trial court or tribunal, depending on the type of offense. From there, administrative procedures of jurisdiction, notification to the parties, request for evidence submission, presentation of private accusation, notification to the accused, and presentation of defense evidence begin; with this, the Trial Court or Tribunal must issue an Order to Commence the Oral Trial (CPP, art. 134).

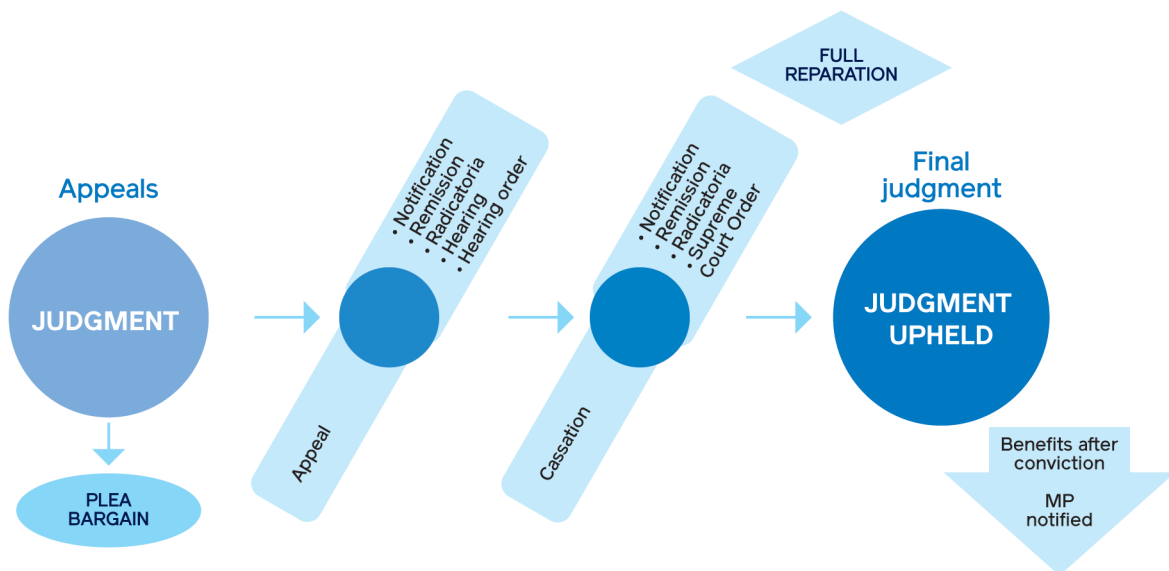
At this stage, there are no established procedural deadlines from start to finish, but each step, in itself, may or may not contain a deadline according to regulations. It is important to note that the law mentions the principle of continuity and celerity, which obliges continuity from the beginning to the conclusion of the Oral Trial.

Figure 2.3. Oral Trial Stage Flowchart



- 4) Recursive Stage: Consists of the appeal, as the first instance of complaints against the sentence, which is made before the immediate superior instance, that is, in the criminal chambers of the Departmental Court. After the decision of the departmental justices (referred to as Appellate Decision), the parties may file a new appeal, at the second instance, called cassation, which refers the proceedings to the highest hierarchical instance of the judicial system: the Supreme Court of Justice, in Sucre, so that the Magistrates of the same analyze the Appellate Decision and determine whether the sentence is correct or requires correction.

Figure 2.4. Recursive Stage Flowchart



II.II.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE INSTITUTIONS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Since this study consistently refers to the institutions in the PJS related to VAWC, their functions and operations are briefly characterized below.

Victims of VAWC have the authority to report the crime, verbally or in writing, to the Bolivian Police or file a complaint with the Public Ministry (or Public Prosecutor's Office). Both options initiate an investigation into the criminal act, conducted by the Police and under the functional direction of the Public Prosecutor's Office. Once the report or complaint is filed, the Police conduct the investigation, through the Special Force Against Crime (FELCC), for most crimes; however, concerning violence against women, the responsible unit is the Special Force Against Violence (FELCV).

Table 2.1 characterizes the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Bolivian Police, indicating the following provisions:

Table 2.1. Characterization of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Bolivian Police (FELCC and FELCV)

Institution	Functions	Source
Public Prosecutor's Office	... represents society before jurisdictional bodies to ensure respect for constitutional rights and guarantees.	Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office, 2012, Article 12.
	Victims shall be treated with care, respect, and consideration. To this end, a permanent program of comprehensive assistance to victims and their families shall be provided, in coordination with State bodies and related public or private institutions.	Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office, 2012, Article 68, II.
FELCC	Specialized operational body of the National Police, responsible for the investigation, apprehension of perpetrators, search, and scientific verification of the commission of criminal acts and their alleged perpetrators.	National Directorate of the Special Force Against Crime, 2007, p. 100
FELCV	Specialized unit of the Bolivian Police responsible for prevention, assistance, investigation, identification, and arrest of the alleged perpetrators of violence against women and the family, under the functional direction of the Public Prosecutor's Office, in coordination with public and private entities.	Ley Integral para Garantizar a las Mujeres una Vida Libre de Violencia (n.º 348, 2013), artículo 53, I.

Source: Own elaboration

Investigative processes sometimes require technical and scientific work to ascertain the truth of the facts through expert studies: chemical, biological, physical, or others. Such investigations are assigned by the Public Prosecutor's Office to the Institute of Forensic Investigations (IDIF) or the Technical Scientific Research Institute of the Police University (IITCUP), as established by Supreme Decree No. 3834: "Adela Zamudio" Immediate Alert and Registration System of the FELCV, 2019, Article 10, a.

Table 2.2. Characterization of the IDIF and the IITCUP

IDIF	IITCUP
Institution dependent on the Public Prosecutor's Office, administratively and financially under the State General Prosecutor's Office. Has functional autonomy in its tasks and is responsible for conducting scientific-technical, laboratory, and multidisciplinary studies.	Dependent on the Bolivian Police, specifically the National Directorate of Instruction and Education. Created by Administrative Resolution of the General Command of the Bolivian Police No. 01526/10, dated December 28, 2010.
Investigates crimes with the assistance of forensic sciences with scientifically obtained evidence. Carries out technical-scientific studies required by prosecutors or judicial authorities.	Responsible for carrying out the technical-scientific work related to the analytical, qualitative, and quantitative study of any object or thing "subject to legal-technical investigation," at the request of the courts, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Police.

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the IDIF and the IITCUP (General Prosecutor's Office, 2013), Police University "Mcal. Antonio José de Sucre," n. d.

As mentioned above, once the complaint has been filed, it is reported to the Judicial Branch, which, in accordance with the Judicial Branch Law (No. 025), consists of the following authorities:

Table 2.3. Roles of the Authorities in the Judicial Branch

Authorities	Functions
Investigative Judges (Precautionary Measures)	Criminal Investigative Judges have the authority to control deadlines, ensure that investigations proceed in accordance with the law, direct the substantiation and resolution of alternative solutions, oversee the trial preparation hearing, and decide on the issues and incidents raised therein, as well as decide on requests for international judicial cooperation, among others.
Trial Judges	Trial judges have jurisdiction to hear and resolve crimes in accordance with the law, and to decide on exceptions established by law.
Trial Courts	Trial judges have jurisdiction to hear and resolve crimes in accordance with the law and to decide on exceptions established by law.
Criminal Chambers of the High Court of Justice	The members have the authority to hear and resolve appeals of rulings and judgments, resolve excuses presented by members and clerks, and resolve recusations against their members, among others.
Criminal Chambers of the Supreme Court of Justice	The Magistrates have the following attributions: To act on and hear appeals for annulment, nullity, and others contemplated by law; to hear and resolve excuses of members, establish and unify jurisprudence, hear and resolve appeals against chambers of the High Court of Justice, among others.

Source: Own elaboration

Finally, public services were established with the purpose of providing protection and assistance to VAWC victims before, during, and after investigative and judicial processes.

Table 2.4. Public Services for the Care and Protection of Victims of VAWC

Institutions	Law
Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents, DNA: "Free municipal service for socio-legal protection and defense dependent on each Municipal Government", (Law of the Children, Girls, and Adolescents Code, No. 2026, 1999, Article 194); among its objectives are to protect children and adolescents psychologically, sociologically, and legally from violence and provide them with specialized and interdisciplinary care	(Supreme Decree No. 27443, 2004) regulating Law 2026 (Boy, Girl, and Adolescent Code, 1999). Despite the repeal of Law 2026, Law 548 (Girl, Boy, and Adolescent Code, 2014) has maintained and strengthened the DNA.
Municipal legal services: Promoting instances for reporting violence against women; they must provide care, file the complaint, and provide the corresponding support. In this sense, they perform comprehensive functions to provide psychological, legal, and social assistance to women who are experiencing violence or are at risk. Protection and assistance to the victim extends to dependent daughters, sons, and other individuals. [...] [Municipal Comprehensive Legal Services (SLIMS)] are a specialized multidisciplinary instance for assisting victims of violence. (Office of the Ombudsman, 2021 b, pp. 29-30).	Law 1674 (Law Against Violence in the Family or Domestic, 1995) and its subsequent regulation (Supreme Decree No. 25087, 1998), consolidated and reinforced by Article 50 of Law 348 (Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free of Violence, 2013, Article 50).
Unit for the Protection of Victims and Witnesses (UPAVT), under the Public Prosecutor's Office: Its objective is to promote the protection and assistance of victims of crimes, witnesses, individuals collaborating with criminal prosecution, and employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office.	Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office, No. 260, 2012, Article 90. Law No. 260: Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office, and Law No. 458: Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses (General Prosecutor's Office, n. d.).

Source: Own elaboration

The entire criminal process, from the complaint to obtaining the final sentence, according to the law, must have a maximum duration of three years. All the aforementioned authorities play an important role in fulfilling this imperative.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

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This chapter describes the methodologies used in the four domains that make up the research. The methodology employed in the Prevalence and Reliance domains is presented at the beginning, which, despite being analyzed differently, gathered information from the same database and utilized the same methodology. Then the methodology of the Performance domain is presented, and, lastly, the methodology of the Confidence domain.

III.I. PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULT WOMEN:

A study conducted among youth aged 13 to 17 years and women aged 18 years and older, exploring the population's Reliance in the Public Justice System

This section elucidates the methodology utilized in the domains of Prevalence and Reliance, grounded in the research design and rationale for selecting a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional design, deemed suitable for analyzing the Prevalence of violence and the population's interaction with the Public Justice System (PJS).

Likewise, the sample selection process is detailed, emphasizing the techniques of probabilistic sampling and how they ensure the representativeness and relevance of the findings. Also described are the tools and strategies for data collection, including the measurement instruments and surveys used. Finally, the methods of data analysis and statistical procedures used are addressed.

III.I.I. Design and Type of Research

Studies in the domains of Prevalence and Reliance have employed quantitative methodology according to a design with the following characteristics: a) cross-sectional, as measurements were taken at a single point in time; b) retrospective, measuring events prior to the time of measurement, and c) population-based with a representative sample, based on data from the Population Survey on Prevalence, Reliance, and Vulnerability to Violence (EPDVV) from 2022.

III.I.II. Sample Design

The sample design included the calculation of its size and the use of probabilistic sampling techniques. For the calculation of the sample size, the population was divided into two groups, consisting of adolescents of both sexes aged between 13 and 17 years, as well as adult women aged 18 and older.

The calculation of the sample size was performed using a specific formula for infinite samples ($N > 10,000$), detailed as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = size of the infinite sample

Z = desired Confidence level (1.96 for 95% Confidence)

p = estimated proportion (if unknown, typically 0.50 or 50% is used)

e = margin of error (0.05 or 5%)

Upon calculation, a sample of 384 was obtained for both populations, considering the four municipalities where the study was conducted, resulting in a total of 1536 adolescents of both sexes and 1536 women aged 18 or older (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Calculation of the Study Sample, by Municipality and Population

Municipality	Surveys Women ≥18 Years	Survey of Adolescents of Both Sexes	Total
Sucre	384	384	768
La Paz	384	384	768
El Alto	384	384	768
Cochabamba	384	384	768
Total	1536	1536	3072

Source: Own elaboration

The sample was selected through a probabilistic design, implying that each participating adolescent and adult woman had an equal probability of being selected. To ensure this, a cluster sampling frame was used based on official information from the 2012 National Population and Housing Census, the last conducted in Bolivia by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). The list of population clusters was classified by department, province, city, census zone, sector, census segment, and block, in urban areas.

The sampling procedure was carried out in two phases. During the first phase, districts in each municipality were randomly selected. At this point, Primary Sampling Units (UPM) were defined at the level of census zones. These zones were distributed to ensure uniform population density in each district. The process included a zoning method designed by the INE, which consisted of a random draw of census zones. It is important to note that this draw was conducted 'with replacement', meaning that after selecting a census zone, it was returned to the set of possible selections for future draws. Thus, the same census zone could

be chosen more than once, maintaining a constant selection probability for each zone at all stages of sampling.

In the second phase, Final Sampling Units (UFMs), or clusters, corresponded to the level of blocks. The selection of blocks was carried out using a systematic random sampling method with replacement. Each cluster included the selection of six blocks. Likewise, each Primary Sampling Unit (UPM) consisted of two clusters for the sample of adult women, and another two for the sample of adolescents of both sexes, totaling 24 units of analysis in each UPM.

For the selection of units of analysis, a uniform allocation method was applied in all municipal districts and UPMs included in the sample, involving the use of quotas for different age ranges. Five age ranges were established for the sample of adult women: 18 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 to 59, and 60 or more years; and two age ranges for the sample of adolescents: 13 to 14 and 15 to 17 years. This ensured a representative and equitable distribution of selected individuals in the sample.

An additional determination was assigned to this selection process: in households where an eligible woman and an eligible adolescent resided, according to the designed quotas, it was possible to survey both individuals for the two independent samples. In the case of finding more than one eligible woman and/or more than one eligible adolescent, the selection of the participant was made according to the quotas by age range with the smaller sample, using the method of the next birthday. Consequently, the person with the nearest birthday to the day of the survey was surveyed, based on the premise that the birthdays of individuals in a household are completely arbitrary and random.

Simultaneously, individuals residing in collective dwellings, such as the prison population, individuals in itinerant or temporary situations in hotels and visitors, as well as inhabitants of orphanages and shelters, were excluded from the study. This measure ensured that the sample more accurately reflected the population segment of interest. The final sample size of the study was 1550 adolescents and 1569 adult women. The distribution detail of the sample by municipalities can be found in the table below:

Table 3.2. Total Sample Size of the Study and Its Distribution by Municipality, Age Group, and Gender

Urban Municipalities	Adolescents Between 13 and 17 years			Adult Women Aged 18 or Older	Total Sample
	Women	Men	Total		
Sucre	195	192	387	388	775
La Paz	192	192	384	385	769
El Alto	194	198	392	392	784
Cochabamba	194	193	387	404	791
Total	775	775	1550	1569	3119

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data, 2022

III.I.III. Tools

The questionnaire design for the survey was developed by IJM and validated by a panel of experts to ensure its adaptation to the Bolivian context. The questionnaire was structured into seven main dimensions: a) sociodemographic characteristics, b) experience of physical violence in the last year and throughout life, c) experience of sexual violence in the last year and throughout life, d) characteristics of the perpetrator, e) vulnerability to violence, f) Reliance in the justice system, and g) interactions based on Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) from the perspective of victims.

To specifically measure “Vulnerability to Violence,” an adapted version of the ASO questionnaire, also developed by IJM (2021), was used. It should be clarified that it was previously validated as a tool for programmatic evaluation, not as part of the survey for the study. This tool was essential in assessing the individuals' vulnerability to being victims of violence and their likelihood of experiencing revictimization. The ASO tool investigated six critical dimensions: Security, Emotional Well-being, Economic and Educational Empowerment, Social Support, and Physical Well-being, focusing on key functional areas to comprehensively understand the factors affecting the recovery and resilience of victims of violence.

To assess the Reliance of the study populations in the PJS, a questionnaire designed by IJM was used. It was structured into two basic modules and one complementary module. The first module, related to Reliance for prevalent cases, explored critical areas such as access to the justice system by victims of violence. It was investigated whether participants maintained an active complaint until justice was achieved or abandoned it. Confidence in the PJS during crucial moments, such as the decision to file a complaint and the level of satisfaction with the PJS's response, was also evaluated. The second module, focusing on evaluation for non-victims of violence, measured the willingness to report acts of violence and their intention to rely on the PJS if they became victims in the future. This module represented an adaptation of elements from the first module, concentrating on hypothetical questions about actions they would take in violent situations, for example: “Would you file a complaint to the authorities if you were a victim of violence?”

Finally, the third module, regarding interactions based on Trauma-Informed Care (TIC), focused on those who had interacted with the PJS, namely individuals who had completed the first module.

III.I.IV. Prevalence Domain Variables

The variables included in the study are described below:

- **Physical Violence:** Defined as any intentional act of aggression that caused, or attempted to cause, physical harm. The measurement employed items covering a range of violent behaviors. The first three specifically focused on acts of violence with potential life-threatening risks: a) attempted strangulation, suffocation, drowning, or intentional burns; b) threats with weapons, such as knives or guns; c) punches, with or without the use of objects, that could result in serious injuries. These items represented severe forms of physical violence and were crucial for assessing the Prevalence of life-threatening situations for victims. Additionally, the fourth item measured the occurrence of slapping, pushing, shaking, or throwing objects to capture less severe but equally significant acts of physical aggression. In all items, response categories were 1= Yes and 0= No. Therefore, it should be noted that instances of infanticide and/or feminicide are combined with assaults.

- **Sexual Violence:** Defined as any act where a woman or adolescent of any gender was physically forced, coerced, or emotionally pressured to engage in sexual activities against their will. This definition encompassed various coercive and non-consensual situations. Detailed items addressing different aspects of sexual violence were used for measurement: a) being pressured into sexual intercourse through physical force; b) being pressured into sexual intercourse without physical force; c) engaging in sexual intercourse in exchange for economic, material, or any other form of support; d) being fondled sexually without consent or being forced to fondle someone else without leading to full sexual intercourse. In all items, response categories were 1= Yes and 0= No.
- **Physical or Sexual Violence:** Defined as the presence of either type of violence, physical or sexual, experienced by the victims. The measurement considered previously defined items for both physical and sexual violence. In all items, response categories were 1= Yes and 0= No.

Additionally, variables were defined to measure vulnerability to victimization among victims of physical and sexual violence. Responses to items were measured on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 indicated 'high vulnerability' and 4 'very stable'. The dimensions grouping these variables were:

- **Social Support:** Evaluated the presence and quality of emotional and practical support that respondents received at home and in their community. Through two items, they were asked to what extent they found encouragement, understanding, and adequate support, both at home and in their community environment.
- **Physical Well-being:** Assessed their access to appropriate healthcare services tailored to their needs. Both ease of access to these services and the availability of financial resources to maintain adequate physical health were considered. Additionally, items regarding self-care practices and making informed decisions about their physical well-being were included.
- **Mental Well-being:** Evaluated their ability to regulate emotions and behaviors in challenging situations, inquiring about managing feelings such as anger or impulses to harm others, as well as their way of relating and connecting with others. Furthermore, their ability to handle stressful situations positively and constructively, and their resilience and perseverance in achieving personal goals were examined.
- **Security:** This dimension focused on assessing the safety and stability of their housing, in terms of the risk of loss and protection against hazards. Questions were asked about the victim's perception of the risk of losing their home and the effectiveness of their residential environment in protecting them from threats to their physical integrity and overall well-being. The assessment included structural and location risks of housing, examining factors such as construction sturdiness, and neighborhood or area security. Additionally, two items were included regarding the perception of experiencing violence: the first about the frequency with which the victim felt capable of getting to safety in a situation of physical violence danger; the second about whether they were at risk of experiencing sexual violence in the last month prior to the survey.
- **Economic and Educational Empowerment:** This dimension assessed the victim's household's ability to ensure a degree of economic stability that not only covers basic needs such as food, clothing, and medical care but also allows for unexpected expenses and enjoyment of recreational activities. Simultaneously, the victim's ability to access

educational and training opportunities, identifying and overcoming barriers that may limit their academic or professional progress, was considered.

- **Legal Protection:** This dimension evaluated the capacity and Confidence of victims of violence to access the PJS and exercise their rights. Overcoming barriers such as discrimination, legal costs, distance, and the availability of adequate legal representation was considered. Furthermore, the victim's ability to request and obtain protective measures against perpetrators, as well as access to assistance services for victims, was examined.

III.I.V. Variables in the PJS Reliance Domain

The central variable of this chapter considers the level of Reliance of the population on the Public Justice System (PJS), from entering it until the conclusion of the process and the attainment of justice. The variable was measured based on multiple indicators distributed in the population survey. Reliance included eight indicators, based on the previous work of International Justice Mission in the region.

The first two refer to the willingness to rely on the PJS in the event of experiencing violence. It includes a) willingness to file a complaint, and b) willingness to remain in the judicial process after filing it.

The following four indicators of Reliance in the PJS by victims of physical and sexual violence include: a) having reported the act of violence to the PJS, b) having reported the act of violence to an institution outside the PJS, c) having remained in the PJS once the complaint was made, and d) having disclosed the act of violence to a community member. These indicators were obtained only from individuals who were victims of physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

The last two indicators refer to “gaps in Reliance.” It looked at: a) not reporting the act of violence to the PJS; b) abandoning the criminal process before the possibility of obtaining justice. Finally, three possible factors associated with Reliance were included, from the victim's interaction perspective with the PJS, assuming: 1) the level of Reliance in the justice system, 2) the level of satisfaction with the response of the PJS to the complaint, and 3) the existence of interactions based on the trauma-informed care approach, from the victims' perspective, with justice system personnel.

III.I.VI. Training

The comprehensive training of the interviewers who participated in the data collection was a crucial element for the realization of the pilot study and data collection. This training was meticulously designed to cover several essential aspects: first, the general objectives of the study were emphasized, ensuring that the interviewers understood the purpose and importance of their work. Second, a detailed analysis of each item in the questionnaire was carried out, ensuring a deep and uniform understanding in the entire team. Finally, a factor of special relevance—strategies and techniques focused on effectively managing emotionally intense situations that could arise during the interviews—was imparted. This last aspect was essential, considering the sensitivity of the topics addressed in the study. The training sought to equip the interviewers with the necessary skills to respond, with empathy and professionalism, to emotional reactions from the participants.

Before commencing fieldwork, interviewers were provided with all necessary resources to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the survey process. This kit included tablets

equipped for electronic recording of questionnaire responses, official credentials identifying the interviewers, informed consent letters to be signed by the participants, and detailed maps, along with route sheets, to guide visits in the municipalities.

III.I.VII. Pilot Test

During the pilot phase of the instrument, a field test was conducted in the municipalities of Cochabamba and El Alto. A team of interviewers consisting of 4 professionals in Cochabamba and 3 in El Alto was formed and two days of intensive work were scheduled at each location to reach the required data quota. In total, 46 surveys were conducted: 25 in El Alto and 21 in Cochabamba. The process identified challenges in the use of tablets for data collection, and in response to this, it was proposed that interviewers install and use the Open Data Kit (ODK) application on their own mobile phones to improve efficiency and convenience in data collection.

The lessons learned from the pilot study provided valuable opportunities to refine the methodology of the main study. The information gathered was essential for improving the data collection instrument, focusing on the continuity and coherence of the items across different sections of the digital questionnaire. Additionally, the data storage process was improved, including both voice recordings and answer marking, which increased the accuracy and reliability of information capture.

III.I.VIII. Data Collection

Individual, face-to-face surveys were conducted in each of the four municipalities selected for the study. These interviews were conducted by a team of professional interviewers. Each team member was assigned specific blocks and households to meet the predetermined quota.

If a household met the inclusion criteria, such as age, the interviewer presented the informed consent and proceeded with the questionnaire application, carefully reading the questions and recording the participants' responses using a tablet. For this, the Ona Data software (www.ona.io) was used, an online platform that facilitates data storage in offline mode and allows sound recording during the survey. The duration of each survey varied between 12 and 20 minutes, depending on the specific modules enabled for each case. The data collection process lasted for a period of five weeks, carried out between October and November 2022.

III.I.IX. Data Analysis for the Prevalence Domain

A descriptive analysis was conducted calculating frequencies (n) and proportions (%) for all variables included in the study. In calculating the Prevalence of physical, sexual, and combined violence, any affirmative response (1= Yes) to at least one of the specific items of each type of violence described previously was identified. The Prevalence of each form of violence was determined by dividing the total number of participants who reported experiencing that violence by the total number of participants in the study. This calculation was performed for two specific time periods: throughout life and in the 12 months prior to the study. The results were expressed in percentages.

Subsequently, an inferential analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test to examine bivariate associations, seeking a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This analysis focused on exploring the relationships between different types of violence and key geographic and demographic variables, such as the studied municipalities, the comparison between IJM

intervention municipalities and the control municipality, and differences by age groups in both study populations. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the dynamics and distributions of violence. RStudio and SPSS tools were used for data analysis.

III.I.X. Data Analysis for the PJS Reliance Domain

Data analysis of the information obtained from the population survey involved the univariate exploration of the items involved in each of the eight indicators distributed across the three modules of the population survey. Relative and absolute frequencies were extracted and reported for each indicator, disaggregated by municipality, for both the sample of women and the sample of adolescents. Secondly, dichotomous variables were created for: 1) the degree of Reliance in the justice system; 2) the degree of satisfaction with the response of the PJS to the complaint; 3) the existence of interactions based on the trauma-informed care approach with justice system personnel. These variables were used to analyze the associations between a) reporting and Reliance in the PJS; b) the degree of permanence in the PJS of victims and levels of satisfaction with services received in the PJS; and c) the degree of permanence in the PJS with the number of interactions based on trauma-informed care. For this, the Chi-square test was used, setting a significance level of $p < 0.05$. RStudio and SPSS were used for data analysis.

III.II. PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM IN CASES OF PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN

To describe the Performance of the PJS, two data collection strategies were employed: one to collect information from the records of the Jurisdictional Control Notebooks (CCJ) on cases of victims in the PJS and, a second, to assess the use of the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approach, through a survey with closed quantitative questions and open qualitative questions, which was answered by officials and social service providers in the care of victims of violence. Below is the methodology for each of the strategies.

III.II.I. Methodology for the Review of Jurisdictional Control Notebooks (CCJ)

1. Type of Research

This study adopted a quantitative and descriptive approach. The information collected comes from the Jurisdictional Control Notebooks (CCJ), physical and sexual VAWC cases in the intervention municipalities of IJM (La Paz, El Alto, and Sucre) and a control municipality (Cochabamba). Cases that took place between the years 2018 and 2021 were considered.

2. Sampling for Intervention and Control Municipalities

Sampling for the selection of CCJ was done in two different ways. For cases in intervention municipalities, initially, a stratified sampling approach was considered. Due to the difficulties that will be detailed later (see Limitations), to reach the sample size for infinite populations, the process was adjusted to a selection of cases that met the criteria of simple random probabilistic sampling, including all those to which access was available and met the selection criteria.

On the other hand, for the selection of the sample in the control municipality, probabilistic sampling was carried out using the Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) methodology. The decision to use two types of sampling was based on the willingness to include the municipality of Cochabamba as part of the study since it allows having reference information on the Performance of the Justice System in an area that IJM will consider as a control tool for future studies.

a) Sample Calculation and Selection of Jurisdictional Control Notebooks for Intervention Municipalities

Sample Calculation:

The Council of the Judiciary provided a database that amounted to more than 30,000 cases (25,764 for La Paz and El Alto, and 5,392 for Sucre) of violence recorded between 2018 and 2021. The sample size was calculated using the formula provided for infinite samples, as detailed in Figure 1 below:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = expected sample size

e = maximum accepted error

N = Universe size

p = Probability of the event occurring

Z = level of Confidence

q = (1-p) Probability of the event not occurring

A sample size of 384 CCJ of physical and/or sexual VAWC was obtained, with a level of Confidence of 95%.

Inclusion criteria and case selection:

For case selection, a database provided by the Council of the Judiciary was used, from which the CCJ included in the study analysis were obtained, according to the following criteria:

- 1) The victims of physical or sexual violence were girls, boys, adolescents, or women.
- 2) Cases were recorded between 2018 and 2021, in the CCJ.
- 3) The criminal types correspond to physical and/or sexual violence offenses, disaggregated in annexes.
- 4) The CCJ was located as registered in the SIREJ.

Based on these criteria and considering the experience of the previous study conducted by IJM in 2018 —where a 50% replacement was decided on to reach the desired sample and despite this, the stipulated number was not achieved— in the present investigation, it was decided to have a replacement list equivalent to 100%, which added 384 additional CCJ. Despite this expansion, the total number of CCJ needed for the sample was not covered, as most of them did not meet the selection criteria, or it was not possible to access the information, even after requesting it from the judicial office three times.

Consequently, to continue with the data collection, it was necessary to randomly select another 224 additional CCJ from the list of cases registered in the SIREJ between 2018 and 2021. After an exhaustive search of 767 cases and a detailed review of 416 of them, a total final sample of 321 CCJ was obtained, with a level of Confidence of 90%, for the intervention municipalities (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Sample for Intervention Municipalities by Age

Intervention Municipalities	Intervention Sample	% Cases of Women With Identified Age	% Cases of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents With Identified Age	% Without Age Information
La Paz - El Alto	220	26,8	5,9	67,3
Sucre	101	70,3	21,8	7,9
Total	321	40,5	10,9	48,6

b) Calculation of the Sample for the Control Municipality

With the implementation of LQAS sampling in the control municipality, a sample size of 90 cases with a level of Confidence of 90% was established. This is a standard sample size used in this type of sampling, which can range from 19 to 90 cases to constitute a lot, establishing cut-off points that allow for equivalent approximations to the intervention sample and, in this case, are representative of the control municipality (Table 3.4). In said municipality, only 83 investigation notebooks were reviewed; therefore, the percentage estimate corresponds to the midpoint of the uncertainty range for these 83 cases.

Table 3.4. Cut-off Points and Percentage Estimates with LQAS

Cut-off Points for n=83	Lot Prevalence Percentage Estimate and Uncertainty Range
0 to 1 individual with violence	1% (0.0% – 2%)
2 to 4 individuals with violence	6% (2.01% – 10%)
5 to 12 individuals with violence	15% (10.01% – 20%)
13 to 22 individuals with violence	27.5% (20.01% – 35%)
23 to 35 individuals with violence	42.5% (35.01% – 50%)
36 to 47 individuals with violence	57.5% (50.01% – 65%)
48 to 60 individuals with violence	72.5% (65.01% – 80%)
61 to 83 individuals with violence	89.5% (80.01% – 99%)

In the control municipality, the final sample reached was 83 CCJ (Table 3.4).

Table 3.5. Sample for Control Municipality by Age

Control Municipality	Sample	% Cases of Women	% Cases of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents
Cochabamba	83	48,2	51,8

3. Variables and instrument for information analysis of the CCJ

PJS Performance: Understood as the State's response to victims, girls, boys, adolescents, and women, concerning three dimensions:

- **Progress:** Case advancement through stages established by the Common and Abbreviated Criminal Procedure Code, up to the final sentence.
- **Timeliness:** Duration of each stage within the overall process, based on deadlines set by the Criminal Procedure Code.
- **Quality:** Set of actions planned in the criminal process to provide timely care that ensures victim safety in case development, with a trauma-informed care approach.

Instrument Validation: The “Bolivia 2022 Notebook Review” instrument, used for data collection, is a modification and adaptation of the information gathering instrument applied in the “Bolivian PJS Performance Study” conducted by IJM in 2018. Before being applied, the instrument underwent an internal review phase to verify the suitability of the proposed items. As a result, adjustments were made in wording and language adaptation. Upon obtaining the final version of the instrument, it underwent review and validation by a team of experts in social research methodology, as well as a team with extensive experience in criminal matters.

The final version of the instrument consists of 68 questions and 44 indicators aimed at collecting information on progress (17 indicators), timeliness (14 indicators), and the quality of care for victims of VAWC (13 indicators), structured into eight modules. Since the instrument allowed gathering information from more than one victim and more than one perpetrator, it also included segments opening groups of questions for each of them (Table 3.5).

Table 3.6. Operationalization of Variables and Performance Indicators

Variables	Indicators
Common Procedure Progress: Case advancement through stages established by the Criminal Procedure Code, common and abbreviated, until reaching a final sentence	% and # cases with initial report % and # of cases with accusation % and # of cases with indictment % and # of cases with opening decision % and # of acquittal and conviction sentences % and # of cases with sentence % and # of cases with final sentence % and # of cases with appeal % and # of cases with cassation % and # of cases with pre-trial detention leading to final sentence (cases reaching final sentence) % and # of formal accusations resulting in sentences % and # of processes with total restriction at the time of sentencing % and # of cases initiated in DNAs, SLIMs, and service platforms
Abbreviated Procedure Progress	% and # of abbreviated procedures % and # Stage of abbreviated procedure request % and # Proportion of progress in the criminal process by type of crime

<p>Timeliness:</p> <p>Ideal duration of each stage within the general process based on deadlines established by the Criminal Procedure Code</p>	<p>Time: Date of the 1st incident to Complaint</p> <p>Time: Complaint to investigation commencement</p> <p>Time: Investigation commencement report to indictment/rejection</p> <p>Time: Notification of indictment to accusation</p> <p>Time: Accusation to opening decision</p> <p>Time: Opening decision to trial commencement</p> <p>Time: Trial commencement to sentence issuance</p> <p>Time: Sentence issuance to appeal</p> <p>Time: Appeal to execution (when there is no cassation) Time: Appeal to cassation</p> <p>Time: Cassation to final sentence</p> <p>Time: Sentence to final sentence (when there is no appeal)</p> <p>Average time of the criminal process from the complaint to the final sentence</p> <p>Maximum process time (Complaint to final sentence)</p>
<p>Quality:</p> <p>Set of actions planned to provide timely care and security to the victim during case development</p>	<p>Number of suspended hearings</p> <p>Reasons for hearing suspension</p> <p>Conducted hearings</p> <p>Average sentence time by type of sentencing offense</p> <p>Modifications in penal type classification during the process</p> <p># of times that the penal type was changed</p> <p>Reason for dismissal</p> <p>% of cases using Gesell Chamber during investigation</p> <p># and % of cases with protective measures</p> <p>Evidence anticipation</p> <p>Victim interaction number</p> <p>Accusation evidence</p>

Source: Adaptation of the Study Protocol and Standardized Global Indicators Manual for PJS Performance by IJM

4. Procedure

a. Training

The research team consisted of a Team Coordinator, a Lead Investigator, two Supervisors, and 16 CCJ Reviewers. The entire team received technical and thematic training for data collection according to the Field Entry Protocol (annexes). Six extensive theoretical and practical training sessions were conducted on the study objectives and the criminal procedure -between June and July 2022- in La Paz. The sessions highlighted information regarding the identification of relevant procedural pieces for recording and proceedings included in each CCJ. Throughout the process, three sessions were also conducted to socialize the instrument, resulting in suggestions to ensure proper data collection.

This data collection was carried out with a team of reviewers consisting of 19 individuals: 6 law graduates and 13 junior professionals (annexes, Organizational Chart, and team description).

b. Pilot Test

The pilot test was conducted with five CCJ, provided by IJM, under Non-Disclosure Agreements by the research team. They contained information on final sentences from common procedure, abbreviated procedure, oral trials, and acquittal sentences. Utilizing the material, the team of reviewers conducted three sessions in which CCJ were reviewed and recorded in the ONA platform.

Following the pilot test, the relevance of all planned items was confirmed, and the correlative opening coherence of segments for cases containing more than one victim or perpetrator was verified. Additionally, the pilot test allowed identifying the functionality of registration on electronic devices (tablets).

c. Data Collection

Once authorization was received from the Departmental Courts of Justice of La Paz, Chuquisaca, and Cochabamba, data collection was conducted from November 7, 2022, to March 17, 2023. As part of the procedure, each reviewer was provided with lists containing information on Judicial Registration Numbers (NUREJ) or Single Complaint Codes (CUD), the type of violence, and the court in which the case was located. Coordination with the courts was carried out through supervisors, who managed entry and allowed reviewers' approach to the courts via identification credentials and lists of CCJ to collect data. An average of 50 cases was assigned to each reviewer. Replacement case assignments were made based on each reviewer's progress in meeting quotas.

5. Data analysis

Responses to all questions contained in the ONA database underwent a rigorous data cleaning process, verifying compliance with selection criteria. Once a final database was obtained, it was subdivided into three to allow disaggregated analysis according to the total CCJ (Nc), total accused (ns), and total victims (Nv); as each CCJ could include more than one victim or more than one perpetrator in the recorded information.

Analysis was conducted using the SPSS statistical package for frequency and percentage result descriptions. Additionally, where relevant, measures of central tendency mean and mode were analyzed. An additional inferential analysis was also performed to explore the existence of significant differences or relationships between indicators.

III.II.II. Methodology for Evaluating the Use of the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Approach by Public Servants and Social Service Providers

1. Type of Research

This is a descriptive and retrospective mixed-method research that obtained both quantitative and qualitative information through closed-ended quantitative questions and complementary open-ended questions that comprised the “Trauma-Informed Care Questionnaire for Service Providers” (TIC-P). Its objective was to assess whether, at the specific moments when VAWC victims had to interact with instances of the justice system, public servants and social service providers present acted in accordance with the events recalled by the survey respondents. This served to evaluate whether the TIC approach was applied to avoid revictimization, regardless of the knowledge public servants had regarding the approach.

2. Sampling for Intervention and Control Municipalities

Participants were selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling, using the snowball technique, starting from a list of Public Servants and Social Service Providers provided by contacts of IJM partner institutions, according to two fundamental requirements:

- 1) Working directly with victims, either in public or private instances
- 2) Having interacted with victims no more than six months before being part of the survey

This type of participant selection was considered appropriate due to previous data collection experiences conducted by IJM, through the TIC-P, in La Paz and El Alto, considering the high turnover in the various units and offices working with VAWC victims and their willingness to participate in the survey.

In this regard, information was provided by participants from all three intervention municipalities (El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre), as well as from the control municipality (Cochabamba). We managed to work with 34 surveyed individuals in the intervention area who, in total, recalled 54 interactions with VAWC victims from cases that occurred at different times, in addition to 7 individuals in the control municipality, who recalled 10 interactions with VAWC victims, also occurring at different times. It should be clarified that, in the case of surveyed individuals who provided information about more than one interaction, they reported on a single victim, in order to maintain the greatest possible clarity in their memories.

Table 3.7. Number of Respondents and Interactions in Intervention and Control Municipalities

Participants	Intervention Area	Control Area
Public Servants*	23	6
Social Service Providers**	11	1
TOTAL Respondents	34	7
TOTAL # of Recalled Interactions	54	10

* Police, Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents (DNA), Municipal Comprehensive Legal Services (SLIM), Victim and Witness Protection and Assistance Unit (UPAVT)

** “Bolivian Professionals at Service” (PROBOS), personnel from private institutions (NGO)

3. Variables and Instrument for the Analysis of Information from the Trauma-Informed Care Questionnaire for Service Providers (TIC-P)

Instrument: The TIC-P measures whether, according to the events recalled by the participants, the TIC approach was employed or not by public servants and social service providers when interacting with VAWC victims. This questionnaire, developed by International Justice Mission, collects information from eight specific moments in which interactions between victims and PJS can occur: 1) complaint filing; 2) during evidence collection; 3) participating in investigative interviews; 4) preparing to testify in hearings; 5) participating in hearings; 6) being rescued from the aggressor(s); 7) being relocated to a shelter or refuge, and 8) discussing the post-rescue aftercare plan.

The instrument begins with an explanatory section for respondents on the key concepts mentioned. It then presents seven general sociodemographic questions and, finally, between 12 and 14 specific questions for each of the moments explained above; in addition, it allows complementing the information of each closed question with comments that provide qualitative information.

Instrument validation: Initially, an interdisciplinary team from IJM Global Programs defined the base instrument designed for computer system use. Next, the IJM Bolivia team, along with the IJM Latin America team, worked on validating the instrument for measurement in the country, starting with adapting the language to the national context and conducting pilot surveys with experts in the field from partner institutions, both public and private, from which valuable feedback was obtained. After making the recommended corrections, the first survey was conducted in 2020, followed by subsequent data collection to calculate the percentage of interactions in which, according to the respondents' recollection. The TIC approach was used by public servants and/or social service providers present at the time referenced in the survey.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Variables: The instrument seeks to obtain a final aggregate result. The indicator, presented below, was obtained through questions about six key competencies that make up the qualitative variables:

Table 3.8. TIC Core Variable and Indicator

Variable	Indicator
Effective application of the TIC approach by public servants and social service providers when interacting with victims.	% of interactions applying the TIC approach carried out between public servants and service providers with VAWC victims.

Additionally, for the result to demonstrate the use of the TIC approach in each interaction surveyed, the use of all competencies applicable to it was integrally evaluated. For this reason, the analysis was complemented with qualitative information obtained through additional comments that provided context to the real possibilities that officials and social service providers have to support victims. These core competencies are presented below¹:

- **Effective communication and reliability:** Ensure that victims know their rights, through clear expectations regarding which services can and will be provided; it also implies prioritizing communication with the victim and trying to understand them.
- **Provide physical, psychological and emotional security:** Ensure that interactions and spaces are safe for victims, physically, emotionally, and psychologically.
- **Collaboration:** Validate the knowledge of victims and ensure their participation in decision-making and service provision.
- **Provide information and respect the victim's choices:** Provide appropriate information to victims about the available options from which they can decide, and then respect those choices.
- **Contribute to empowerment:** Recognize the strengths and resilience capabilities of victims, from the validation of their survival experiences and psychoeducation.
- **Connect with the victim:** Strengthen relationships with victims through positive social in order to provide healing, hope, and sustainable well-being.

Additionally, after explaining the key concepts of the instrument to the participants, they were asked a specific complementary question to understand their perception of the interaction referenced in the survey: "In general, in your professional opinion, did the victim receive trauma-informed care during this interaction?" This question determined the difference between the result obtained from interactions that employed the TIC approach, compared to what they considered happened.

1. The details of these competencies and sub-competencies are found in the Annexes.

4. Procedure

Training

The two interviewers, part of the IJM team, participated in face-to-face training in the city of La Paz, as the information would be collected in-person and virtually using the Zoom application. This training was divided into two parts: The first focused on ensuring that interviewers understood the TIC approach, explaining that it has to be applied by PJS officials and non-officials who are in contact with victims, as well as the competencies that are part of the approach. The second sought to explain to the instrument interviewers would use in the data collection, for the proper use thereof, and its application through ONA. ONA is a platform used by organizations worldwide for data collection, real-time monitoring, and data storage.

It is worth noting that the interviewers already had experience applying interviews and questionnaires in social research. In this regard, each interviewer prepared by interviewing IJM staff working with VAWC victims to obtain specific experience in applying the instrument. All of the above was done to ensure an adequate data collection process.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted through scheduled appointments, some in person and others virtually through the Zoom application. On average, the survey application took 15 minutes per remembered interaction. The data collection process took place from January to May 2023. Although initially, three months were allocated for the interviews, difficult access to participants required a time extension.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed quantitatively, in the case of closed questions corresponding to each moment, and qualitatively in the case of complementary open questions. The evaluated moments in which service providers could interact with victims were: 1) complaint filing; 2) during evidence collection; 3) participating in investigative interviews; 4) preparing to testify in hearings; 5) participating in hearings; 6) being rescued from the aggressor(s); 7) being relocated to a shelter or refuge, and 8) discussing the post-rescue aftercare plan.

Between 12 and 14 questions were developed, whose answers acquired values from zero to three, according to the impact (positive or negative) that the action carried out had on the victims. These values were summed up and divided by the total number of responses obtained per type of moment evaluated. Regardless of the moment in which the victim interacted with the PJS, the result was dichotomous, acquiring the value “1” if it was an interaction in which the TIC approach was used, or “0” if the interaction did not employ the approach. In this sense, for it to be assumed that an interaction applied the TIC approach, it must exceed an 80% rating and, additionally, have applied all corresponding competencies (dimensions) integrally. Finally, the results of all interactions that did employ the TIC approach were summed up and divided by all evaluated interactions, obtaining the final results.

On the other hand, the responses to the open questions allowed respondents to expand information to clarify the context in which the interaction occurred, as well as other aspects that could have influenced the evaluation outcome.

CONFIDENCE PERCEPTION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

This section includes an explanation of the type of research conducted, the sample design, the pilot test, the research instrument, study variables, and the procedure. Each of these aspects is explained below.

1. Type of research

This is a research study that describes the Confidence perception that key stakeholders have regarding the PJS. It is non-experimental in nature, as there is no manipulation of variables in controlled spaces. Research relies on the perception of selected stakeholders, whose opinions were collected during fieldwork. However, these opinions do not imply whether the PJS acts effectively, efficiently, and equitably or not; rather, they reflect the degree of Confidence existing in them, as stated in the introduction. Additionally, this research is of a horizontal or synchronic type, as it is limited to understanding the level of Confidence existing at the time of data collection. To measure Confidence in the PJS, this study collected the perception of key stakeholders through a survey and structured interviews as follows.

2. Sample Design

For data collection, this research selected various key actors from a convenience sample who are part of or are linked to case management of VAWC cases within the PJS. Notably, it is not uncommon for participating officials to avoid being part of such investigations due to fear of reprisals, loyalty to their organization, or reluctance to be evaluated in their professional and/or work Performance, attitudes that limit these studies. Therefore, this type of sampling is methodologically valid and also recommended.

Following the criteria of IJM, participants were divided into five groups: 1) justice system officials, 2) local stakeholders, 3) victim companions, 4) representatives of international organizations, and 5) “corporate business actors.” However, based on the results obtained, it was observed that stakeholders 2, 3, 4, and 5 kept a similar Confidence pattern. For this reason, to simplify the analysis and avoid redundancies, participants were divided into two general groups: 1) PJS officials and 2) non-officials of the system.

The opinions of the first group reflect the internal Confidence existing in the PJS, while those of the second group reflect external Confidence. However, it is emphasized that both types of participants are presented in the analysis as key stakeholders in the PJS. In all cases, individuals with knowledge, experience, or experiences related to the PJS and VAWC were sought to avoid biases due to unfamiliarity with the work of the various instances of the victim protection axis. To achieve this goal, individuals who met the criteria of belonging to hierarchical positions within PJS institutions or who had experience in carrying out their functions were selected as much as possible.

As shown in Table 3.8, most participants hold managerial positions (49 out of 70: 70%), while the minority hold middle-management (13: 18.6%) or operative positions (8: 11.4%). This participant distribution implies that the research primarily captures the perception of hierarchical staff within the institutions.

Table 3.9. Number of Participants by Department and Position

Municipality	Managerial	Middle-management	Operative	Total per municipality
Sucre	16	6	3	25
La Paz	17	5	4	26
El Alto	9	1	0	10
Cochabamba	7	1	1	9
Total per position	49	13	8	70

Source: Own elaboration

3. Pilot Test

A review and adaptation to the Bolivian reality of the research instrument proposed by IJM were carried out. This task was undertaken by teams from that entity and the Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (IICC). Subsequently, a final draft of the instrument was prepared and subjected to a pilot test and validation by an expert, namely, it was applied to a Bolivian lawyer specialized in family law and rights of children, and adolescents, former judge and board member. This validation was conducted using a Gesell Chamber at the facilities of the Bolivian Catholic University “San Pablo,” with the presence of the researchers and data collection personnel involved in this study.

Based on the feedback gathered on that occasion, and through collaborative and coordinated reflection between the IICC and IJM, adjustments were made to the instrument's length and wording to develop the final version, which can be seen in the Annexes: Research Instruments.

4. Tools

The formulation of the research instrument structurally responds to three components: the identification of participants, the presentation of the research and responsible institutions, and the content of the questionnaire, which is the essence of the instrument. A brief description is presented below, expanded in the Annexes: Research Instruments.

- e) Identification of survey respondents: The department and municipality in which they reside, the institution they work for, and the type of position they hold (managerial, middle-management, or operative). This information was recorded prior to the application of the instrument and is archived confidentially.
- f) Presentation of the research and the institutions conducting the research, in addition to verifying that the survey respondent provided their informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality in the handling of their personal data.
- g) The body of the questionnaire organized according to the central variables of the research, namely, the effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of changes in the PJS.

The research instrument incorporates closed and open-ended questions. While closed-ended questions correspond to the survey, open-ended questions belong to the interview. Both types of questions were administered simultaneously to all participants in this study. Closed-ended questions are answered using a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 10 (where 0 indicates no Confidence and 10 indicates complete Confidence), as well as the options “did not know/did not respond” and “not applicable.” The question related to changes is answered with “yes,” “no,” or “did not know/did not respond.” In the case of a favorable response, it leads to the question about the sustainability of these changes, which is answered with “not sustainable,” “slightly sustainable,” “sustainable,” or “did not know/did not respond.”

5. Study Variables

The framework used for data collection and subsequent analysis comprises the dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of changes in the PJS, as suggested by IJM (see Table 3.9). It is important to note that these dimensions refer to the perception held by key stakeholders who participated in the present study, expressing their Confidence in the PJS or the sustainability of its changes.

Table 3.10. Operationalization of Confidence in the PJS Regarding VAWC

Dimension	Sub-dimensions	Indicators
Confidence in the Effectiveness of the PJS	Adherence to the law	There is Confidence that the PJS acts in adherence to the law regarding VAWC
	Effective joint work	There is Confidence that the PJS works effectively to ensure justice regarding VAWC
	Crime deterrence	There is Confidence in the PJS's ability to reduce crime related to VAWC
	Governmental support	There is Confidence that the PJS receives the necessary governmental support to respond to VAWC
Confidence in Institutional Efficiency	Independence	There is Confidence that each PJS institution complies independently with its legal mandate regarding VAWC
	Timely response	There is Confidence that each PJS institution PJS responds* in a reasonable time regarding VAWC
	Accessibility	There is Confidence that each PJS institution is accessible in terms of the services it provides regarding VAWC
	Governmental support	There is Confidence that each PJS institution receives the required governmental support regarding VAWC
Confidence in Institutional Fairness	Non-discriminatory treatment	There is Confidence that each PJS institution treats everyone equally and without any discrimination when interacting with people in cases of VAWC
	Dignified treatment	There is Confidence that each PJS institution provides humane and respectful treatment to people when interacting with them in cases of VAWC
Sustainability of changes to the Public Justice System	Perception of positive change	There is a perceived positive change or relevant progress in the Performance of the PJS regarding VAWC
	Sustainability of change	It is perceived that the positive change or relevant progress in the Performance of the PJS regarding VAWC is sustainable

(*) Responds to requests made by the system user

Source: Own elaboration based on IJM criteria

6. Procedure

Training

To ensure a quality data collection process, the team worked following a protocol that includes basic guidelines for field entry at three stages: before, during, and after data collection. This sought to standardize the field entry process to ensure rigor in data collection.

The research instrument was administered using the Ona Data platform by seven surveyors: one for Cochabamba, two for Sucre, and four for El Alto and La Paz. They were trained in general aspects of the criminal justice process, soft skills for conducting surveys, and the use of Ona Data and the digital tablets provided to record and upload information to this platform, in accordance with the data collection protocol.

Data Collection

Data collection took place between September and December 2022. Through IJM experts, a baseline list of key stakeholders to be surveyed was generated, according to the PJS institutions related to or involved in VAWC cases. From this list of stakeholders by institution, municipality, and number, the respective individuals were identified and invited to participate in the research.

However, due to the partial lack of favorable responses obtained in the first round of contacts with participants, the data collection process was supported through a snowball sampling method, relying on contacts of individuals who were actually interviewed and surveyed. This convenience sampling method was used to access key stakeholders more easily to conduct surveys and interviews, considering that they are a population that is difficult to reach (Otzen & Manterola, 2017), due to their roles.

Initially, the plan was to collect information through face-to-face contact with participants; however, interviews via video conferencing had to be used due to difficulties in accessing participants and their explicit request to use virtual channels. Consequently, the data collection protocol prepared for this domain also considered this modality.

These strategic adjustments to access potential informants during data collection in the field study (Mendieta Izquierdo, 2015) facilitated reaching the total number of proposed participants. The quantity and detail of the individuals effectively surveyed and interviewed can be reviewed in Table 3.10. The distribution and number of these actors, by municipality and institution, reached 70 participants in the municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba. It is worth noting that surveyors used tablets to record respondents' answers and utilized them to transcribe the testimonies.

Table 3.11. Number of Participants by Institution and Municipality

Participants	El Alto	La Paz	Sucre	Cbba.	National reach	Total
Total	8	27	19	8	8	70
PJS Officials						
National Police	0	0	1	0	2	3
Special Force to Combat Violence (FELCV)	1	4	1	0	0	6
Special Force to Fight Crime (FELCC)	0	0	1	1	0	2
Public Prosecutor's Office: General Prosecutor's Office and departmental prosecutor's offices	0	1	1	0	2	4
Institute of Forensic Investigations (IDIF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council of the Judiciary: national and district	0	0	2	0	2	4
Supreme Court of Justice	0	0	0	0	2	2
Departmental Courts of Justice	0	0	0	1	0	1
Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents (DNA)	2	3	1	1	0	7
Municipal Comprehensive Legal Services (SLIM)	0	1	1	1	0	3
Autonomous Municipal Governments	1	2	1	0	0	4
PJS Officials subtotal	4	11	9	4	8	36
Multilateral organizations, victims' companions, and business and corporate stakeholders						
International organizations	0	3	0	0	0	3
Bolivian Professionals at Service (Probos)	0	5	3	2	0	10
Civil society organization, partner of IJM but not part of its staff	0	1	0	0	0	1
Civil society organization, non-IJM partner	4	6	6	2	0	18
Business and corporate stakeholders	0	1	1	0	0	2
Subtotal multilateral organizations, victims' companions, and business and corporate stakeholders	4	16	10	4	0	34

Source: Own elaboration

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using a quantitative approach for the survey and a qualitative approach for complementary data collected through open-ended questions related to comments made during the application of the instrument. The responses to all closed-ended questions contained in the Ona data database were downloaded and then analyzed using the Tableau software program, to systematize the study variables.

During the data systematization process, it was established that some participants were unable to answer certain questions because they were unfamiliar with how some of the institutions operated. Therefore, unanswered questions by participants were not considered in the tally of responses and in the analysis.

As explained, possible responses are expressed on a Likert scale, where 0 indicates no Confidence and 10 indicates complete Confidence. Responses between 7 and 10 were unified under the category “Confidence.” Therefore, when the results of this research mention the percentages of those who have “Confidence,” or when expressions such as “Confidence percentage” are used, these refer to individuals who responded by marking between 7 and 10.

The qualitative approach was implemented through the analysis of the responses provided by participants to the interview's open-ended questions in the instrument. This data was analyzed using coding and categorization methods (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) and the NVivo software (version 14). Based on this organization, relevant content from each response was identified and assigned to each node. After this process, findings were established based on the various responses, identifying patterns among them.

To comply with the ethical considerations governing this research and to anonymize the opinions of the participants in this study, after transcribing their testimonies, they are cited in parentheses as “official participant” and “non-official participant,” omitting references to their gender.

III.IV. QUALITY CONTROL OF THE STUDY

The following describes the different quality control processes applied in each of the domains.

To begin, in the case of the Prevalence and Reliance domains, verification of correct data recording was performed by supervising 25% of the surveys collected in the fieldwork using the following criteria: a) the survey's location according to the geographic coordinates recorded by the system; b) the duration of the survey and each of its questions; c) compliance with defined quotas; d) proper reading of the questions by the interviewers through voice recording; and e) reading and signing of informed consent forms in all cases, as well as additional informed assent in the case of minors. Surveys that raised doubts in this supervision phase were reviewed in detail for approval or rejection.

For the Performance domain, in the case of research based on the Judicial Control Notebooks, the information entered into the ONA platform was verified in three stages: The first involved reviewing the Judicial Control Notebooks entered into the Departmental

Court platform of each municipality, and verifying their correspondence with the Judicial Control Notebooks that make up the sample. The second stage involved cross-referencing the same code, victim's gender, victim's age, perpetrator's gender, perpetrator's age, and the year the criminal proceedings began to determine if it was a Judicial Control Notebook that met the study's objectives. For the third stage, 10% of the selected cases were randomly selected and reviewed again by supervisors, who ensured that the information collected and recorded in the ONA platform matched the information presented in the Judicial Control Notebook. The field supervisor then randomly reviewed 50% of the entered cases, thus ensuring the quality of the data registered.

For the trauma-informed care questionnaire, quality control of the collected interviews was conducted in two stages: one by each interviewer and another by the supervisor. In the first stage, immediately after each interview was concluded, the interviewers checked that the responses to the closed questions were correctly marked and that the transcription of the additional comments was consistent with what was expressed by each key actor. Additionally, the review included verification that each record was effectively stored in the ONA software, both the questionnaire responses and the recording of each interview (provided that the key stakeholders gave their authorization for the recording). In a second stage, the interviewer's supervisor audited 20% of the surveys from start to finish, verifying both the correct application of informed consent and the questionnaire itself.

Finally, in the case of Confidence, a member of the research team was responsible for reviewing and evaluating the data collection to ensure its quality. For this purpose, one survey was randomly selected for each interviewer –representing 10% of the full sample size– and checked according to the following criteria: reading of the informed consent and verification of its acceptance by the participants; clear reading of the questions when applying the instrument, and proper application of the instrument and transcription of the interviews.

III.V. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to mention that, to start the study, the research protocol was written, which would dictate the entire research process for each one of the domains. The protocol underwent an evaluation process to ensure that the participating individuals would be safe, both physically and emotionally, by obtaining the approval of the Institutional Ethics Committee of the Universidad Católica Boliviana “San Pablo” in March 2022.

In this sense, for all cases in which surveys were used (Prevalence, Reliance, and Trauma-Informed Care Questionnaire), the following was considered:

- The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines stipulated in the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017) Code of Conduct and the Helsinki Declaration for studies involving human participants. Since the study deals with highly sensitive topics, special consideration was given to the principle of Do No Harm, ensuring anonymity and the voluntary, informed nature of participation. Thus, an essential requirement in the implementation of the study was to have the informed and signed consent of the surveyed individuals, as well as their legal guardian's consent in the case of minors.

- In addition, discussions were held about the rights of the respondents/interviewees to participate or not in the research, to suspend the interview in the course of it, or to refuse to answer any questions.
- All individuals who participated in person and/or virtually stated that they were sufficiently informed about this study, its implications, and their rights.
- In the case of Prevalence and Reliance, the interviewers were also trained in quick emotional containment responses to ensure respectful and humane treatment of the respondents and to act in accordance with the ethical principles established in the protocol. A list of telephone numbers and toll-free lines related to informed consent was included in the survey with the purpose of promoting the referral of possible violence cases to a support network.

On the other hand, in the case of the review of Judicial Control Notebooks, although the data collection was exclusively for statistical information, the reviewers signed a non-disclosure agreement regarding all the information they could observe and collect from the Judicial Control Notebooks. Finally, for all four domains, documents related to data collection and the study in general were safeguarded by the research team to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

III.VI. LIMITATIONS

This section explains the methodological limitations in the four protection domains: Prevalence, Reliance, Confidence, and Performance. Transparent acknowledgment of these limitations provides a solid foundation for future research seeking to refine methodology and broaden understanding in the field of the justice system's response to VAWC cases.

III.VI.I. General Limitations

The study addressed violence only from two of its classifications: physical violence and sexual violence. However, there are other classifications validated by research and legislation that would allow the identification of various factors and mechanisms for more specific interventions in certain population sectors and within the justice system. Moreover, none of the domains covered the entire national territory, as the geographical delimitation involved only four municipalities; additionally, the phenomenon of violence against children, in obtaining primary information, was understood and analyzed only based on adolescents between 13 and 17 years old. In light of this, the inclusion of younger participants will require revising the ethical and methodological foundations for possible adaptations and future research. Therefore, despite having representative samples in the four municipalities of interest, studies are needed to expand the geographical scope, age, and types of violence measured to understand in more detail the magnitude of the problem and the functioning of the justice system against VAWC in the country, thus ensuring a life free of violence for everyone.

III.VI.II. Limitations by Domain

Prevalence and Reliance: Being a cross-sectional study, causal relationships between variables cannot be established, meaning that the study can identify correlations and

trends, but cannot determine causality, i.e., the cause-and-effect relationship between variables.

Confidence: The consideration of temporality emerges as a crucial element in evaluating Confidence in the justice system. Fluctuations in the duration of officials' tenure contributed to variations in institutions' perception at a specific time. Therefore, it is essential to consider this temporary dimension when interpreting the results and consider strategies that address the different stages of participants' service to obtain a more accurate and equitable assessment of Confidence in the justice system.

Moreover, the study had a limitation regarding access to the sample and the people for whom the survey was intended, mainly due to two reasons: Firstly, the survey was conducted by scheduling an appointment with the key stakeholder, requiring the participants' availability for at least half an hour, which made meetings challenging. Secondly, there were no direct contacts in the municipalities of Sucre and Cochabamba to establish initial contact with the participant and generate interest in participating. This required a significant amount of lobbying to get them to accept taking the surveys; several appointments had to be rescheduled up to three times.

Performance: Concerning the information gathered from Judicial Control Notebooks, the most notable limitation of the study was the challenge in accessing the cases selected in the random sample, which led to the inclusion of several replacement Judicial Control Notebooks to meet the sample size. Another significant limitation was the lack of information in the Judicial Control Notebooks in the sample. While these notebooks reflect the reality of the quality of the data recorded at the time of opening a case, the lack of information resulted in the analysis including only those cases with sufficient data.

Regarding the information obtained from the Trauma-Informed Care Questionnaire (TIC), it is crucial to mention that a much smaller sample was obtained in the cities of Cochabamba and Sucre, as there were no prior relationships with key stakeholders. Due to this difficulty, the sample does not allow for differentiated analysis by type of respondent or institution to which they belong.



CHAPTER IV

Prevalence of Physical and Sexual Violence in Adolescents and Adult Women:
A Study Conducted Among Youth Aged 13 to 17 and Women Aged 18 and Older

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The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the Prevalence and distinctive characteristics of physical and sexual violence affecting adolescents of both sexes, aged 13 to 17, as well as adult women aged 18 and older. The analysis focuses on the intervention municipalities selected by IJM (El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre), in addition to a control municipality, Cochabamba. For this, data collected in 2022 by the Population Survey on Prevalence, Reliance, and Vulnerability to Violence (EPDVV) was examined.

Despite the relevance of violence as a social issue (outlined in the introduction chapter of this book), population surveys focused on physical and sexual violence against women and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries have methodological limitations, which often leads to questioning the reliability of their data (Bott et al., 2021; Devries et al., 2019; Temmerman, 2015). Therefore, it is important to address this knowledge gap, as quantitative research and analysis of physical and sexual violence against adolescents and women are crucial to raise awareness of the issue. Studies on its Prevalence not only foster greater social awareness and sensitivity but are also essential for driving effective policies for the optimal allocation of resources aimed at its prevention and elimination, thus contributing to the protection of the human rights of victims (Temmerman, 2015). Detailed data analysis facilitates the discernment of key trends, enabling the design of relevant strategies and the implementation of specific intervention programs. Moreover, by highlighting the severity of these acts of violence, these initiatives promote cultural change and are fundamental for equitable and sustainable development.

International Justice Mission (IJM, 2018), in a study on the Performance of the PJS in Bolivia highlighted the need for a population study on sexual violence against children and adolescents, including indicators that allow for regional and longitudinal comparisons.

IJM addresses sexual and physical violence, given its serious consequences —equally serious as other forms of violence, e.g. psychological and economic— and the urgency of defining comprehensive strategies to prevent and combat it (IJM, 2018). In the following sections, we will present the results of the EPDVV 2022, which include: The sociodemographic characteristics of survey participants, adolescents aged 13 to 17 and women aged 18 or older; the results on the Prevalence of physical and sexual violence in both population groups; and the conclusions derived from this research.

IV.II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IV.II.I. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Study Populations

Adolescents Aged 13 to 17

Table 4.1 details the sociodemographic profiles of adolescents aged 13 to 17 who participated in the study (N = 1,550), distributed across the intervention municipalities of IJM —El Alto, La Paz, Sucre— and a control municipality, Cochabamba. The first municipalities represented 75% of the total sample of adolescents.

In the total sample, the gender distribution was equitable: 50% for both; 14.2% of respondents reported being in a romantic relationship, and 2.3% indicated having some form of disability. Regarding ethnic demographics, in the intervention municipalities, the mestizo group was the most representative: 31.2%, followed by Aymaras: 29.1%, and Quechuas: 11.9%. In terms of education, the vast majority of adolescents had secondary-level education: 92.8% of the sample. A smaller segment had primary education: 6.6%, and an even smaller percentage reported having technical education: 0.3%.

Table 4.1. Sample Distribution of Adolescents Aged 13 to 17, According to Sociodemographic Characteristics Disaggregated by Project Area and Control Group

	IJM Intervention Municipalities		Control Municipality (Cochabamba)		Total Sample	
	n = 1163 (75%)		n = 387 (25%)		N = 1550 (100%)	
Municipality	n	%	n	%	N	%
La Paz	384	33,0	NA	NA	384	24,7
El Alto	392	33,7	NA	NA	392	25,3
Sucre	387	33,3	NA	NA	387	25,0
Cochabamba	NA	NA	387	100,0	387	25,0
Gender						
Women	581	50,0	194	50,1	775	50,0
Male	582	50,0	193	49,9	775	50,0
Ethnic Group						
Aymara	339	29,1	18	4,7	357	23,0
Guaraní	8	0,7	2	0,5	10	0,6
Quechua	138	11,9	48	12,4	186	12,0

Mestizo	363	31,2	135	34,9	498	32,2
White	81	7,0	32	8,3	113	7,3
Others	82	7,0	28	7,2	110	7,1
Don't know/No response	152	13,1	124	32,0	276	17,8
Education level						
Primary	78	6,7	24	6,2	102	6,6
Secondary	1077	92,6	362	93,5	1439	92,8
Technical	3	0,3	1	0,3	4	0,3
University	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Don't know/No response	5	0,4	0	0,0	5	0,3
Has a partner						
No	968	83,2	352	91,0	1320	85,1
Yes	188	16,2	35	9,0	223	14,4
Don't know/No response	7	0,6	0	0,0	7	0,5
Has some form of disability						
No	1130	97,2	378	97,7	1508	97,3
Yes	26	2,2	9	2,3	35	2,3
Don't know/No response	7	0,6	0	0,0	7	0,5

Note: NA = not applicable

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Women Aged 18 or Older

Table 4.2 presents relevant information on the distribution of the sample of women aged 18 or older, broken down by sociodemographic characteristics and disaggregated by IJM intervention municipalities, plus the control municipality. The total sample of the study includes 1,569 women.

Concerning the ethnic composition of the women in the sample, it is noted that the mestizo group predominates with 38.9%, followed by the Aymara (29.0%) and the Quechua groups (19.4%). Regarding educational level, 31.4% reported having university studies, above those with secondary education: 28.7%. Additionally, 59.8% of women reported having a partner, and 5.8% reported some form of disability.

Table 4.2. Sample Distribution of Adult Women Aged 18 or Older, According to Sociodemographic Characteristics Disaggregated by Project Area and Control Group

	IJM Intervention Municipalities		Control Municipality (Cochabamba)		Total Sample	
	n = 1165 (74%)		n = 404 (26%)		N = 1569 (100%)	
Municipality	n	%	n	%	n	%
La Paz	385	33,0	NA	NA	385	24,5
El Alto	392	33,6	NA	NA	392	25,0
Sucre	388	33,3	NA	NA	388	24,7
Cochabamba	NA	NA	404	100	404	25,8
Ethnic Group						
Aymara	419	36,0	36	8,9	455	29,0
Guaraní	2	0,2	0	0,0	2	0,1
Quechua	185	15,9	119	29,5	304	19,4
Mestizo	432	37,1	178	44,1	610	38,9
White	42	3,6	22	5,4	64	4,1
Others	33	2,8	10	2,5	43	2,7
Don't know/No response	52	4,4	39	9,6	91	5,8
Education level						
Primary	301	25,8	95	23,5	396	25,3
Secondary	337	28,9	113	28,0	450	28,7
Technical	160	13,7	63	15,6	223	14,2
University	360	30,9	133	32,9	493	31,4
Don't know/No response	7	0,6	0	0,0	7	0,4
Has a partner						
No	459	39,4	167	41,3	626	39,9
Yes	705	60,5	234	57,9	939	59,8
Don't know/No response	1	0,1	3	0,7	4	0,3

Has some form of disability						
No	1093	93,8	379	93,8	1472	93,8
Yes	68	5,8	23	5,7	91	5,8
Don't know/No response	4	0,3	2	0,5	6	0,4

Note: NA = not applicable

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

IV.II.II. Violence Against Adolescents Aged 13 to 17

This section of the report focuses on physical and sexual violence against adolescents aged between 13 and 17, and their vulnerability to victimization, providing a detailed insight into this issue through five key indicators. The data presented offers a perspective on the Prevalence of these types of violence, both throughout the lives of these young individuals and in the last 12 months preceding the research. The results are based on comparisons between IJM intervention municipalities and the control municipality, Cochabamba, exploring statistically significant differences based on age and gender.

Indicator 1: Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence

Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence Throughout Life

In the study sample, the Prevalence of violence throughout the lives of adolescents was 39.87% (see Figure 4.1). This number is considerably higher than the global Prevalence for adolescents aged 15 to 24 (approximately 10%), according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021a).

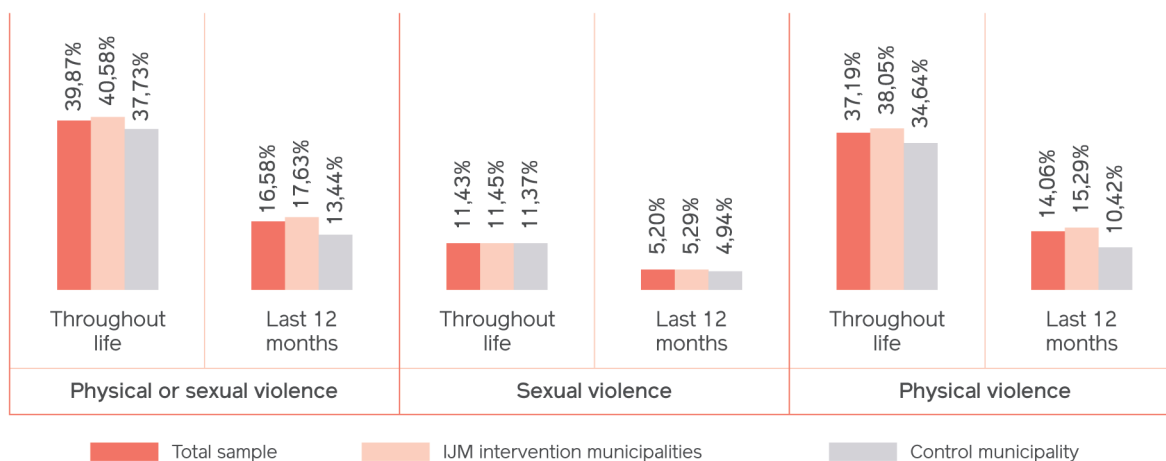
In the IJM intervention municipalities, Prevalence was 40.58%, while in the control group, it was slightly lower at 37.73%. No significant differences were observed by gender or municipality (see Table 4.3). Significant differences by age ($p < 0.05$) were observed, with a higher Prevalence in the 15 to 17 age group (45.19%) compared to adolescents aged 13 to 14 (34.46%) (see Table 4.3).

Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months

Regarding violence in the last 12 months, Prevalence in the total sample of adolescents reached 16.58% (Figure 4.1). In the intervention municipalities, this Prevalence was 17.63%, while in the control municipality, it was 13.44%. The municipality with the highest Prevalence was Sucre (18.86%), followed by El Alto (17.87%) and La Paz (16.15%) (see Figures 4.1 and 4.4).

When considering the age of the adolescents, a higher Prevalence was observed in the 15 to 17 age group (18.55%), compared to the 13 to 14 age group (14.56%), with a significant difference ($p < 0.05$). It is worth noting that no relevant differences were found regarding gender (see Table 4.3).

Figure 4.1. Prevalence of Types of Violence in Adolescents: Comparison Between the Total Sample, IJM Intervention Municipalities and Control Municipality (Last 12 Months and Throughout Life)



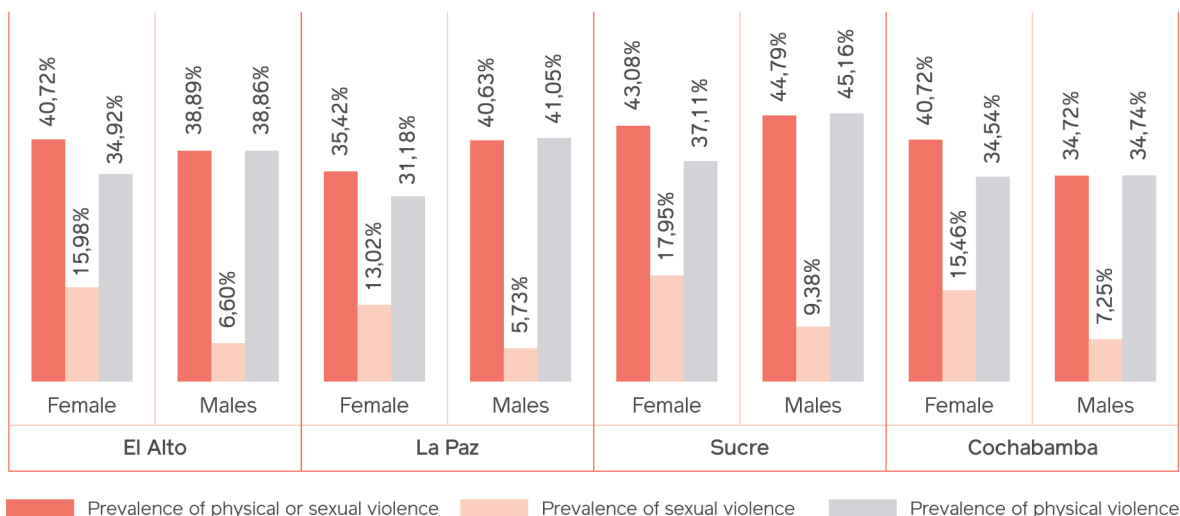
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.2. Prevalence of Types of Violence Throughout Life in the Total Sample of Adolescents by Municipality



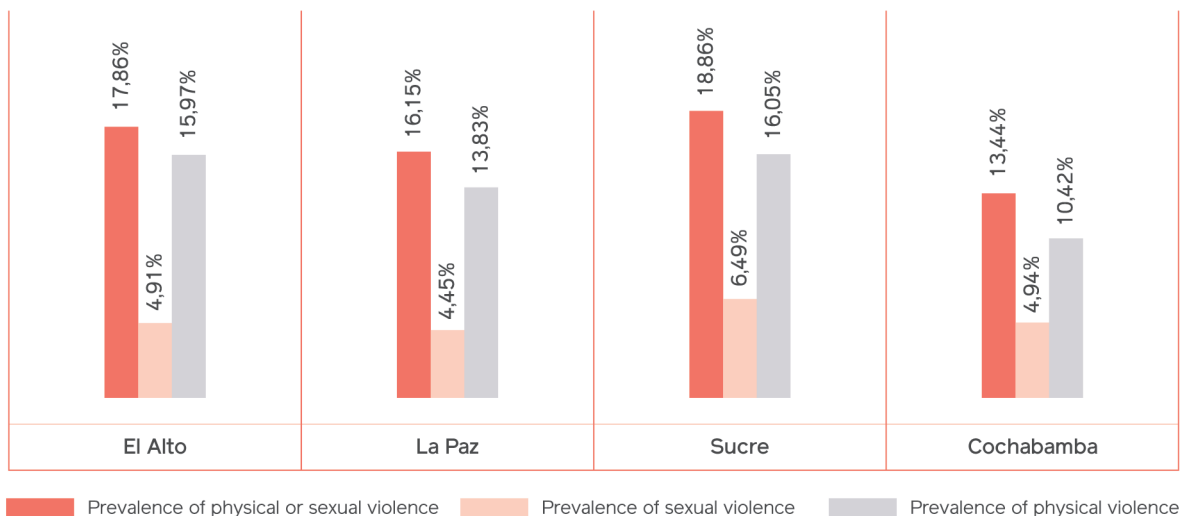
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.3. Prevalence of Types of Violence Throughout Life by Municipality and Gender of Adolescents



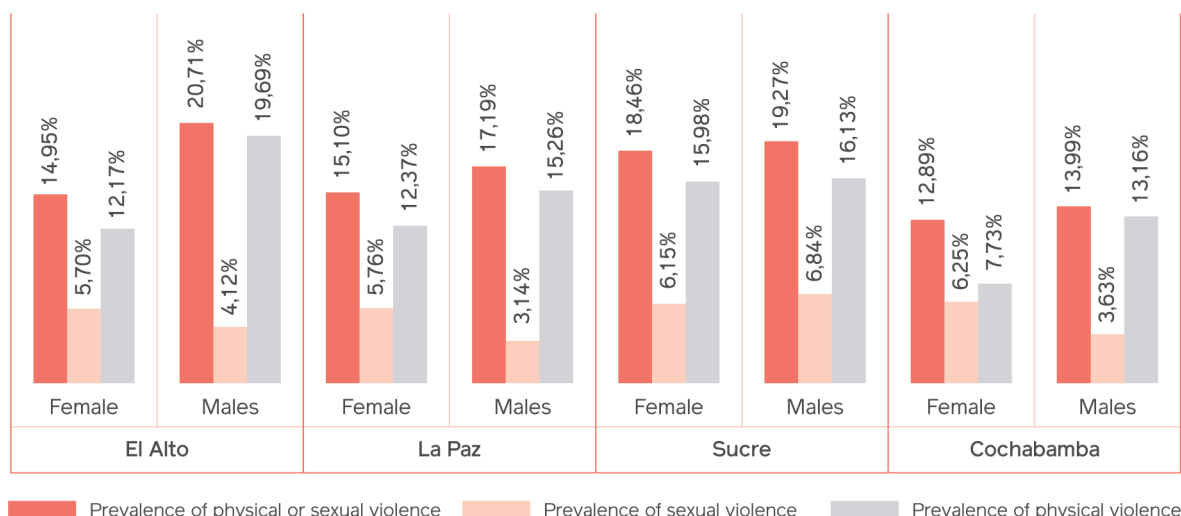
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.4. Prevalence of Types of Violence in the Last 12 Months in the Total Sample of Adolescents by Municipality



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.5. Prevalence of Types of Violence in the Last 12 Months by Municipality and Gender of Adolescents



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Indicator 2: Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Prevalence of Sexual Violence throughout Life

In the total sample of adolescents, the Prevalence of sexual violence throughout life was 11.43% (see Figure 4.1). This data is similar in both the IJM intervention municipalities and the control municipality. Sucre recorded the highest Prevalence (13.70%), while La Paz had the lowest (9.38%) (see Figure 4.2).

Significant differences by age were observed ($p < 0.05$): the highest Prevalence was recorded in the 15 to 17 age group (12.52%), compared to the 13 to 14 age group (7.95%) (see Table 4.3). It is noteworthy that comparing this data with other studies remains challenging due to the limited availability of comparable figures and differences in definitions of sexual violence. In various countries in the region, the reported Prevalence of sexual violence in children and adolescents among young women varies considerably: from 1% to 25% (UNICEF, 2022).

Regarding gender, statistically significant gaps in the Prevalence of sexual violence were observed between males, 4.20%, and females, 5.60% ($p < 0.05$); the highest Prevalence is among females. These gaps varied, with differences of up to seven percentage points in La Paz and nine points in El Alto (see Figure 4.3). Nevertheless, an especially crucial finding, given the lack of comparative research in this field (Devries et al., 2019), is the victimization of male adolescents. This data suggests the need to address sexual violence as a problem that concerns both sexes and to address the specific needs of each.

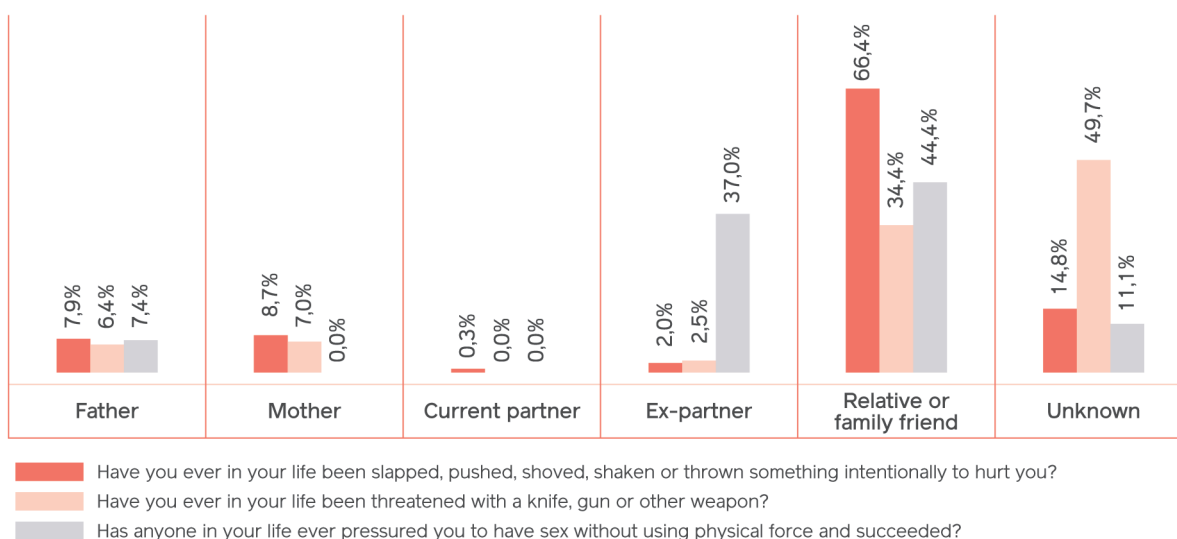
Prevalence of Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months

Regarding sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the research, a Prevalence of 5.20% was found in the total sample of adolescents. In the IJM intervention municipalities, Prevalence was 5.29%, a similar figure to that recorded in the control municipality (see Figure 4.1). When analyzing the municipalities individually, Sucre showed the highest Prevalence of sexual violence in the last year (6.49%), followed by El Alto with 4.91%, and Cochabamba with 4.94%. La Paz registered the lowest Prevalence, with 4.45% (see Figure 4.4). No statistically significant differences were detected by gender, as evidenced in Figure 4.5.

If adolescents answered affirmatively to the question about sexual coercion (“Has anyone ever pressured you to have sexual relations without using physical force and succeeded?”), they were asked who the first person was. The highest proportion of responses identified a family member or a family friend as the main perpetrator (44.4%), followed by the former partner (37.0%). The father was identified as the perpetrator in 7.4% of responses. Therefore, 88.8% of the perpetrators were close to the victims (see Figures 4.6 to 4.8).

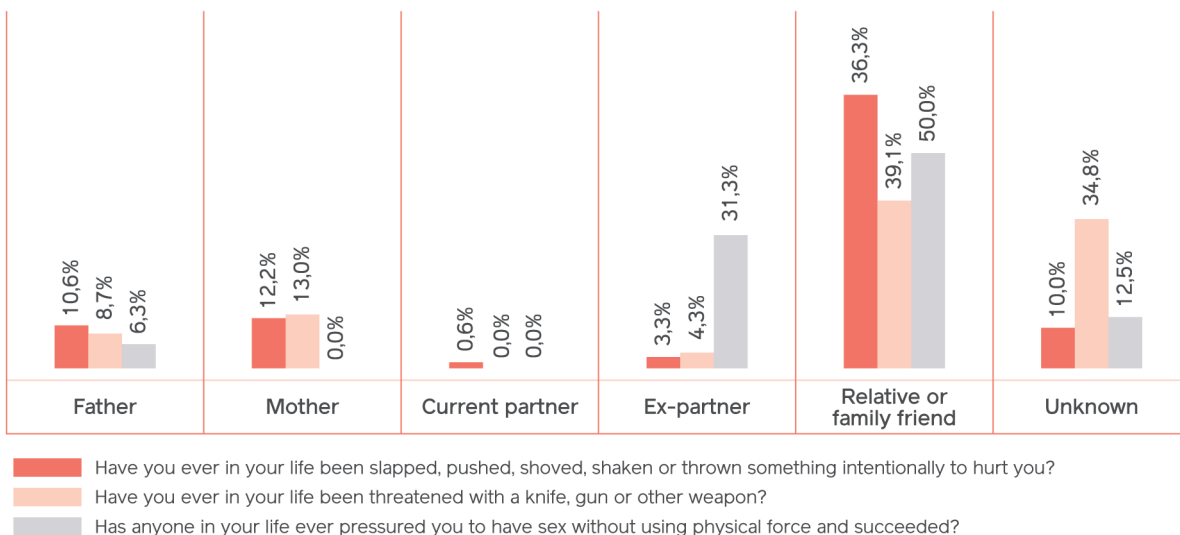
These results are consistent with those reported in previous studies on the Prevalence of this phenomenon (Abrahams et al., 2014; Devries et al., 2019; Malvaso et al., 2020; Nazar et al., 2018). Likewise, sexual coercion exerted by former partners shows notable Prevalences, particularly among male adolescents, about 45% of whom report being coerced into sexual relations. In the case of female adolescents, the Prevalence of sexual coercion by former partners is 31%. Although the data reinforces that women are the most affected group by sexual violence (Abrahams et al., 2014; Malvaso et al., 2020), the report on males is consistent with previous studies that identified partners of male adolescents as aggressors and identified patterns of bidirectional aggression (Rubio-Garay et al., 2017).

Figure 4.6. Aggressor by Type of Violence (Total Sample of Adolescents)



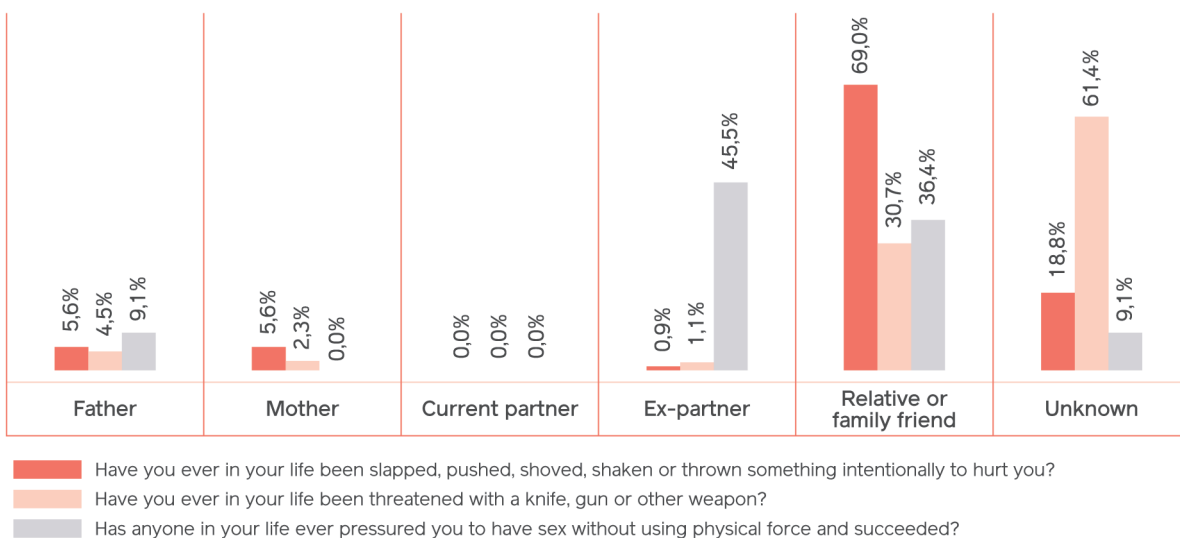
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.7. Aggressor by Type of Violence (Sample of Female Adolescents)



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.8. Aggressor by Type of Violence (Sample of Male Adolescents)



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Indicator 3: Prevalence of Physical Violence

Prevalence of Physical Violence Throughout Life

In the total sample of surveyed adolescents, 37.19% experienced physical violence at some point in their lives (see Figure 4.1). In IJM intervention municipalities, a Prevalence of 38.05% was identified, while the control municipality reached 34.64%. Focusing on specific municipalities, Sucre recorded the highest Prevalence of physical violence throughout life, at 41.05%, followed by El Alto (36.91%) and La Paz (36.7%) (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

Gender gaps indicate significant differences in the Prevalence of physical violence between females (33.93%) and males (39.09%) — $p < 0.05$ —, with higher Prevalence in males (see Table 4.3). Regarding age, Prevalence in the 15 to 17 age group (41.61%) was higher than in the 13 to 14 age group (31.33%), a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 4.3).

Additionally, adolescents were asked about the first person in their life who had slapped, pushed, shaken, or thrown something intentionally to harm them. The highest proportion responded that it was a family member or a family friend (66.4%), followed by a stranger, in second place (14.8%). Lower frequencies corresponded to the father (7.9%) and the mother (8.7%) (see Figures 4.6 to 4.8).

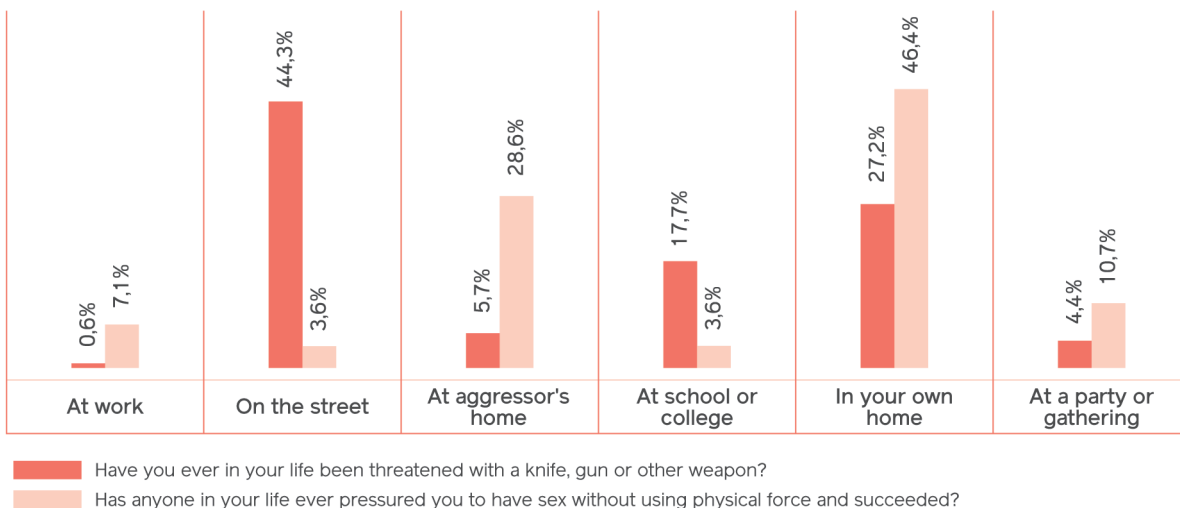
They were asked if they had ever been threatened with a knife, gun, or other weapon in their life. In case of a positive response, they were asked who the perpetrator had been, and most responded that it had been a stranger (49.7%), and secondly, a family member or friend (34.4%). The father was identified as the perpetrator in 6.4% of responses from both genders. It is worth mentioning a gap of 4.2 percentage points between the figure recorded in males (4.5%) and that of females (8.7%) (see Figures 4.6 to 4.8).

Prevalence of Physical Violence in the Last 12 Months

Regarding physical violence in the last 12 months, the results showed a Prevalence of 14.06% in the total sample of surveyed adolescents (see Figure 4.1). It was observed that the Prevalence of this violence was 15.29% in the intervention municipalities, while in the control municipality, a lower percentage was recorded: 10.42%. Regarding specific municipalities, Sucre presented the highest Prevalence of physical violence with 16.05%, followed by El Alto, with 15.97%, and La Paz, with 13.83% (see Figures 4.1 and 4.4).

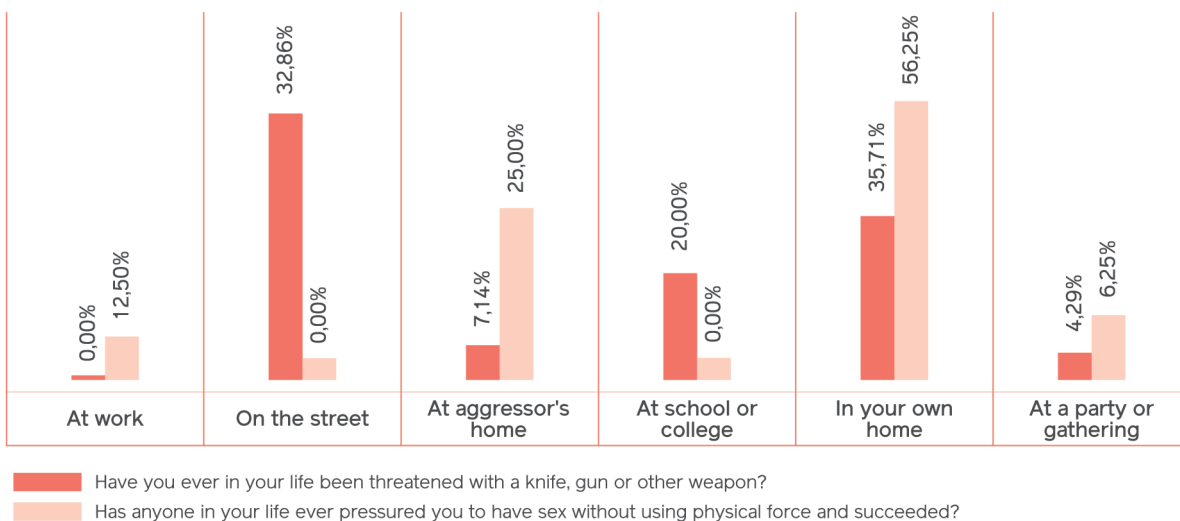
Significant differences by gender were also evidenced ($p < 0.05$): higher Prevalence in males (15.74%) than in females (11.87%) (see Table 4.3). The largest Prevalence gap between both genders was observed in the municipality of El Alto, with 7.52 percentage points; then in the municipality of Cochabamba (control) with a gap of 5.43 percentage points, and La Paz, with 2.89 percentage points (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.9. Violence by Place Where the Incident First Occurred (Total Sample of Adolescents)



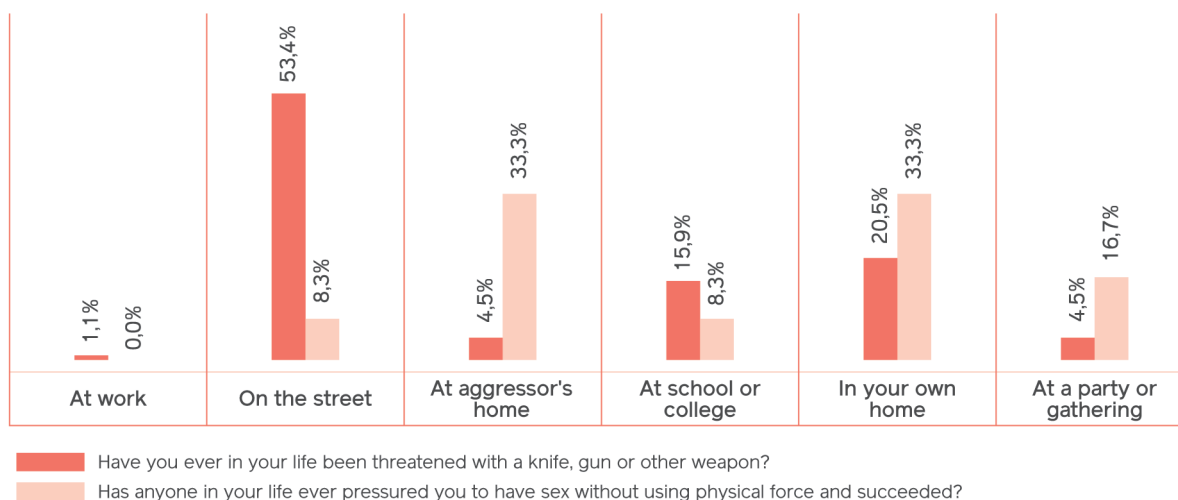
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.10. Violence by Place Where the Incident First Occurred (Sample of Female Adolescents)



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.11. Violence by Place Where the Incident First Occurred (Sample of Male Adolescents)



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Regarding violence by occurrence setting, differentiated by gender, it was identified that adolescent females suffer more physical and sexual violence in their own homes, with significant percentages: 35.71% (physical violence) and 56.25% (sexual violence) regarding the total of cases. On the other hand, adolescent males reported higher physical violence on the street, with a 53.4% occurrence. School, an environment mainly associated with this age group, is revealed as another scenario of risk of physical violence: 8% of adolescent males reported suffering sexual violence in the educational environment (see Figures 4.9 to 4.11).

This data coincides with those obtained from global and regional Prevalence studies, which found that the family environment presents the highest likelihood for adolescents to be victims of physical violence (Devries et al., 2018; Sánchez & Hidalgo, 2019). Likewise, a study in the national context, by the IICC of the Universidad Católica Boliviana “San Pablo,” and World Vision, with non-probabilistic sampling, found that children and adolescents perceived the family environment as the most dangerous (Behavioral Sciences Research Institute & World Vision Bolivia, 2019).

These findings highlight the importance of addressing physical violence in the close environments of adolescents and promoting healthy relationships within families. A consideration is that scientific evidence shows that the exposure of boys and adolescent males to physical violence increases the likelihood of them reproducing violence in adulthood and playing toxic masculine gender roles, that is, having harmful and violent behaviors, which respond to masculinity stereotypes and social pressure (Corvo & Golding, 2022; Makhanya, 2023; Wagers et al., 2021), so it is urgent to prevent this type of violence.

Indicator 4: Vulnerability to Victimization

The nature of this type of study, which addresses the vulnerability and resilience of adolescents who are victims of physical and sexual violence, indicates it is critical to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors are the internal cha-

characteristics of the individual, such as their emotional, mental, and physical capacity to manage and overcome trauma. Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, are elements external to the individual, such as social support, home security, and access to health and legal services, which can influence their recovery and well-being.

This distinction is supported by numerous studies and theories in psychology and social work. For example, Luthar et al., 2000, in their study on resilience, emphasize the importance of both internal and external factors in an individual's ability to overcome adversity. Additionally, Masten and Wright (2010) highlight how the interaction between internal and external factors plays a crucial role in the development of resilience after traumatic experiences.

The analysis of vulnerability to victimization was based on the degree of self-perceived vulnerability of adolescents to the Prevalence of physical or sexual violence. As described in the methodology chapter of this research, vulnerability to physical or sexual violence was measured through dimensions collected by the modified version of the ESO survey (International Justice Mission [IJM], 2021). These dimensions are classified into intrinsic factors —such as physical and mental well-being— that focus on the personal capacity and resilience of the individual, while extrinsic factors encompass social support, home security, economic and educational empowerment, and access to legal protection. They evaluate elements of the external environment that impact the victim's recovery and adaptation.

Assessing the vulnerability and resilience of adolescent victims of violence allows us to better understand how different aspects of their lives and personality contribute to their ability to recover and strengthen after adverse experiences. In conclusion, adolescents that are vulnerable in some of these dimensions are also more susceptible to experiencing physical or sexual violence.

Figure 4.12 illustrates the distribution of this vulnerability in the complete sample in the intervention municipalities of IJM and in the control municipality. Significant differences were identified in the vulnerability of adolescents in several key dimensions. In the “safety” dimension, which evaluates factors of stability and protection in the household environment, the highest proportion of vulnerability was recorded, at an alarming 96.46%. This indicates that most adolescents face critical challenges related to the safety and stability of their homes, which are fundamental to their recovery and overall well-being.

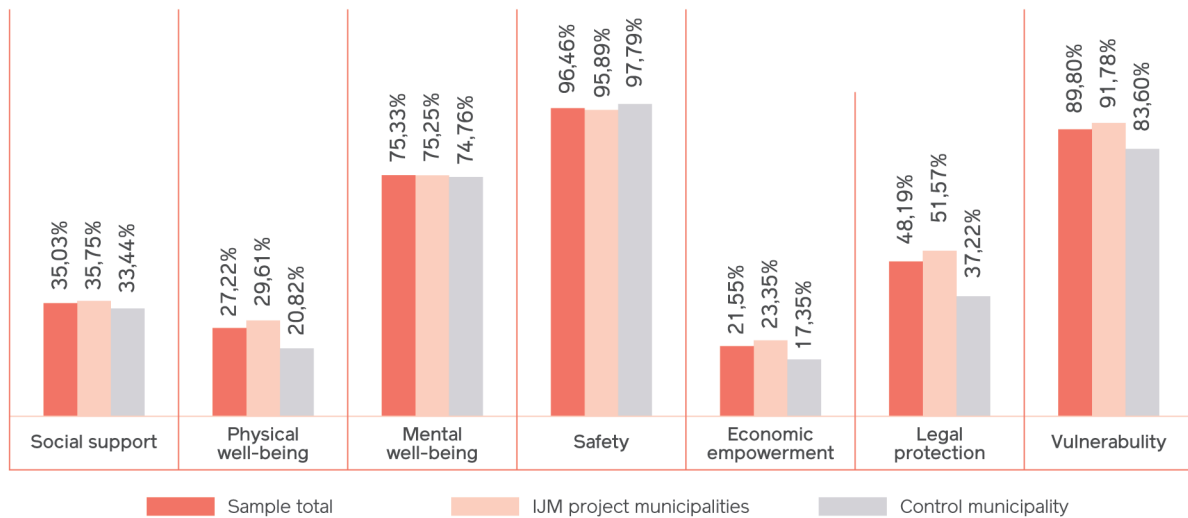
In the “mental well-being” dimension, which measures the ability of adolescents to regulate emotions and handle stressful situations, a high vulnerability was observed (75.33%). This finding highlights significant issues in emotional management and mental resilience of adolescents, which can severely impact their recovery and development.

“Legal protection” and “social support” also showed considerable levels of vulnerability, at 48.19% and 35.03%, respectively. These results suggest that many adolescents encounter barriers to accessing justice and lack emotional and factual support in their homes and communities. In contrast, lower proportions of vulnerability were observed in the dimensions of “economic and educational empowerment” (21.55%) and “physical well-being” (27.22%). Although these percentages are relatively lower, they are still concerning and require attention.

The total vulnerability index reached a notable 89.80%, suggesting that a large proportion of adolescents engage in risky behaviors, experience difficulties in engaging constructively in daily activities, and lack skills for healthy stress management. Additionally,

significant differences existed in this vulnerability index between municipalities and between domains ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 4.6). These findings underscore the urgency of interventions to improve security, mental well-being, and social and legal support for these young individuals.

Figure 4.12. Vulnerability to Victimization by Type of Dimension (Total Sample, Intervention Area, and Control Municipality)



Note: The definition of dimensions is based on the “Assessment of Survivor Outcomes” (ASO) from IJM (2018)

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Table 4.3. Prevalence of Violence in the Adolescent Sample (N = 1550) and its Connection to Sociodemographic Characteristics

	Physical or Sexual Violence			
	Throughout Life		Last 12 Months	
Municipality	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
El Alto	156 (39,80)	NS	70 (17,86)	NS
La Paz	146 (38,02)	-	62 (16,15)	-
Sucre	170 (43,93)	-	73 (18,86)	-
Cochabamba	146 (37,73)	-	52 (13,44)	-
Intervention Area				
Intervention Municipalities:	472 (40,58)	NS	205 (17,63)	NS
Control Municipality	146 (37,73)	-	52 (13,44)	-
Age Groups in Years				
13 a 14	265 (34,46)	<0,000	112 (14,56)	<0,05
15 a 17	353 (45,19)	-	145 (18,55)	-
Gender				
Male	308 (39,09)	NS	138 (17,80)	NS
Female	310 (33,93)	-	119 (15,35)	-
	Physical Violence			
	Throughout Life		Last 12 Months	
Age Groups in Years	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
13 a 14	241 (31,33)	<0,000	103 (13,39)	NS
15 a 17	325 (41,61)	-	111 (14,21)	-
Gender				
Male	303 (39,09)	<0,05	122 (15,74)	<0,05
Female	263 (33,93)	-	92 (11,87)	-

Age Groups in Years	Sexual Violence			
	Throughout Life		Last 12 Months	
	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
13 a 14	66 (7,95)	<0,001	24 (3,12)	<0,000
15 a 17	111 (12,52)	-	56 (7,17)	-
Gender				
Male	34 (4,20)	<0,000	34 (4,38)	NS
Female	46 (5,60)	-	46 (5,93)	-

Note: p = p-value of the Chi-squared test; NS = not significant

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Indicator 5: Vulnerability to Experiencing Re-victimization

Based on the estimates of the dimensions of the preceding indicator, vulnerability to experiencing new victimization was calculated. The results showed that, of the total sample, 84.38% of the adolescents who were victims of physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives are susceptible to new victimization. This data suggests that a previous experience of violence significantly increases the likelihood of becoming a victim again. This proportion is highest in the municipality of La Paz (91.85%), followed by El Alto (87.6%). Sucre was the municipality with the lowest proportion (79.8%). These differences were significant ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Ratio of Adolescents Victims of Physical or Sexual Violence Vulnerable to Re-victimization by Municipality

Vulnerability	Sucre		El Alto		La Paz		Cochabamba		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Adolescent women and vulnerable men	103	79,8	120	87,6	121	91,85	99	79,8	443	84,38

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

IV.II.III. Violence Against Adult Women Aged 18 or Older

This section focuses on physical and sexual violence against women aged 18 and older and their vulnerability to victimization. It provides data on this issue through five key indicators and analyzes the Prevalence of these types of violence, both throughout the lives of these women and in the last 12 months prior to the research. The results are based on comparisons between IJM intervention municipalities and a control municipality, and by age groups, exploring statistically significant differences.

Indicator 1: Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence

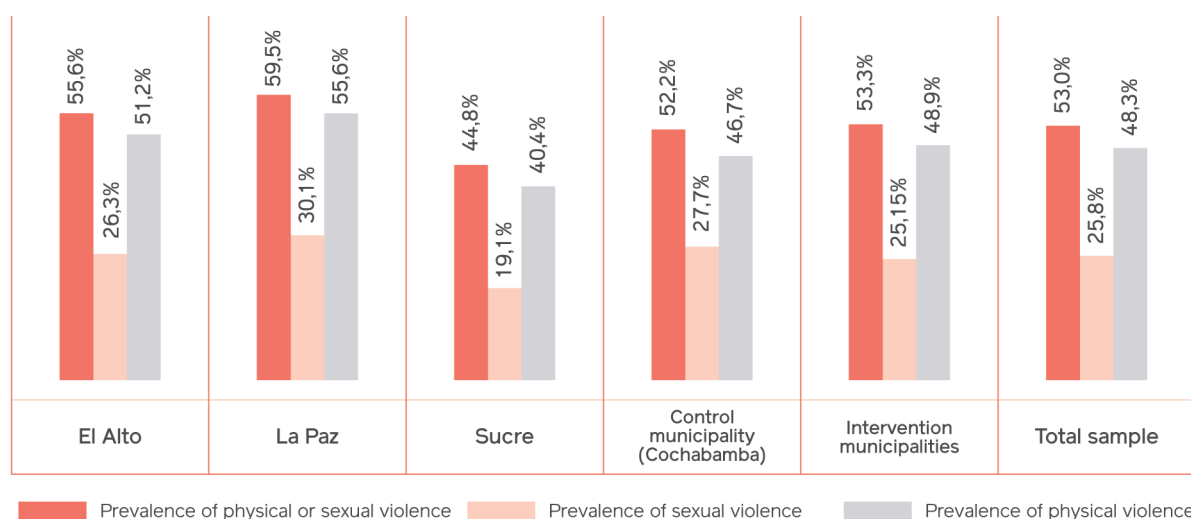
Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence Throughout Life

The Prevalence of physical or sexual violence throughout life among the surveyed women was 53.3% (Figure 4.13). This Prevalence is higher than the global estimate: around 30% of women worldwide were victims of physical or sexual violence by their partner or third parties.

In the intervention area, this Prevalence was similar to that of the control municipality: 53.30% and 52.22%, respectively. When analyzing the data by municipality, significant differences were observed between each one ($p < 0.05$). La Paz presented the highest Prevalence with 59.48%, followed by El Alto with 55.61%. The lowest Prevalence was in Sucre, with 44.85% (see Figure 4.13).

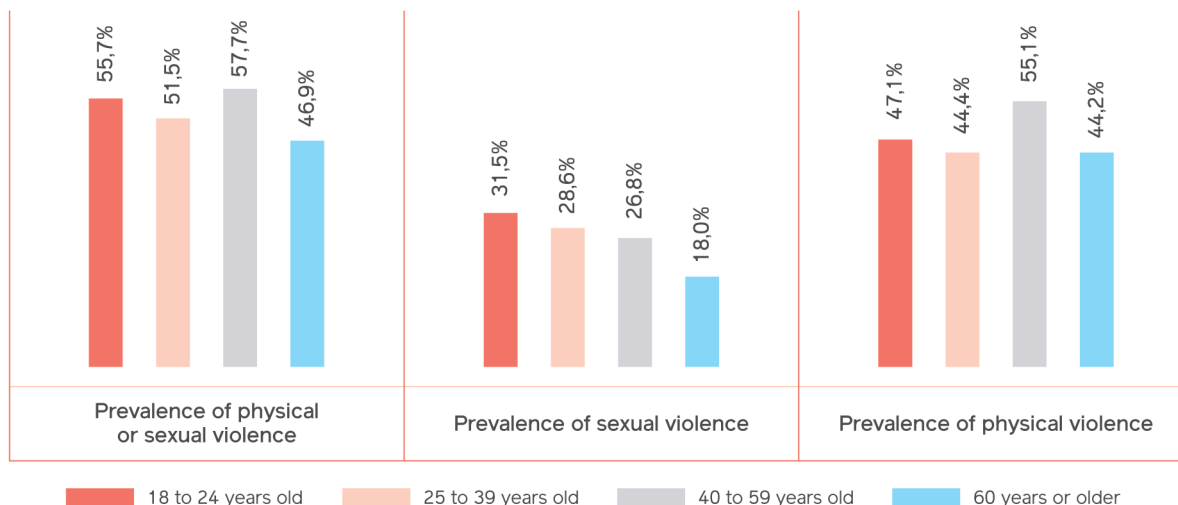
In the Prevalence of physical or sexual violence by age, significant differences were observed ($p < 0.05$). Women aged 18 to 24 had the highest Prevalence, at 55.7%. Women aged 25 to 39 also reported a Prevalence of 51.5%. On the other hand, women aged 40 to 59 had a Prevalence of 57.7%, and those over 60 had a slightly lower Prevalence, with values of 46.9% (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.13. Prevalence of Violence Against Women Throughout Life by Type and Municipality



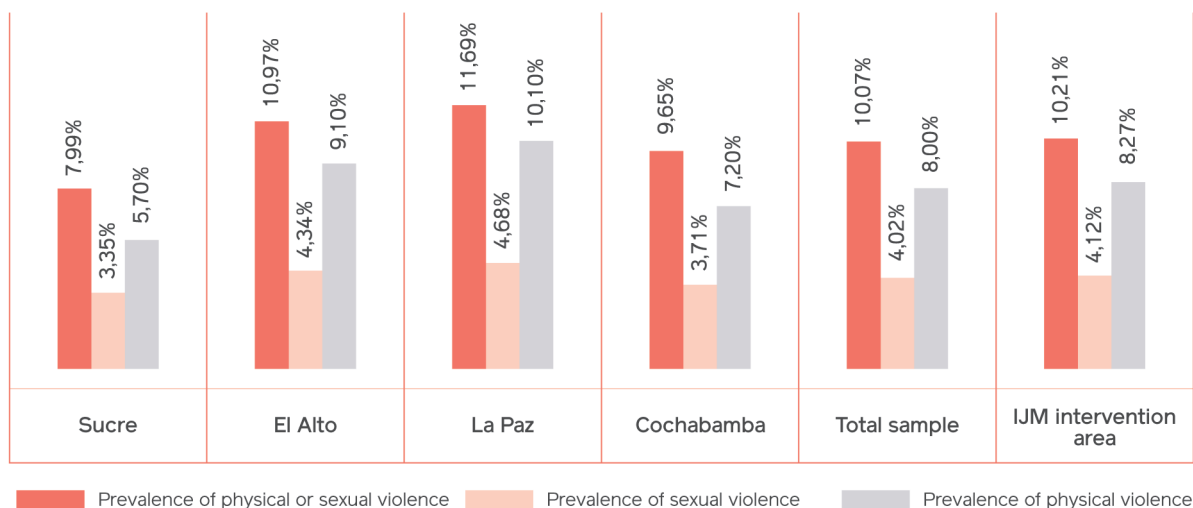
Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.14. Prevalence of Violence Against Adult Women Throughout Life by Age Group



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Figure 4.15. Prevalence of Violence Against Adult Women in the Last 12 Months by Municipality



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

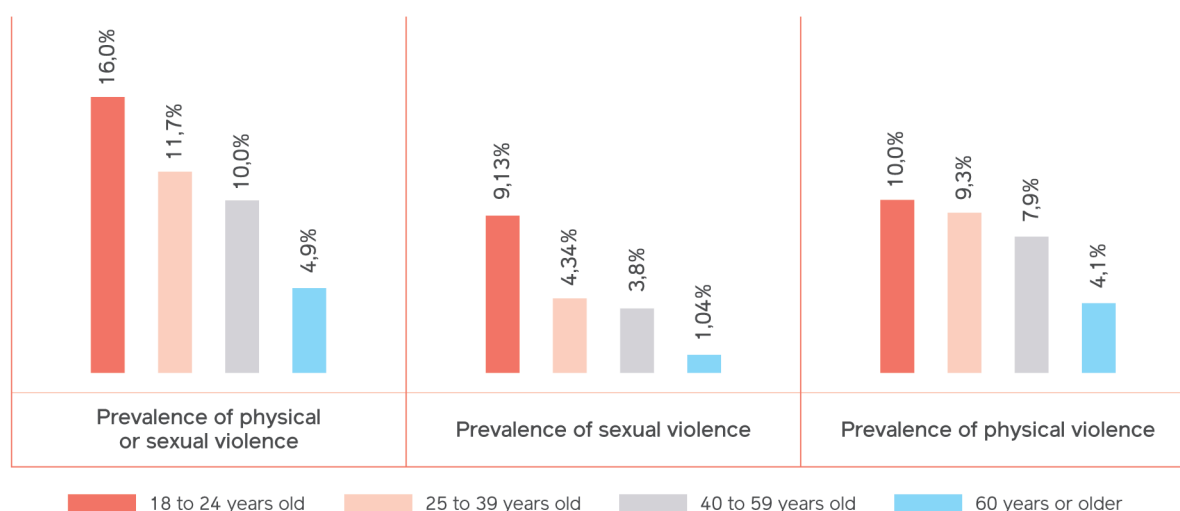
Prevalence of Physical or Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months

The Prevalence of physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months among women was 10.09%. In the intervention municipalities, this Prevalence was 10.21%, without a statistically significant difference compared to the control municipality (9.65%). No statistically significant differences were observed between the data from each municipality (see Table 4.5).

In the analysis, statistically significant differences were observed in the Prevalence by age groups ($p < 0.05$). In the group of women aged 18 to 24, a Prevalence of 15.98% was recorded, while in the segment of 25 to 39 years, the figure decreased to 11.67%. In the group of 40 to 59 years, it was even lower (10.01%), and the lowest Prevalence was recorded at 4.94% in women aged 60 or more (see Table 4.5).

The Prevalence of physical or sexual violence against women throughout life and in the last 12 months is high. They are above global estimates: between 27% and 30% of women aged 15 to 49 who experienced some form of physical, sexual, or partner violence throughout their lives (World Health Organization, 2021; WHO 2021a, 2021b). Updated data until 2018 indicates that, in the last 12 months, 13% of women in that age range have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence by their partner or spouse (WHO, 2021c).

Figure 4.16. Prevalence of Violence Against Adult Women in the Last 12 Months by Age Group



Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Indicator 2: Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Prevalence of Sexual Violence Throughout Life

The Prevalence of sexual violence throughout life in adult women was 25.8%, similar to that of the intervention municipalities (25.15%). In Sucre, it was estimated that 19.10% of women were victims of sexual violence, while in El Alto the percentage increased to 26.30%. The highest Prevalence rates were found in La Paz (30.1%) and in the control municipality, with 27.7% (see Figure 4.13).

The results also provide information on the Prevalence of sexual violence in different age groups, with significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In the group aged 18 to 24, the Prevalence was 31.50%; in the group aged 25 to 39, it was 28.60%; in the group aged 40 to 59, it was 26.84%, and in the group of women aged 60 or older, it was 18.00% (see Figure 4.15 and Table 4.5).

Prevalence of Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months

The Prevalence of sexual violence in the last 12 months among adult women was 4.02% in the total sample and 4.12% in the IJM intervention area. The lowest Prevalence was recorded in Sucre (3.35%), and the highest Prevalence rates were in La Paz (4.68%) and El Alto (4.34%). In the control municipality, a Prevalence of 3.71% was reported (see Figure 4.15).

Regarding the Prevalence of sexual violence, a decreasing trend is again observed as the age of women increases, with statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In the 18 to 24 age group, the Prevalence of sexual violence is 9.13%; in the 25 to 39 age group, it decreases to 4.34%; in the 40 to 59 age group, it further decreases to 3.80%; and in the group of women aged 60 or older, the lowest Prevalence of sexual violence was recorded: 1.04% (see Figures 4.16 and Table 4.5).

Indicator 3: Prevalence of Physical Violence

Prevalence of Physical Violence Throughout Life

The Prevalence of physical violence throughout life in the surveyed adult female population was 48.34% (see Figure 4.13). This figure is comparable to the data from the EPCVcM (Prevalence and Characteristics Survey of Violence against Women), which estimated the Prevalence of physical violence at 50.3% (INE, 2017). Similar Prevalence was observed in the intervention municipalities, at 48.93%. La Paz municipality presented the highest Prevalence (55.60%), followed by El Alto (51.20%), and Sucre (40.40%). Cochabamba municipality showed a Prevalence of 46.70% (see Table 4.13).

The Prevalence of physical violence was examined in different age groups without finding statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In the 18 to 24 age group, a Prevalence of 47.19% was recorded; in the 25 to 39 age group, 44.47%; in the 40 to 59 age group, 55.17%; and in the group of women aged 60 or over, the lowest Prevalence of physical violence was recorded, at 44.23% (see Figure 4.14 and Table 4.5).

Prevalence of Physical Violence in the Last 12 Months

The Prevalence of physical violence in the last twelve months was 8.0% in the total sample of adult women. In the IJM project area, a slightly higher Prevalence was observed: 8.27%, while in the control municipality, Cochabamba, it was lower: 7.20%. The municipality with the highest Prevalence was La Paz, at 10.10%, followed by El Alto (9.12%), and Cochabamba (7.20%). The lowest Prevalence was found in Sucre, at 5.70% (see Figure 4.15).

With the breakdown of violence into specific categories, it was found that the Prevalence of physical violence also decreases as women's age increases, with statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In the 18 to 24 age group, the Prevalence of physical violence was 10.04%; in the 25 to 39 age group, it was 9.38%; in the 40 to 59 age group, it was 16.40%; and in the group of women aged 60 or over, the lowest Prevalence of physical violence was recorded, at 4.16% (see Figure 4.16 and Table 4.5).

Indicator 5: Vulnerability to Victimization

The analysis of vulnerability and resilience in women aged 18 and over, victims of physical and sexual violence, followed a measurement similar to that described in the section

on adolescents. As with them, the dimensions corresponded to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors refer to internal characteristics of the woman, such as her emotional, mental, and physical capacity to face and overcome trauma. On the other hand, extrinsic factors encompass elements of the environment, such as social support, home security, and access to health services and legal assistance.

Following the findings of previous studies, such as those of Luthar et al. (2000) and Masten and Wright (2010), this analysis also highlights the importance of the interaction between these two types of factors in the resilience and recovery of women after traumatic experiences. It is argued that greater vulnerability in either of these dimensions could increase women's propensity to suffer physical or sexual violence. Figure 4.17 shows the distribution of vulnerability to victimization in the total sample, both in IJM intervention municipalities and in the control municipality. Differences between the proportions of the domains were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 4.6).

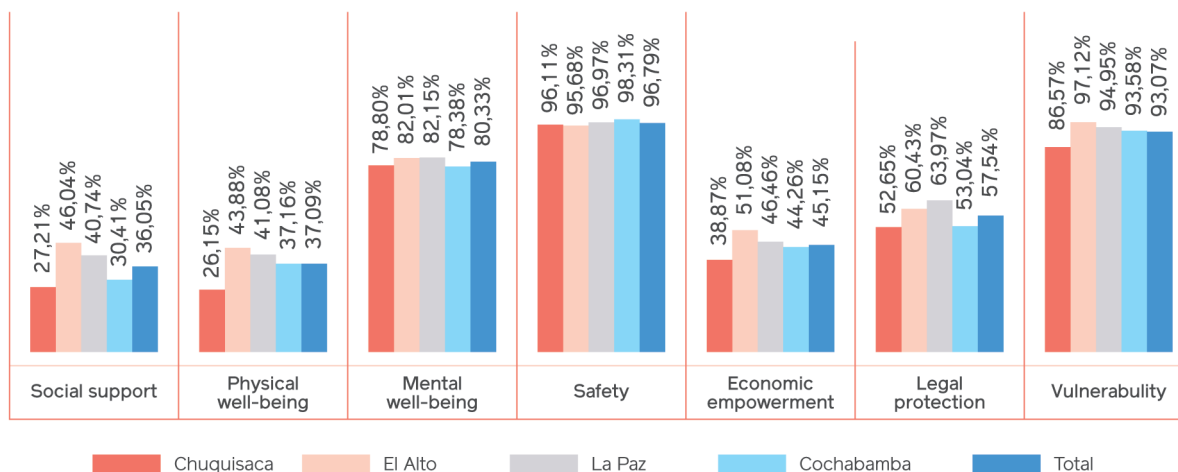
The security dimension, with a vulnerability of 96.79%, stands out as the main concern for these women. This high percentage suggests an alarming Prevalence of insecurity in homes and communities, which could contribute to a constant sense of threat and fear. Insecurity in these aspects is crucial, as it directly affects their well-being and ability to recover and rebuild their lives in a safe environment.

Vulnerability in mental well-being, with 80.33% of women, reflects the deep emotional and psychological scars left by violence, including difficulty in managing emotions and behavior. Given this serious situation, sustainable psychological and therapeutic support services are urgently needed.

Legal protection and economic empowerment, with vulnerabilities of 57.54% and 45.15%, respectively, are also critical areas. This data indicates significant barriers to accessing justice and achieving independent economic capacity. Lack of access to adequate legal resources and limited economic autonomy can perpetuate cycles of vulnerability and Reliance, preventing these women from defending their rights and improving their living conditions.

The assessment of vulnerability and resilience in women aged 18 and over, victims of physical and sexual violence, yields critical findings in various dimensions. These results reflect the complex and multifaceted realities faced by these women; they highlight not only their personal challenges but also the areas in which interventions and policies should be most effective. These findings call for a holistic and gender-sensitive approach to assisting victims of violence.

Figure 4.17. Vulnerability to Victimization of Adult Women, According to Dimension (Total Sample, Intervention Municipalities, and Control Municipality)



Note: The definition of dimensions is based on the “Assessment of Survivor Outcomes” (ASO) by IJM (2018)

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Table 4.5. Prevalence of Violence in the Sample of Women (N = 1559) and its Connection to Sociodemographic Characteristics

Municipality	Physical or Sexual Violence			
	Throughout Life		Last 12 Months	
	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
El Alto	218 (55,61)	<0,000	43 (10,97)	NS
La Paz	229 (59,48)	-	45 (11,69)	-
Sucre	174 (44,84)	-	31 (7,99)	-
Cochabamba	211 (52,22)	-	39 (9,65)	-
Intervention Area				
Intervention Municipalities:	621 (53,30)	NS	119 (10,21)	NS
Control Municipality	211 (52,22)	-	39 (9,65)	-
Age Groups in Years				
18 to 24	122 (55,70)	<0,001	59 (15,98)	<0,000
25 to 39	225 (51,48)	-	93 (11,67)	-

40 to 59	305 (57,65)	-	82 (10,01)	-
60 or more	180 (46,87)	-	25 (4,94)	-
Physical Violence				
Throughout Life		Last 12 Months		
Age Groups in Years	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
18 to 24	101 (47,19)	<0,001	22 (10,04)	<0,000
25 to 39	189 (44,47)	-	41 (9,38)	-
40 to 59	277 (55,17)	-	42 (16,40)	-
60 or more	165 (44,23)	-	16 (4,16)	-
Sexual Violence				
Throughout Life		Last 12 Months		
Age Groups in Years	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
18 to 24	69 (31,50)	<0,000	50 (9,13)	<0,000
25 to 39	125 (28,60)	-	64 (4,34)	-
40 to 59	142 (26,84)	-	53 (3,80)	-
60 or more	69 (18,0)	-	10 (1,04)	-

Note: NS = not significant; p-value from the Chi-squared test

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Table 4.6. Prevalence of Violence in the Sample of Adolescents (N = 1550) and Women (N = 1559) and its Connection to Sociodemographic Characteristics

Municipality	Vulnerability Throughout Life			
	Adolescents		Women	
	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
El Alto	290 (91,77)	<0,000	270 (97,12)	<0,000
La Paz	309 (94,50)	-	282 (94,94)	-
Sucre	228 (89,06)	-	245 (86,57)	-
Cochabamba	265 (83,60)	-	277 (93,58)	-

Domains				
Social Support	426 (35,03)	<0,000	416 (36,05)	<0,000
Physical Well-being	331 (27,22)	-	428 (37,09)	-
Mental Well-being	916 (75,33)	-	927 (80,33)	-
Security	1173 (96,46)	-	1117 (96,79)	-
Economic Empowerment	262 (21,55)	-	521 (45,15)	-
Legal Protection	586 (48,19)	-	664 (57,54)	-

Note: *p*-value from the Chi-squared test

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

Indicator 6: Vulnerability to Experiencing Re-victimization

Based on the foregoing estimation, vulnerability to experiencing re-victimization was calculated. The results show that, in the total sample, 54.6% of adult women who were victims of violence (physical or sexual) throughout their lives are vulnerable to re-victimization. This proportion registered its highest peak in the municipality of La Paz: 64.0%, and the lowest in Sucre: 44.9% (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Total Ratio of Vulnerability in Adult Women Victims of Violence Throughout Their Lives by Municipality

Vulnerability	Sucre		El Alto		La Paz		Cochabamba		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Vulnerable	111	44,93	145	56,42	176	64,00	142	52,20	574	54,61

Source: Own elaboration based on EPDVV data

IV.III.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to detail the Prevalence of physical and sexual violence among adolescents aged 13 to 17, as well as among adult women aged 18 and older, in the intervention municipalities of IJM (Sucre, La Paz, El Alto) and in Cochabamba, as the control municipality. The following are the main conclusions of the study.

Regarding the Most Relevant Findings in Adolescents

Alarming Prevalence of Violence: Throughout their lives, 40% of adolescents experienced some form of violence, physical or sexual. When considering the last 12 months prior to the research, the figure was 16.58%. Breaking down violence by type, sexual violence affected 11.43% of adolescents throughout their lives, and 5.20% in the last 12 months. Regarding physical violence, 37.19% of adolescents suffered it throughout their lives, and in the last 12 months, 14.06%.

Age Differences: It is noteworthy that the Prevalence of physical or sexual violence in the last twelve months and throughout life is higher in adolescents aged 15 to 17 years compared to those aged 13 to 14 years.

Gender Differences: The Prevalence of physical or sexual violence was similar between women and men. However, statistically significant gaps were observed in the Prevalence of sexual violence between males and females ($p < 0.05$), resulting in higher rates in women in all IJM intervention municipalities. Regarding physical violence, gender gaps were significant, both throughout life and in the last 12 months. Men presented the highest Prevalences in all IJM intervention municipalities.

Perpetrators and Setting Where Violence Occurs: It was identified that in almost half of the cases of sexual violence, the perpetrator is a family member or a close friend of the family (44.4%). In second place is the former partner: 37% of cases. The home itself is the highest-risk space for sexual violence for both women and men (56.2% and 33.3%, respectively). School or university are also identified as environments where adolescents are particularly susceptible to experiencing physical violence: 20.0% and 15.9%, respectively.

Vulnerability to Experiencing Physical or Sexual Violence: Assessing the vulnerability and resilience of adolescent victims of violence across different dimensions of intrinsic and extrinsic factors provides deeper insights into how various aspects of their lives and personalities contribute to their capacity to recover from adverse experiences. The dimension of “security,” evaluating the stability and protection of the residential environment and the risk of experiencing sexual violence, exhibited the highest proportion of vulnerability, at a concerning 96.46%. In the “mental well-being” dimension, which measures adolescents’ ability to regulate emotions and manage stressful situations, a high vulnerability of 75.33% was observed. On the other hand, in terms of legal protection and social support, there are also considerable levels of vulnerability: 48.19% and 35.0%, respectively.

Risk and prevention: It should be noted that the prior experience of physical or sexual violence significantly increases the risk of experiencing violence again in the future for 84.38% of adolescents. This proportion was highest in the municipality of La Paz: 91.85%, followed by El Alto: 87.6%. Sucre had the lowest proportion: 79.8%. These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Regarding the Key Findings in Adult Women:

Alarming Prevalence of Violence: In the past year, approximately 10.07% of adult women, and over half, 53.0%, reported experiencing it at some point in their lives. Regarding physical violence, in the last year, 8.0% of women reported experiencing it. Over their lifetime, the number increases to 48.3%.

Age Differences: In all age groups, the Prevalence of different types of violence remains consistent when considering the past twelve months, with the exception of sexual violence, which shows a decrease as women age. In contrast, Prevalence of violence over a lifetime follows a downward trend with increasing age; women aged 18 to 24 years have the highest Prevalence, while those aged 60 and older report the lowest Prevalence.

Vulnerability to Suffer Physical or Sexual Violence: Domains with the highest vulnerability were security (96.79%), referring to protection and absence of abuse and threats, the mental well-being dimension (80.33%), followed by legal protection (57.54%), and economic empowerment (45.15%). These differences by domain were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Risk and Prevention: Over half of women, 54.6%, who were victims of violence are at risk of experiencing it again.

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CHAPTER V

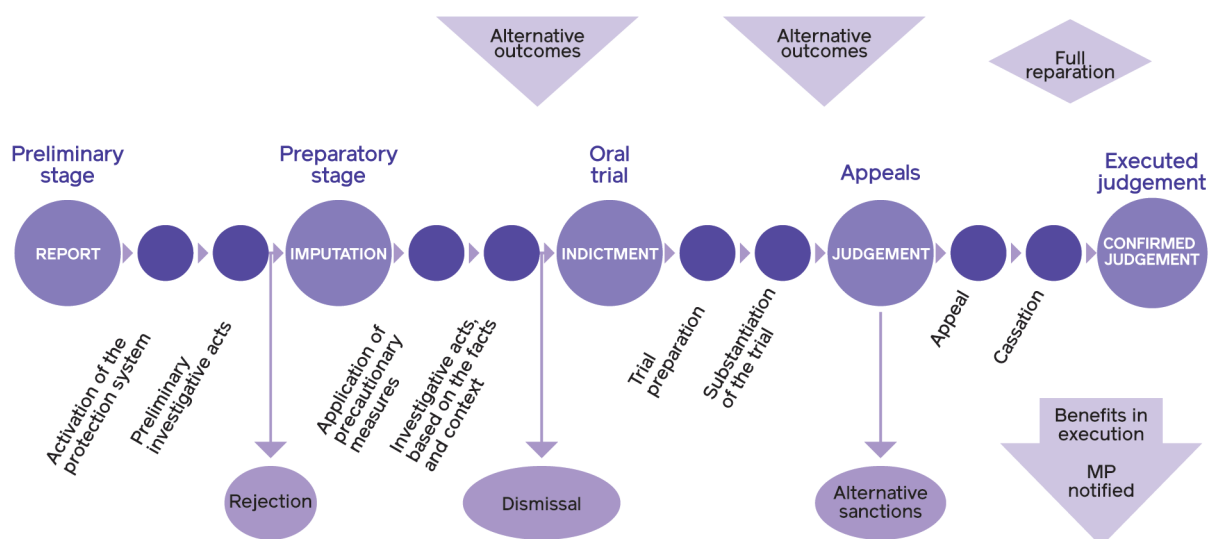
PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM IN CASES OF VAWC

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V.I. INTRODUCTION

The Performance of the Public Justice System (PJS) is reflected in its ability to provide a prompt and timely response, to girls, boys, adolescents, and women victims of violence, and to individuals accused in criminal proceedings of this type. Understanding its Performance allows for the improvement of the State's assistance to victims, identifying its weaknesses and strengths at each stage. Assisting victims in the Plurinational State of Bolivia involves passing through four stages of the criminal process: 1) Preliminary, 2) Preparatory, 3) Oral Trial, and 4) Recursive Stage. It is important to note that, from the preparatory stage until before the sentence is issued in the oral trial, the accused can request an abbreviated procedure as an alternative to the common procedure (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Criminal Process Flowchart



There are several action strategies to be implemented during the stages of the process. Their modes and times are defined by the Criminal Procedure Code (CPP; 2010). The process can start in the following ways: Through preventive police intervention; reporting the violent incident to the Public Prosecutor's Office, and reporting to the Special Force for the Fight Against Violence (FELCV). It culminates when an enforceable sentence is obtained (Articles 364 and 365 of the CPP). Throughout this process, prosecutors, investigators, judges, and protective and anti-violence agencies must act under the international standard of Enhanced Due Diligence. Similarly, in cases where the victims are girls, boys, or adolescents, the legal principle of the Best Interest of the Child must always be considered.

Ideally, to safeguard the safety of the parties involved and ensure timely access to justice, the CPP provides, in its Article 133, that the maximum duration of this process does not exceed 3 years from the first procedural act (the complaint). However, according to the study on the "Performance of the Bolivian Justice System," published by IJM in 2018, the average duration time of a case is three years and four months, reaching up to five years and one month, the most delayed process, and one year and 11 less the one resolved the fastest.

Delays in assisting victims of violence are usually attributed mainly to the workload faced by the PJS, due to the lack of resources and trained judicial personnel. This shortage negatively impacts the effectiveness of process development, as reported by Fundación Construir, in its 2023 report, supported by data from the Attorney General's Office in 2018.

The shortage in resources and personnel not only affects the development of adequate investigations but also leads to delays in obtaining crucial evidence to conduct trials. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of infrastructure and insufficient use of adequate technology in the execution of judicial procedures, as pointed out in the IJM Report (2018).

Furthermore, although the Judicial Registration System (SIREJ) was implemented in 2016 and Justicia Libre (JL) in 2020, these platforms have not yet managed to integrate and keep all data updated, preventing access to reliable information that allows for efficient monitoring of cases during PJS judicial processes. The lack of an alert system for deadline control and the absence of control mechanisms to assess the quality-of-care forces officials and parties to duplicate efforts to optimize time in process development (Arce, H., 2017).

Finally, while the Bolivian CPP prohibits revictimization (Art. 393), it remains a weakness that the justice system has yet to resolve (Ciudadanía y Alianza Libres sin Violencia, 2018). Interaction with the PJS can be a detrimental experience for the individual, as he/she is susceptible to being revictimized. If the process is too long, victims may experience additional stress or be at greater risk of exposing their identity, which can lead to social stigma and shame. Consequently, Confidence in the system is fragile and can exacerbate the trauma and existing fear in victims. Whereas, if interactions are established under the Trauma-Informed Care approach, actively avoiding revictimization in institutional processes and individual practices of persons or those exposed to violence (SAMSHA, 2014), these can become an opportunity to build Confidence in the system and in the healing of victims (IJM, 2020).

Research Questions

In this sense, case resolution, process duration, and attention to victims are aspects that reflect the Performance of the PJS in cases of violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women. This study seeks to be the baseline to identify:

- How does the PJS respond to reported cases at each stage of the procedural process?
- How are the procedural times established by law met in each of its stages?
- How are victims treated when they interact with the Justice System and its institutions?

Study Objective

To answer these questions, the objective of this chapter is to describe the Performance of the PJS in the attention to and resolution of cases of violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women, during the period between 2018 and 2021, through the progress analysis, timeliness, and quality of service in VAWC cases; specifically in cases of physical and sexual violence, where:

- a) Progress is understood as the advancement of the case until a sentence is reached.
- b) Timeliness is the duration of each stage within the general process, based on the deadlines established by the CPP.

- c) Quality is the set of actions provided in the criminal process to provide timely assistance and ensure safety to victims during the case's development.

Additionally, the characteristics of the attention and interactions of officials and service providers who have direct contact with VAWC victims within the PJS will be detailed. This analysis aims to investigate the implementation of the Trauma-Informed Care approach in these interactions.

To achieve this, two data collection strategies were used to describe the Performance of the PJS: the first to gather information from the Judicial Control Notebooks (CCJ), and the second to assess the use of the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approach by officials and social service providers in the care of violence victims; through a survey with open and closed questions. We remind the reader that for more information, they can review the methodology section.

The results obtained in the research are described below, according to each of the dimensions of progress, timeliness, and quality; followed by the results provided by the TIC survey. Finally, the chapter's conclusions are presented. We trust that the results will provide an opportunity to reflect on the process a violence victim goes through to confront the accused, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Public Justice System (PJS), and understand the challenge the State faces in improving the system's Performance in assisting VAWC victims, strengthening the identified advances and resolving pending challenges.

V.II. RESULTS

Below are the results that outline the Performance of the PJS, based on the data collected from the CCJ and the surveys of professionals on the implementation of the TIC approach. First, we will detail the characteristics of all reviewed cases (nc), to then analyze the categories of progress, timeliness, and quality, referring, as appropriate, to the number of cases (nc); the number of victims (nv); and the number of accused (ns); understanding that the latter refers to the accused individuals (whose designation may change throughout the process stages, but for this study, they will be referred to as accused). Lastly, we present the results derived from the measurement of TIC application in the care of VAWC victims.

V.II.I. Results of the Review of Jurisdictional Control Notebooks

1. Descriptive Characteristics of Jurisdictional Control Notebooks

We had a sample of 321 CCJs for the intervention municipalities and 83 for the control municipality. (For more information, see the chapter on Methodology). Each CCJ may contain information about more than one accused and/or more than one victim, allowing for the opening of different timelines for each of them and, therefore, reflecting differentiated responses from PJS. In this context, Table 5.1. presents the number of CCJs (nc) analyzed, as well as the number of victims (nv) and number of accused (ns) considered in the indicator calculations.

Table 5.1. Number of CCJ Notebooks, Victims, and Accused Reviewed for the 2018-2021 Period

	Total	VAW	VAC	NI
CCJ Number (nc)	321	130	35	156
Number of Victims (nv)	336	133	41	162
Number of Accused (ns)	348	144	40	164

NI: Not identified

a. Information about the Victims

Out of the 321 CCJs, 308 involved a single victim, 11 involved two victims, and 2 referred to three; totaling 336 violence victims (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Number of Victims per CCJ Reviewed

Number of Victims per Case	Reviewed CCJ Cases Nc=321	% Cases	Total Number of Victims per Case Nv=336	% Victims per Case
1	308	96	308	91.7
2	11	3.4	22	6.5
3	2	0.6	6	1.8
Total	321	100 %	336	100 %

Out of the 336 identified victims in the reviewed cases (Table 5.3), 162 records did not have information on the victim's age, resulting in a 48.2% gap regarding this information. It was also observed that the majority of violent incidents occurred when the victim was between 25 and 39 years old: 21.7% (nv=73), followed by the group of minors, with 12.3% (nv=41) of cases.

Table 5.3. Registry of Violence Victims by Age (nv)

Victim's Age at the Time of the Incident	Frequency of Total Sample Cases (nv= 336)	Percentage of Total Sample Cases (nv=336)	Percentage of Cases with Age Data (nv=174)
Not Identified	162	48,2	-
3 to 5 years	3	0,9	1,7
6 to 12 years	12	3,6	6,9
13 to 14 years	11	3,3	6,3
15 to 17 years	15	4,5	8,6
18 to 24 years	26	7,7	14,9
25 to 39 years	73	21,7	42
40 to 59 years	29	8,6	16,7
Over 60 years old	5	1,5	2,9

Regarding the distribution of data according to the victim's age, it is important to note that only 20% of them corresponded to situations of violence against children. This is relevant considering that Bolivia has the highest incidence of cases against this population (IICC and Celam, 2022).

In this context, it is imperative to consider that although the law does not limit the capacity of a child or adolescent to file a complaint and follow a legal process, the likelihood of them doing so is virtually nil. In practice, they are still required to be accompanied by an adult, and carrying out a process requires a significant amount of time and resources, which children and adolescents usually do not have. Additionally, it is crucial to consider that evidence from several studies indicates that the perpetrator is usually someone close to the victim —such as a family member— making it difficult to act due to fear of immediate retaliation after filing the complaint.

b. Information about the Accused (ns)

In 16 out of the 321 CCJs, multiple accused were found (ns), totaling 348 accused (ns), as detailed in Table 5.4 below:

Table 5.4. Number of Accused (ns) per Case

Number of Accused per Case (ns)	Total Cases	Cases in %	Total Accused (ns)	Total Accused (ns) in %
1	305	95	305	87.6
2	10	3.1	20	5.7
3	4	1.2	12	3.4
4	1	0.3	4	1.1
7	1	0.3	7	2
Total	321	100%	348	100%

Regarding the age distribution of the accused (Table 5.5.), it is noteworthy that no information was found in 60.9% of cases. From the remaining percentage (38.9%), it was observed that 13.8% of the accused were between 18 and 36 years old, and 14.1% were aged between 37 and 45.

Table 5.5. Distribution of Accused by Age (ns=136)

Age of the Accused at the Time of the Incident	Frequency of Total Sample Cases (ns=348)	Percentage of Total Sample Cases (ns=348)	Valid Percentage (ns=136)
Not Identified	212	60.9	-
19 to 27	21	6.0	15.4
28 to 36	49	13.8	36
37 to 45	40	14.1	29.4
46 to 56	18	5.2	13.2
58 to 73	8	2.3	5.9
Total	348	100	100

Table 5.6. summarizes the characteristics of the place where the violent incident occurred, as well as the relationship between the victim and the accused. It is noteworthy that in 54.4% of the assaults (199 cases), the aggression was committed by a member of the nuclear family and took place at the victim's home, followed by other scenarios such as the street, university, or school.

Table 5.6. Relationship Between the Victim and the Accused and the Place of the Incident

Place where the Assault Occurred	Nuclear Family	Extended Family	Victim's Friend	Family Friend	Other	Not Identified
Victim's Home	199	1	5	2	15	2
University, School, or Institute	15	2	4	4	7	1
Perpetrator's Home	0	0	0	0	1	0
On the Street	32	0	1	3	13	1
At Work	3	0	0	0	0	0
At a Party or Gathering	4	0	0	1	0	1
Another Place	15	0	0	0	8	6
Total	268	3	10	10	44	31

Note: Each reported aggression could have occurred in more than one location

2. Contextualization of the Complaint

It is important to examine the time interval elapsed from the first incident of violence until the date the complaint is filed, as this moment marks a significant milestone for the victim, who, for some reason, demonstrates his/her strength to confront their aggressor (Gutiérrez, Steinberg, Capella, 2016). Generally, while in 101 out of 321 cases victims lodged complaints within 24 hours, on average complaints are made after 45 days (Table 5.7).

When describing the results, it is observed that, if we divide the sample by type of violence, whether physical or sexual, on average cases of sexual violence took longer to be reported (59 days), than cases of physical violence (42 days). Furthermore, if we divide the sample by population, between women and children, adolescents, the results show that cases against the latter took longer to be reported (70 days) than cases of violence against women: 62 days (see Table 5.7).

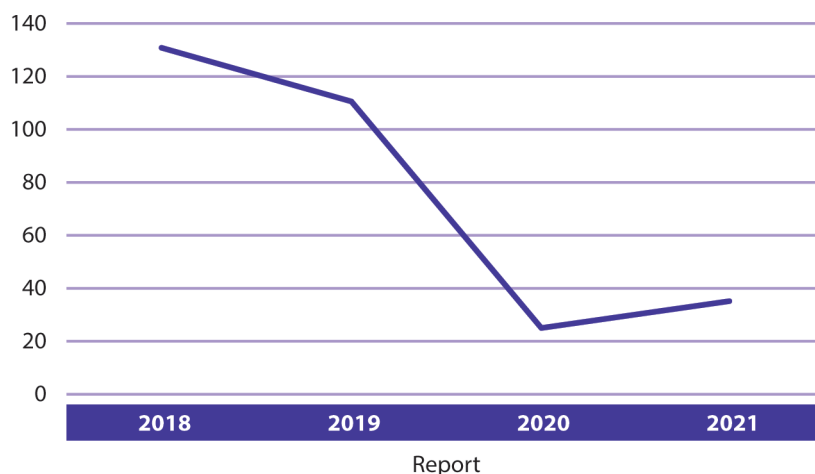
Table 5.7. Days to File a Complaint by Age and Type of Violence

Number of Cases	n	Mean	Maximum Days	Minimum Days
General	nc 321	45	1461	0
Violence Against Women	nv 124	62	1461	0
Violence against Children and Adolescents	nv 35	70	989	0
Sexual Violence	nv 45	59	989	0
Physical Violence	nv 278	42	1461	0

Note: Maximum numbers are repeated because they represent the same case. In nv, cases with available information were considered, while in nc, there are cases that are repeated because they record more than one type of violence.

Filing the Complaint as a First Step in the Criminal Process

Figure 5.2. shows the decrease in violence complaints from 2018 to the present date. It is plausible to consider that during these years, especially in 2020 and 2021, there was a low number of complaints in violence cases -and therefore recorded- due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine imposed during that period.

Figure 5.2. Number of Complaints Reviewed per Year (n=321)

What was the institution in which the act of violence was first reported?

As reflected in Table 5.8, the Public Prosecutor's Office, with 52% (n=167), followed by the FELCV, with 35.2% (n=113) of the cases, are the entities that first became aware of an act of violence among those analyzed in this research. The rest of the institutions received cases marginally compared to these first two. On the other hand, in the control municipality (Cochabamba), it was observed that at least 27.5% of the analyzed cases initiated their actions through complaint-promoting instances, such as the DNA and SLIM.

Table 5.8. Institution Taking the Complaint

Institution Where the Violent Incident was Reported	nc	%
Prosecutor's Office / Public Ministry	167	52,0
FELCV	113	35,2
DNA	13	4,0
FELCC	6	1,9
SLIM	6	1,9
Other	16	5
Total	321	100

By segmenting the victim's age at the time of the incident, it was identified that only 37.14% (nv: 13) of the 35 cases reported involving children and adolescents were reported to the DNA; 34.29% (nv: 12) were reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the rest were reported to another institution. In the case of women, 67.74% (nv 84) of the cases were reported to the Public Ministry (Prosecutor's Office), and 30.65% (nv 38) to the FELCV.

How are complaints filed?

Complaints can be filed verbally or in writing: Verbal complaints are formalized through a direct statement to authorities, prosecutors, or police, expediting the opening of the case, while written complaints are submitted with the assistance of a lawyer and enter through a memorial or a complaint. The difference between these last two lies in the fact that the complaint implies responsibility, as a procedural party, throughout the legal process. In both cases, whether through a memorial or a complaint, filing a written complaint entails an additional financial cost for the victims.

Of the total complaints, 34.9% (n=112) were complaints; 34.3% (n=110) were verbal complaints; 29.6% (n=95) were written complaints, and 1.2% (n=4) were direct action complaints. As shown by the cross-tabulation of data in Table 5.9., regardless of the type of violence, complaints were made most frequently to the Prosecutor's Office and in writing, with 27% (n=75) for physical violence and 31% (n=14) for sexual violence.

Table 5.9. Type of Complaint per Type of Violence*

	TOTAL		VFIS (N=278)		VSEX (N=45)	
	n=321	%	n	%	n	%
Written Complaint to Prosecutor's Office	88	27,4	75	27	14	31
Verbal Complaint to Prosecutor's Office	58	18,1	51	18	7	16
Written Complaint to FELCV	7	2,2	7	3	0	0
Verbal Complaint to FELCV	52	16,2	44	16	9	20
Complaint to Prosecutor's Office	112	34,9	97	35	15	33
Direct Action to Police	4	1,2	4	1	0	0

*Cases may register more than one type of violence

3. Progress of the Criminal Process

Below are the results regarding the progress of cases in the four stages of the criminal process: Preliminary, preparatory, oral trial, and recursive stage. The results forming part of this dimension were analyzed based on the sample of 321 CCJs reviewed (nc). Data on the number of rejected cases, dismissed cases, and those opting for abbreviated proceedings will be provided. No follow-up was conducted on cases that were rejected and dismissed because access to information from the Prosecutor's Office was not available.

Progress of Cases in the Preliminary Stage

After filing the complaint, 81,3% (nc=261) of the 321 cases were assigned to a specialized court for investigation into corruption and violence against women. 18,1% (nc=58) were assigned to commence in an ordinary criminal investigation court, and the remaining 0,6% (nc=two) had unknown court assignments. Out of the 321 cases, 1,5% (nc=five) lacked the investigation initiation report; 8,1% (nc=26) did not receive a resolution; 58,9% (nc=189) were rejected, and 33% (nc=106) were charged, thus proceeding to the next stage (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10. Case Progress in the Preliminary Stage

Case Progress	N=321	%
Cases Assigned to a Specialized Court	361	81,3
Cases Without Investigation Initiation Report	5	1,5
Cases Without Resolution	26	33
Rejected Cases	189	58,9
Cases Charged (proceeding to the next stage)	106	33

Case Progress in the Preparatory Stage

The preparatory stage initiates a more detailed investigation phase regarding the elements that will support the conclusive resolution, as evidence supporting the accusation is gathered in this phase. Out of the 106 CCJs that advanced to this stage -42.2% of the total (nc=45)- 19.8% (nc=21) were dismissed, and 37.7% (nc=40) received an accusation resolution, thus proceeding to the Oral Trial (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.11. Case Resolution in the Preparatory Stage

Case Status	n	% Over Charge (nc=106)
Cases without Resolution	45	42,5
Dismissed	21	19,8
Accusations	40	37,7
Did not reach the Preparatory Stage	-	-
Total	106	100%

Case Progress in the Oral Trial Stage

i. Preparation and Effective Initiation of the Oral Trial

According to the data collected in this research, out of the 40 CCJs with accusations, 7,5% (nc=3) opted for abbreviated proceedings; in 35% (nc=14) of the cases, there was no information registered about the opening order, and only 57.5% (nc=23) of the cases obtained an opening order. Of these 23 cases, 16 recorded the age of the victim: nine were children or adolescents, and seven were women over 18 years old. Despite all 23 accusations having an opening order and date, only in 17.5% (nc=7) of the cases was the actual start date of the oral trial identified.

ii. Sentence

Regarding the 23 opening orders, 21.74% (five) received a sentence through abbreviated proceedings, 21.74% (five) through regular proceedings, and 56.52% (nc=13) did not have information regarding the issuance of a sentence. Considering the eight sentences issued through abbreviated proceedings and those obtained at the conclusion of the oral trial (regular proceedings), they total 13 sentences. Disaggregating by population, there were two CCJs where it was not possible to identify the age group; three where the victim was a woman over 18 years old, and eight where girls, boys, or adolescents were identified as victims according to the Judicial Control Notebooks analysis.

Case Progress in the Recursive Stage

Once a sentence is issued, the parties have the possibility to use appeal resources in the second instance and cassation in the third. (Art. 394 of the CPP). That is, they can request a review of the sentence in two instances before a higher judicial authority. If this right is not exercised before the procedural deadlines expire, the sentence becomes final; however, it must go through the administrative process of executory, implying that it is final, cannot be reviewed again, and must be enforced.

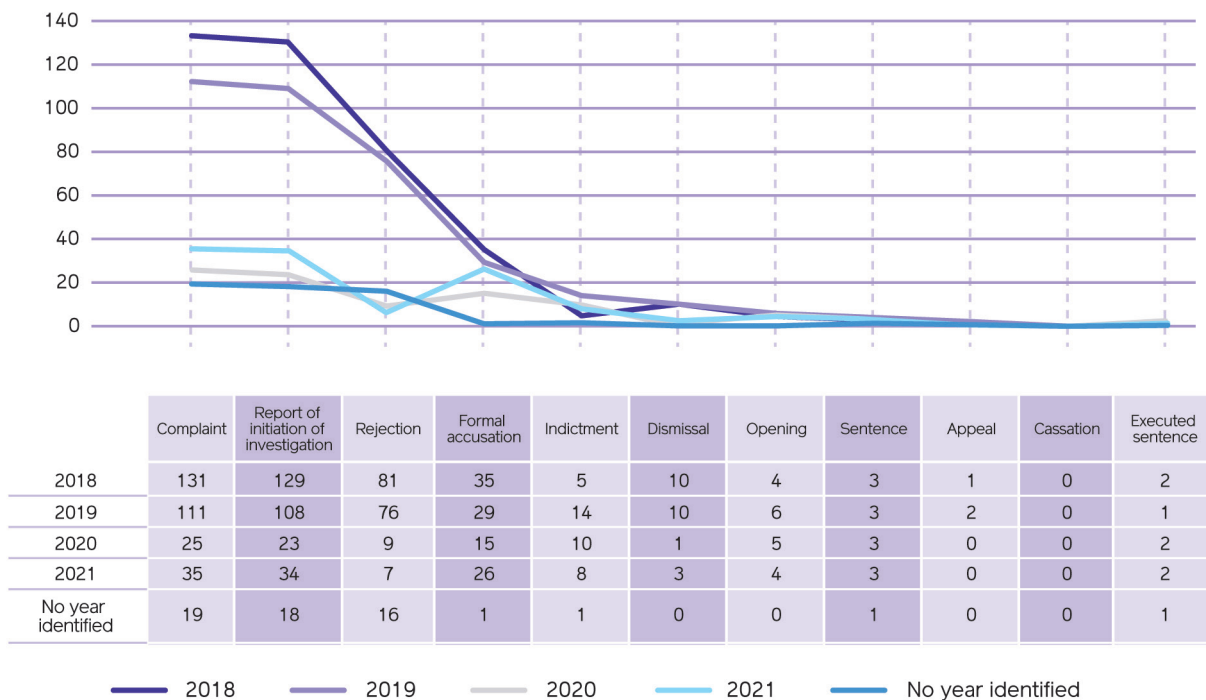
With this background, out of the 13 sentences, three were in the appeals stage, and one obtained a sentence using abbreviated proceedings. Of the remaining 10 sentences, eight were executory and did not present an appeal. Finally, two of the sentences were neither appealed nor executory, meaning they do not have the formality of being final. In summary, as shown in Table 5.12, it is possible to observe that between the preliminary stages and the oral trial, the system did not provide any type of response in more than 30% of the cases. This is without considering that 58.88% of the cases were rejected, only 2.49% obtained enforceable sentences, and the remaining 9.2% were still in process.

Table 5.12. Current Case Status

Current Case Status	nc	%
No Resolution in Preliminary Stage	26	8,10%
Rejected Cases	189	58,88%
No Resolution in Preparatory Stage	45	14,02%
Dismissed	21	6,54%
Without Opening Order	14	4,36%
No Sentence, but with Opening Order	13	4,05%
Appeal	3	0,93%
No Definitive Sentence	2	0,62%
Enforceable Sentence	8	2,49%
Total Cases	321	100,00%

Figure 5.3 below shows the progress of cases per year. As is evident, regardless of the number of complaints made each year (more than 100 or fewer than 50), the capacity of cases that the system can handle at each stage is similar. The number of rejections is relatively proportional to the complaints, and similar enforceable sentences are obtained each year.

Figure 5.3. Progress of Criminal Proceedings Compared by Year



4. Analysis of the Timeliness of the Criminal Process

Next, the dimension of the timeliness of response of the PJS is analyzed, evaluated in days elapsed for each of the steps within the criminal process. It is important to consider two aspects: first, the analysis is based on the 348 records of accused (na); and second, although the law mandates that the maximum time a criminal process can last is three years, only the steps from the complaint to the report, from the initial report to the indictment, from the indictment to the notification, from the notification of the indictment to the accusation, and from the opening order to the start of the actual trial have deadlines established by law. That is, around 10 months, out of the three-year maximum process time, are regulated in the Criminal Procedure Code (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.13. Timeframe for Compliance with Criminal Proceedings

Stages of the Criminal Proceedings	Intermediate Steps	Deadlines Established by Law
Preliminary Stage (Accused)	0. Complaint – Arrest Warrant	-
	01. Complaint. Apprehension	-
	1. Complaint – Report on the start of investigations	24 hours
	2. Report on the start of investigations – Indictment	8 - 60 business days
Preparatory Stage (accused)	3. Indictment - Notification to the Accused	"The next day"
	4. Notification to the Accused - Accusation	6 calendar months
	5. Accusation - Opening Order	No deadline specified
Oral Trial (accused)	6. Opening Order to Start of Trial (Actual)	20-45 business days
	7. Start of Trial (Actual) – Sentence	No deadline specified
Recursive Stage (sentenced)	8. Sentence - Appeal	No deadline specified
	9. Sentence - Enforceable Sentence	No deadline specified

**The name of the accused changes according to the stage of the criminal procedure; for this research, it is only referenced as accused for better reader understanding.*

Preliminary Stage

Time between the complaint and the issuance of the arrest warrant and its execution

Monitoring was carried out between the filing of the complaint and the issuance of the arrest warrant in 19 cases of accused with the necessary information. In five of them, the warrant was issued in less than 24 hours. However, the average time for its issuance was 94 days, reaching a maximum of 491 days (one year and four months), as can be seen in Table 5.14. When dividing the sample by age, it was observed that the issuance times of this document are, on average, faster when the victims are minors than in cases where the victims were women over 18 years old.

Table 5.14. Timeframe Between Complaint Submittal and the Issuance of the Arrest Warrant

	Ns:348	M	Maximum Days	Minimum Days
General	19	94	491	0
VCM Cases	10	133	49	0
VCNNA Cases	6	72	369	0

Regarding the time elapsed between the complaint and the execution of the arrest warrant, it was found that, on average, 13 days go by from the police locating the accused and apprehending him to bringing him to the prosecutor's office to give a statement. It is relevant to note that six of them were apprehended within 24 hours of the complaint, according to available information.

Time Between the Complaint and the Date of Submission of the Investigation Initiation Report to the Judiciary

Article 298 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPP) establishes that a maximum of 24 hours must elapse between the complaint and the submission of the investigation initiation report. After reviewing data from 232 accused individuals, it was evident that in 41.2% (n=97) of cases, this deadline was not met, with a maximum time of 131 days recorded, averaging 5 days for the submission of this document (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15. Timeframe Between Complaint Submittal and Start of Investigation Report

	Ns: 348	M	Maximum	Minimum	Mode
General	232	5	131	0	0
VAWC Cases	102	3	39	0	0
VCNNA Cases	101	1	10	0	0
Cases where age is not identified	29	-	-	-	-

Time Between the Submission Date of the Investigation Initiation Report and the Indictment Date

The Comprehensive Law to Ensure Women a Life Free of Violence (Art. 94) and the CPP, establish in Art. 86 the prosecutor's obligation to carry out the first investigative acts within a period of eight days, which can be exceptionally extended to 60 days at the request of the Prosecutor's Office. After this period, the prosecutor must issue a resolution of rejection or formal indictment, and may also apply an alternative procedure such as abbreviated proceedings.

Regarding the accused individuals (n) with rejected processes (see Table 5.16), it was possible to observe that, in general, the 60-day period established by law for this step is not met, as the average time to obtain a rejection resolution was 266 days, with a case of one accused individual obtaining a resolution after four years (1,585 days). On the other hand, in the case of accused individuals with indictment, 10.6% (n=37) complied with the established time of observation, with an average of 136 days, with a minimum time of 24 hours for 12 accused individuals and a maximum of over a year for another nine accused individuals.

Table 5.16. Timeframe Between Start of Investigation Report and Date of Indictment

		Ns:348	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Mode
Rejection	General	199	266	1585	15	488
	VCM Cases	74	240	905	20	488
	VCNNA Cases	8	190	327	15	142
Indictment	General	98	136	706	0	0
	VCM Cases	58	141	706	0	0
	VCNNA Cases	21	144	440	0	376
	VSEX Cases	24	124	395	0	0
	VFIS Cases	76	140	706	0	0

Time Between the Indictment and the Date of Notification to the Accused

The court must notify the accused by the day following receipt of the resolution by the Public Prosecutor's Office. The deadline was met in 11.2% of cases (ns=39); however, it was evident that, on average, notification of indictment is issued 63 days after the indictment is issued. On the other hand, it was also observed that, of the 15 accused individuals for whom we have information, the deadline for notification exceeded 100 days.

Time Between Notification to the Accused and the Date of the Accusation

During the hearing on precautionary measures, the Public Prosecutor's Office indicates the time it will take to complete the investigative proceedings, a time period that must not exceed a maximum of six months (180 days), starting from the date of notification of the accusation to the accused. Once this period has elapsed, the prosecutor may issue a formal accusation if the evidence collected serves to demonstrate that the accused is the perpetrator of the incident, or alternatively, it will be necessary to dismiss the case.

Of the 46 accused individuals who advanced to this stage, it was observed that only 39.29% (ns=11) received an accusation within the 6-month period, and in general, accusations were received on average 278 days later (more than nine months). Furthermore, eight accused individuals (ns) received accusations after more than 180 days, and nine others within timeframes exceeding a year. Regarding the control municipality, at least 42.50% have an accusation occurring within the established time. Finally, the time between the complaint and the formal accusation was 345 days for intervention municipalities and 46 for the control municipality.

Oral Trial Stage

Time between the Accusation and Issuance of the Opening Order for Oral Trial

The issuance of a public accusation implies that the case will be brought before a court or sentencing judge to conduct the oral trial. In this regard, the CPP determines procedural acts for the preparation of the trial. These acts consist of the filing of the accusation, submission

of evidence, notifications, presentation of private accusations, and presentation of exculpatory evidence. Likewise, once the aforementioned preparatory acts have been followed, the court or judge issues an order opening the trial, establishing the criminal offense for which the trial will be conducted and the trial start date, which should not exceed 45 days from the issuance of this document.

Of the 28 accused individuals (ns) with accusation dates, 21 had opening order dates. Of these, one accused individual received the opening order within three days, eight received it during the next 180 days (6 months) after the accusation, and ten accused individuals received the opening order after a year. For two accused individuals, it occurred after two years.

Time Between the Issuance of the Opening Order for Oral Trial and the Effective Trial Start Date

In accordance with Art. 343 of the CPP, the trial must commence no later than 45 days after the opening order is issued. From the reviews conducted for this study, it was found that eight accused individuals met this deadline, in another four, dates were recorded before the limit was reached (35 days), and in the remaining four cases, the average time to commence the trial was 65 days. In the control municipality, 6.0% of processes complied with the time.

Time Between the Effective Start of the Oral Trial and the Sentence

Regarding the average number of days for the issuance of sentences, of the five cases with sentences by regular procedure (ns), it took an average of 186 days for the sentence to be issued. One accused individual received it in less than 24 hours and another in 184 days. The longest period to obtain a sentence, of the cases analyzed, was 374 days. For the rest of the sentences, it was not possible to calculate this information (n=3).

Recursive Stage and Sentence Execution

The recursive stage seeks to guarantee the impartial and fair review of a sentence that one of the parties assumes was pronounced in non-compliance or erroneous application of the law, ensuring that the rights of the parties involved in the criminal procedure are respected. We advise the reader to review the section on criminal proceedings for more details.

The timeliness of cases in this stage, from sentencing to appeal, cassation, and to enforceable sentence, can be seen in the data. Out of the 13 sentences that reached this stage, three were appealed within an average of 136 days after sentencing. No cases registered cassation appeals based on the collected information.

According to the analyzed cases, the average time from sentencing to enforceable sentence was 32 days. However, there is a 1.4% (ns=5) of processes for accused individuals (ns) in which the sentence and its enforceability occurred on the same day, and a 0.9% (ns=3) in which the period exceeded one month. If we analyze the data of the eight accused individuals with enforceable sentences, from the complaint, all of them obtained the final resolution before the three years established by law. In this sense, it is important to note that this data could indicate the possibility of reducing the time to improve the care of victims of violence who manage to go through the entire process, as even the case with the longest time ends in less than the three years established by law.

Finally, Table 5.17 summarizes the procedural deadlines executed in the processes for each accused individual. As it is possible to observe, the average number of days passed, from the complaint to the enforceable sentence, generally exceeds the three years established by the regulations for the development of criminal proceedings for violence against children and women.

Table 5.17. Summary of Deadlines Lapsed Between Stages

Procedural Stage		Deadlines Established by Law	Average Deadlines Identified in the Study	PJS Instances Involved for Deadline Compliance
Preliminary Stage (Accused)	0. Complaint – Arrest Warrant	-	94	Public Prosecutor's Office
	Apprehension	-	13	Public Prosecutor's Office and Police
	1. Complaint – Report on the start of investigations	24 hours	5	Public Prosecutor's Office and Police
Preparatory Stage (accused)	2. Report on the start of investigations – Indictment	8 - 60 business days	136	Public Prosecutor's Office and Investigating Court
	3. Indictment – Notification to the Accused	"The next day"	63	Public Prosecutor's Office and Investigating Court
	4. Notification to the Accused – Accusation	6 calendar months	278	Public Prosecutor's Office and Investigating Court
	5. Accusation – Opening Order	No deadline specified	227	Public Prosecutor's Office and Sentencing Court or Tribunal
Oral Trial (accused)	6. Opening Order to Start of Trial (Actual)	20-45 business days	65	Sentencing Court or Tribunal
	7. Start of Trial (Actual) – Sentence	No deadline specified	112	Sentencing Court or Tribunal
Recursive Stage (sentenced)	8. Sentence – Appeal	No deadline specified	136	Sentencing Court or Tribunal – Criminal Chambers
	9. Sentence – Enforceable Sentence	No deadline specified	32	Sentencing Court or Tribunal
Total Days Elapsed Between Stages		3 years	1161	PJS

5. Quality of Care During the Criminal Process

The quality of response from the PJS is shown in the set of actions planned to provide timely attention and security to the victim in the development of the case. To measure this, the following indicators were considered:

- Protective measures granted to the victim
- Number of cases with precautionary measures granted to the accused
- Reasons for dismissal of the accused
- Use of Gessell Chamber and/or use of proof in advance to prevent revictimization
- Number of times the victim interacted with the PJS; the more interaction the more likelihood for revictimization
- Presentation of evidence for the accusation
- Number of hearings conducted
- Suspended hearings
- Average sentencing times according to the criminal type of sentence
- Modifications to the classification of criminal types during the process that reduce the penalty for the accused, to the detriment of the victim

We recommend the reader to pay special attention to the abbreviations indicating the sample number for calculating the indicators. Where:

- *nc: number of cases*
- *nv: number of victims*
- *ns: number of accused individuals*

Since they are used as appropriate for each indicator. The results obtained are detailed below:

Protective Measures Granted to Victims

Law 1173 establishes two types of protective measures, one for women and another for girls, boys, and adolescents. Out of the 336 victims studied, 53.3% (179) had protective measures. In the case of underage victims, the most applied measures were a) Prohibition for the perpetrator to approach or visit the same spaces as the victim (nv=13); b) Prohibition of threats towards the victim (nv=5), and c) Prohibition to communicate with the victim (nv=5).

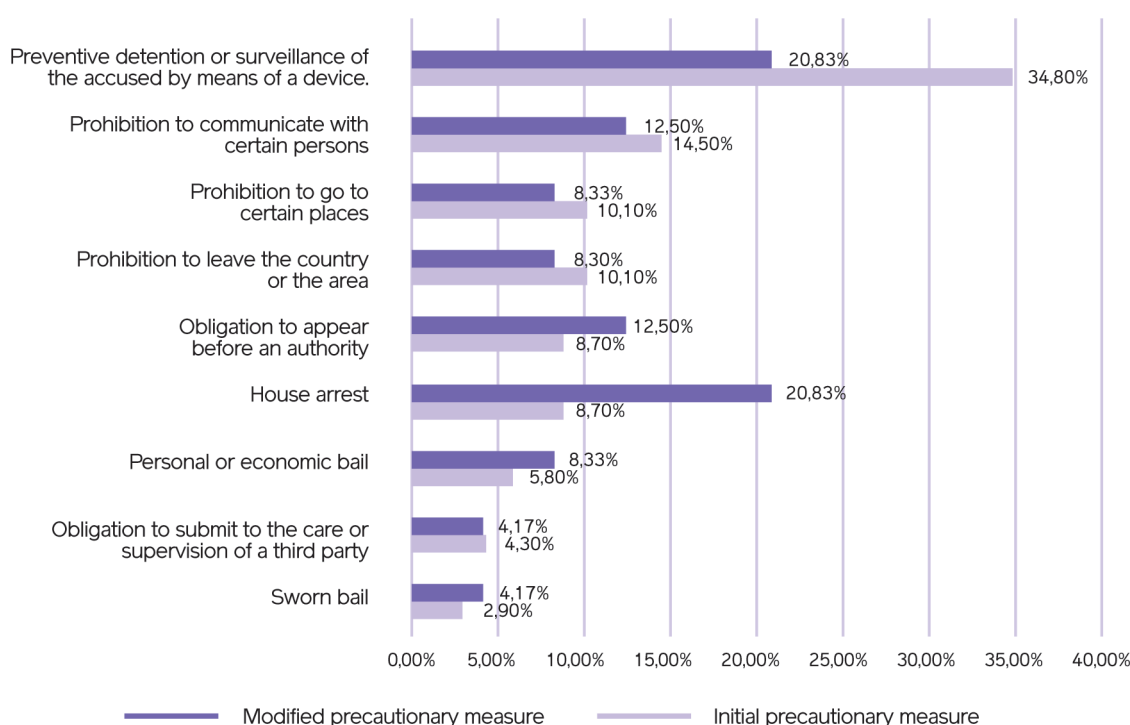
In the case of underage victims, the most applied measures were a) Prohibition for the perpetrator to approach or visit the same spaces as the victim (nv=13), b) Prohibition of threats towards the victim (nv=5), and c) Prohibition to communicate with the victim (nv=5).

Precautionary Measures Granted to the Accused

Once the formal indictment has been issued and notified, the Public Prosecutor's Office, in the face of the risk of flight or obstruction, can request the application of one or more of the precautionary measures provided for in Article 231 of the CPP. These measures can be modified during the process, either with leniency at the request of the accused or more severity, at the request of the prosecutor's office or the plaintiff.

Out of 113 accused individuals who were indicted, 46% (n=52) obtained precautionary measures. Out of 41 accused individuals (ns) with precautionary measures, the main measures correspond to (Figure 5.4): a) Preventive detention (34.8%; ns=23), b) Prohibition to communicate with certain individuals (14.5%, ns=10), and c) “Prohibition to leave the country or the area and to be in certain places”, (10.10%; ns=7 correspondingly). It is important to mention that, out of the 13 accused individuals (ns), nine were in pre-trial detention at the time their sentences were issued.

Figure 5.4. Initial and Modified Precautionary Measures Applied During the Process



The request for modification of precautionary measures was made for 14 accused individuals, on average requested twice per individual. The most implemented modifications resulted in house arrest and pre-trial detention.

Reasons for Dismissal

Dismissal in a violence case can have multiple effects beyond the legal realm: Impact on public perception, Confidence in the judicial system, emotional well-being of the parties involved, and various social implications for the accused. The review of Judicial Control Notebooks (CCJ) for the accused reflected that 24 were dismissed; of these, 19 corresponded to physical violence, two to sexual violence, and three did not identify the type of violence. The main reason for dismissal, in 21 cases, was that it was determined that the accused individual did not participate in the incident of violence; in the remaining three cases, it was determined that the assault did not occur.

Number of Victim Interactions, Use of Gesell Chamber, Use of Pre-trial Evidence, and Evidence for Accusation

The number of interactions with the victim, the use of the Gesell Chamber, the use of pre-trial evidence, and the gathering of evidence for the accusation are directly related to the quality of care for victims of violence in a legal process, as these practices and actions are designed to improve the victim's experience in the legal process through support and protection, as well as facilitate access to information and the collection of solid evidence to strengthen the case against the accused individual. Below, we will describe the results related to these indicators.

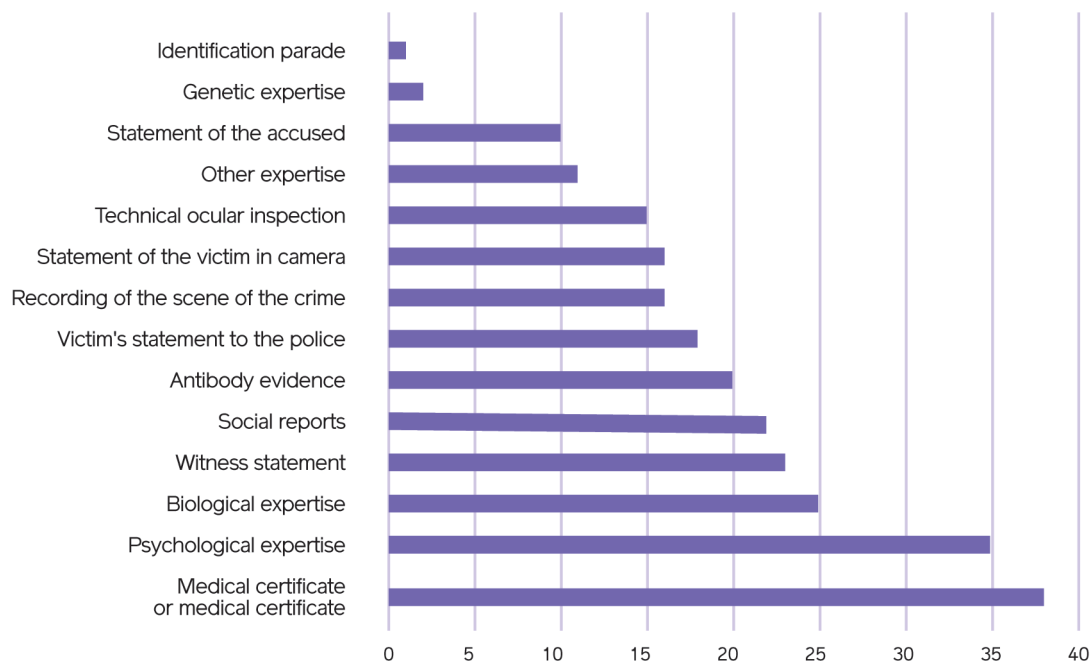
In accordance with the standard of enhanced due diligence, efforts are made to reduce revictimization by minimizing the number of victim interactions in the criminal process and with a single statement that can be video-recorded. The alternatives for the statement within the Criminal Procedure Code (CPP) are the statement in the Gesell Chamber or, failing that, the pre-trial evidence (statement with trial formalities).

It is evident that, from the information of 104 victims analyzed in the CCJ, on average victims participate twice during the process (nv=104). However, there are processes where the victim did not participate even once (nv=4), with one case where the victim participated up to 12 times. Victims of physical assaults participated at least twice (nv=97), while victims of sexual assaults interacted on average three times (nv=14). Overall, victims participated in giving statements to the police (nv=244); with the forensic doctor (nv=207); in social reports (nv=86); and in psychological sessions (nv=85) with a professional.

Acknowledging that the victim's statement should occur only once, according to regulations, it should be video-recorded and, optimally, conducted in the Gesell Chamber. It is important to highlight that, of the 42 victims in whose cases the accused were indicted in the preparatory stage, only 16 gave their statement in the Gesell, leaving 26 who did not use this tool.

On the other hand, regarding evidence, of the 44 accusations reviewed, all have an average of five elements of evidence per accusation. The main evidence presented is the medical/forensic certificate (ns=38); followed by psychological expert's opinion (ns=35); biological expert's opinion (ns=25); and witness testimony (ns=23) (see Figure 5.5.).

Figure 5.5. Evidence Presented for Accusation



Suspensions and Hearings Held for the Oral Trial

Although the CPP does not determine a fixed deadline for the conclusion of the oral trial, according to the principle of immediacy in Art. 86, of Law 348 -concordant with Art. 334 of the CPP-, oral trial hearings must be conducted uninterruptedly and continuously, as the suspension of hearings in cases of violence can have a significant impact on victims, both emotionally and in their personal security, as they generate uncertainty, continuous risk, and increased distrust in the criminal justice system (De Luca, 2022). Therefore, it is essential that judicial systems address these cases with the necessary urgency and sensitivity to provide the support and protection needed to those who have suffered violence, which is why this procedural stage should conclude as soon as possible.

Despite this, it is evident that five of the eight accused individuals who entered oral trial had hearings suspended, which means an average of three suspensions per case. The cases that presented suspension corresponded to both violence against children and adolescents (nc=3) and violence against women (nc=1). Additionally, a majority of cases with suspended hearings were observed in sexual violence offenses (nc=4), as opposed to physical typologies (nc=1). The main reasons for the suspension of hearings were the absence of the accused individual (nc=5); the absence of the defense lawyer (nc=2), and in four cases, the reason was not specified.

After the aforementioned suspensions, only one hearing was held in all cases to determine the sentence. The most severe sentences imposed were for three rape offenses and one for aggravated rape, with convictions of 15 and 20 years, respectively. Two accused individuals received eight years' conviction for statutory rape, one for sexual abuse with a four-year conviction and, finally, one was sentenced to three years for family or domestic violence.

Modifications to the Classification of Criminal Typology During the Process

Modifications in the qualification of the criminal typology during the process can happen for various reasons: Progress in the investigation, a thorough review of the evidence, priority in the protection of the victim by identifying a more appropriate criminal typology, and negotiations between parties to expedite the resolution of the case.

The data collected by the CCJ (see Table 5.18.) revealed that, of the 13 cases that have a sentence, changes in criminal types usually changed to less severe criminal typologies, such as, for example, from rape to statutory rape. The changes in typology were evident, when five accused individuals (ns), had one or two changes from the beginning of the process. Consequently, their conviction terms were reduced.

Table 5.18. Changes in Process Typologies

Type of Violence	Type of Start	Type of Indictment	Type of Accusation	Type of Sentence
Family or Domestic Violence	3	3	3	3
Rape, Aggravated Rape, Rape of a Child or Adolescent, Aggravated Rape of a Child or Adolescent.	8	7	7	6
Statutory Rape	0	1	1	2
Sexual Abuse; Aggravated Sexual Abuse	3	3	2	2
Other Types of Crimes	0	0	1	0
Total	14	14	14	13

Note: There are 14 criminal types at the beginning of the 13 convictions

As we can see in Table 5.19., it is expected that the actions planned by the PJS are executed to provide quality care to victims and smooth the path they go through during the criminal process, contrasting with what actually happens based on these indicators.

Table 5.19. Implementation Status of Quality Indicators

Actions Planned to Improve Victim Care	Expectation	Reality
Protective measures granted to victims	Applied to all cases	Applied in only 53.3% of victim cases nv=179/336
Precautionary measures granted to defendants (accused individuals)	Applied to all cases	Applied in only 52% of defendant cases nv=46/113
Use of Gesell Chamber and/or use of pre-trial evidence	Application in all cases	Almost never used
Reasons for dismissal	Clear and justified	Clear reason for dismissal, which does not justify case closure
Number of victim interactions	A single statement	Up to 12 interactions were found
Suspensions and hearings held for the oral trial	Without suspensions	Up to 8 suspensions were found
Modifications to the classification of the criminal offense to reduce the sentence during the process	No modification of the criminal offense type for reduction of the sentence	All modifications reduce the penalties for the accused

V.II.II. Measurement Results in the Use of the Trauma-Informed Care Approach

This section presents the results obtained from answers from PJS officials and non-officials who interact or assist victims during the criminal process. In this regard, the specific objective of the questionnaire is first addressed, evaluating the percentage of interactions that, according to the memories of the respondents, applied the TIC approach by all present during the interaction. Additionally, qualitative findings are presented for the intervention municipalities. These aim to explain factors that influence the application of the TIC approach by officials and social service providers in the care of VAWC victims.

Thus, in the intervention municipalities, the approach was effectively applied in 48.1% of interactions; contrasting with the belief of the respondents who considered that 57% of interactions had included TIC, obtained through the question: *"In general, in your professional opinion, did the victim of violence receive trauma-informed care during this interaction?"*

On the other hand, in the control municipality the effective application of the approach reached only 20% of interactions; contrasting with the belief of the respondents, who considered that 90% of interactions had included TIC.

In support of the above, the qualitative findings are presented below:

Finding No. 1: Professionals are capable of assisting victims from a TIC approach, even without having been trained in the use of the approach.

There are public servants and social service providers who, beyond knowing or not the TIC approach, apply their understanding of the generalized impact of trauma that VAWC victims face during the different moments when they interact with the PJS, such as with protection and care systems:

“Before addressing the case through interviews, I go over the theory, so I can get information from a single question. I avoid asking how they were beaten; I need to know how their life changed since the incident. That’s my job, to inquire about before and after the incident. With five questions, I manage to include all the information I need. I intertwine models and theory, so I avoid having to remind them of what they have experienced. I don’t address anything about the incident; that’s not my job.” (Personal communication with a public servant from intervention municipalities, April 2023).

As Sweeney et al. (2018) establish, the importance of integrating trauma knowledge into interactions with victims to avoid revictimization is undeniable.

On the other hand, other professionals managed to identify reasons why the approach was not applied: *“They are not clearly informed how long they are going to be there, what is the reason for being taken to the home... They do not work with an approach based on active listening.”* (Personal communication with Social Service Providers from intervention municipalities, April 2023).

Finding No. 2: There are contradictions between the perception of information provided by officials and service providers to victims and the information they actually communicate

If a public servant or service provider does not provide effective communication or clear information about the different processes and services, the way they relate to victims may be affected, potentially generating responses that can be interpreted as aggressive by professionals (International Center for the Prevention of Aggression [ICAP], 2018). Through the information obtained, it was observed that there is personnel that strives to ensure that the victim has the information they need, as mentioned in the following quotes:

“Indeed, victims are always informed of the procedure that will be followed to instill more Confidence in them [the victims].” (Personal communication with public servant from the control municipality, May 2023).

“I try to get them to collaborate with other tools, in other ways, trying to think on the importance of the information needed. If they really don’t want to give an answer; I respect it. It’s about guiding and respecting so that they make their own decisions.” (Personal communication with public servant from intervention municipalities, April 2023).

However, on other occasions, communication was not effective, and the respondent identified shortcomings: *“The information provided was given to me by the team and I had to question the way in which the information had been communicated [to the victim] without first explaining to the adolescent what the procedure was. There was no informed consent, I have meddled a little into what should have been done...”* (Personal communication with social service provider from intervention municipalities, April 2023).

These contradictions reinforce the need for care protocols that specify guidelines for communication with victims to provide them with sufficient and adequate information to make decisions about their process, a fact that was seconded by one of the participants when asked if he had informed the victim about his/her rights and the decisions he/she could make when testifying at the judicial hearing: *“It would be important (...) if we were given an approved template, in order to be respectful of the rights of the witness on these matters...”* (Personal communication with public servant from a control municipality, May 2023).

Finding No. 3: The absence of trained personnel makes it difficult to implement the TIC approach

When a victim is exposed to triggers of traumatic memories, as is usually the case in situations where they interact with public servants and service providers, the latter must focus on responding to such a situation and contribute to making the victim feel safe, to ensure he/she remains in the PJS throughout the stages of the criminal process (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). In this regard, participants from the intervention municipalities highlighted the lack of trained staff as the main shortcoming to handling cases in general: *“The lack of experience or knowledge/approach on sexual crimes and the consequence on survivors is what obstructs and is detrimental in this situation [re: services provided by different officials]...”* (Personal communication with a public servant from the control municipality, May 2023).

These shortcomings are more evident when it comes to providing services to victims with particular diagnoses or characteristics: *“Although the institution's care protocol was followed, or that was the initial thinking [that trauma-informed care was provided], in reality, more measures were needed. Due to ignorance of the diagnosis [schizophrenia], certain specific measures were taken... The adolescent tried to harm the other girls in the home, even the staff. The survivor had to be removed from the others due to this issue, it was not the correct thing to do, but it surpassed the institution's capabilities...”* (Personal communication with a social service provider from intervention municipalities, March 2023), which supports the need for TIC approach training and specific training for special cases.

Finding No. 4: Victims who are children, adolescents, or women need to strengthen their relationships through positive social support to achieve sustainable healing and well-being. However, it is a significant challenge for both PJS officials and non-officials to include these networks as support in the care and accompaniment during the process.

While public servants and social service providers can work alongside victims to empower them, they need to involve support networks: *“Considering that the separation from the user's social environment is a risk factor, I encourage users to keep those networks. I even provide them with my number and express my availability if they want to contact me (in cases of violence against women). In the case of violence against children and adolescents, they can access protection from their extended family, but the bonds also break down. It is important to remember that they have other family members who help and support them...”* (Personal communication with a public servant from the intervention municipalities, April 2023).

Participants also identified the need to strengthen support networks, as the following quotes illustrate:

“In most family sessions the challenge is to link them, to reconnect them, to have them see themselves as a family. To have them see resources such as their family and its possibilities, its protection and risk factors and figure out what can be done.” (Personal communication with a social service provider from the intervention municipalities, April 2023).

“We always try, as a team, to anticipate the situation; it’s very traumatic if the process is prolonged. We try to ensure that the victim undergoes psychological therapy as appropriate. It is necessary to work with the support network, not just with the victim.” (Personal communication with a public servant from the control municipality, May 2023).

V.III. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the Performance of the PJS in addressing and resolving VAWC cases during the 2018-2021 period. To this end, information was collected regarding the progress, timeliness, and quality of case management, from the complaint stage to the obtaining of enforceable sentences, in addition to the use of trauma-informed care approach. The results allowed us to identify several aspects needing attention to strengthen the system’s response to the population. Below are the concise conclusions derived from these results and their possible implications.

V.III.I. Performance Evaluation of the Bolivian Criminal Justice System

The PJS makes notable efforts to work within a solid legal framework for victims of gender-based violence and violence against children. Laws No. 348 and 054 reflect a specific disposition, within the legal framework, to protect human rights and, above all, to prevent, punish, and eradicate VAWC.

Regarding cases progress, despite the extensive existing regulations, results show a backlog of cases that enter the system and end with the issuance of a final sentence. More than 30% of them have no response to their process, and only 2.9% reach an enforceable sentence. Considering that almost 60% of cases are rejected from the outset, and that, regardless of the number of complaints filed each year, the number of cases with enforceable sentences is one or two, it is possible to conclude that obtaining a sentence in Bolivia is very difficult.

Regarding *timeliness*, it can be concluded that there is a need to adjust the regulations to regulate all stages of the criminal process since it only regulates approximately 10 months of the three years established by law. This leads to the possibility that processes stagnate between the steps that make up each stage, as is the case between the complaint and the arrest warrant, the step between the accusation and the opening order, or the start of the

trial and the sentence. This fact highlights other shortcomings: the absence of criteria for adequate accountability of the PJS and the impact that these delays have on the continuity of the process and the care provided to victims (Esquivel, 2008).

Unfortunately, five of the eight cases that reached an enforceable sentence exceeded the three-year time limit established by law, and only three managed to finish in less time than anticipated. This leads to two conclusions: First, the evident need to adjust the long execution times during the process; second, based on the cases resolved within the legal timeframe, it is possible for the PJS to improve response times between the complaint and the enforceable sentence.

Regarding the *quality* of victim care, we conclude that the appropriate and continuous use of relief and security measures available to victims promotes their continued participation in the process. Evidence of this is the eight cases that reached the enforceable sentence stage, in which protection measures, precautionary measures, pre-trial detention of the perpetrator, the use of the Gesell Chamber, and little or no interaction of the victim with the perpetrator were utilized, among others.

V.III.II. Difficulty of access and lack of information demonstrates the need for an integrated and interoperable case registration and monitoring system

The PJS is composed of various instances that, throughout the criminal process, are responsible for assisting victims of violence. These entities seek to safeguard the proper use of international human rights norms and standards to protect all individuals involved in the process. That is, the PJS assists direct and indirect victims, their relatives, and people affected at the time of assisting victims; in addition to dealing with the accused (ns) that are part of the complaints. To fulfill this purpose, it is necessary for all parties involved in the process, but especially all public servants and private individuals who assist victims, to have access to the necessary information to carry out proper case monitoring.

In the search for data to carry out the investigation and during the data analysis, it became evident there is difficulty in accessing information regarding violence cases handled by the PJS. In the first phase (data collection) it was necessary to search and review more than 900 cases to reach the sample, which only amounted to 384. However, due to the lack of access to notebooks (due to various factors), the absence of information in them, or the delayed attention given by researchers to the legal instances, only a sample of 321 CCJ was obtained.

The collection process and the data itself (or lack thereof) revealed the existing problems in registration during the complaint, whether written or oral, and in the management of the CCJ throughout the procedural stages. Not having complete information in the CCJ –especially information such as the victim’s age at the time of the incident, the accused’s age, and the year of the complaint– resulted in serious complications when attempting to track processes and assist victims. Despite the changes introduced by Law 1173¹ and the current software system in the prosecutor’s office “Justicia Libre”, there is still no unified and systematized registration system that allows finding the basic data of each process to

1. Law No. 1173 on Abbreviation of Criminal Procedure and Strengthening the Comprehensive Fight against Violence against Children, Adolescents, and Women and its subsequent modification through Law No. 1226.

work and monitor each one in all the entities where it is likely to receive complaints and/or directly participate in the process.

It is important to mention that the difficulty in accessing information and the incomplete records in the CCJs presented a limitation for this study since it was necessary to have a large number of replacement cases to obtain the final sample.

V.III.III. The Milestone of a Complaint as the First Step to Access the PJS

According to the reviewed notebooks, the number of complaints from 2018 to 2022 decreased by almost 80%, which does not necessarily imply that the Prevalence of the crime decreased; on the contrary, the results regarding the Prevalence of violence cases in this same period of time (see Prevalence chapter) show an increase in cases. Although these figures may be attributed to important external factors, such as the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, they also reflect the opportunity for the PJS to rethink the accessibility of all its services to facilitate complaints and assist victims; for example, by implementing immediate reaction teams, toll-free lines, or mobile brigades.

On the other hand, the decrease in complaints could also be attributed to the deficiencies that system users perceive within the system itself, such as not believing in the victims, revictimization in repeated interview mechanisms, the use of stereotypes and prejudice at the base of investigation hypotheses, difficulty in initiating complaints due to social pressures, delays in the investigation stages, not requesting or ineffectiveness of protection measures, not knowing which institutions take complaints free of charge, and loss or leakage of information (Lorente-Acosta, 2020). Other factors include [authorities] are not aware of the traumatic effect on victims and, most definitely, the fear that the complaint will not result in an effective measure and the violence will be repeated, i.e. fear of the aggressor (Martínez Reyes & Rodríguez Núñez, 2023) (see more in the Reliance chapter).

If cases of violence are not reported, they remain invisible to justice and to the possibility of action by the State and society. Considering that it is difficult for adult women to take this step (reporting), it is even more challenging when it comes to minors, as despite the fact that the Child and Adolescent Code gives DNA the authority to act *ex officio*, children and adolescents find it difficult to inform this institution of the violence, as they have no way of going to these entities to file a complaint to defend themselves; institutions require the presence or authorization of guardians, and even if they have their support, resources are not always available to pursue a process.

V.III.IV. Importance of Trauma-Informed Care

Regarding the results obtained on the application of the TIC approach in the care of VAWC victims, during the interactions surveyed, it was found that the approach was effectively applied in only 48.1% of the interactions in the intervention municipalities, with only 19 to 21 questions asked based on six main competencies. Contrasting this finding with the results obtained from a single question, which asked respondents about each interaction surveyed, it was observed that 57% of the interactions did include the TIC approach. While in the control municipality results show that the approach was effectively applied in 20% of the interactions; contrasting with the opinion of the respondents, who considered that 90% of the interactions included TIC.

This translates to:

1. Interaction based on the TIC approach occurs in less than half of all interactions.
2. Respondents perceive better results in each interaction than what was actually obtained as shown in the measurement. However, they recognize that almost half of the interactions lacked the necessary competencies to avoid revictimization.

Therefore, the need for training to improve the use of competencies that are part of the TIC approach is demonstrated.

Further exploration of the findings revealed three key factors that hinder the application of the approach by all individuals involved in the interactions: a) Lack of training for personnel; b) Lack of protocols supporting the application of the approach during specific moments with victims, such as during the process of informing about the procedures to follow and the characteristics of the services; c) Lack of programs or guidelines in services that actively involve the participation of victims' support networks in the care processes.

Therefore, efforts in the implementation of the TIC approach should focus on these three factors, both by the State and by institutions that can contribute to it, in order to provide services that support victims and prevent their revictimization. It is important to clarify that the results show a snapshot of what happened at the time of data collection, accumulated in the intervention municipalities. In the future, it would be worth investigating in detail by type of respondent and by municipality, in order to carry out a more comprehensive analysis with a larger sample.

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CHAPTER VI

CONFIDENCE PERCEPTION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

Leonardo Villafuerte Philippsborn

According to the preamble of the Bangalore Principles: “Public Confidence in the judicial system and in the moral authority and integrity of the judiciary is of utmost importance in a modern democratic society” (United Nations (UN) 2003, p. 21). Public Confidence is fundamental for the operation of the Public Justice System (PJS), as both the participation of victims in seeking justice as well as the perceptions of respect and satisfaction with the outcomes obtained rely on it (Indermaur & Roberts, 2009). At the same time, Confidence is also essential for the coordination and interaction of institutions and actors administering justice and protecting girls, boys, adolescents (NNA), and women survivors of physical and sexual violence. “Jurisdiction would become a farce if citizens no longer trusted in it and, to safeguard their rights, resorted to other methods” (Roos & Woischnik, 2005, p. 46).

For example, the rule of law would be affected if parties preferred to reach agreements among themselves without resorting to judicial institutions (Pizarro Sotomayor & Méndez Powell, 2006). Therefore, Confidence in the PJS is essential to safeguard and maintain its legitimacy (Armendáriz, 2020). According to data published by the Latinobarómetro Corporation, between 1996 and 2018, while the Bolivian population has always distrusted the Judicial Branch —those who have “a lot of Confidence” in it have never exceeded the 5.9% reached in 1997—, from 2006 to 2018, the number of people who had “no Confidence” in it increased (from 20.9% to 35.5%), and the number of those who had “some Confidence” decreased (from 32.4% to 19.4%). This situation, as interpreted by Galindo (2003) based on the data from the same institution, is not much different in the rest of Latin America, as the judiciary is one of the four institutions with the least Confidence.

It is worth noting the existence of formal efforts by the highest judicial authorities in Bolivia to regain the confidence in the PJS. According to Roos and Woischnik (2005), Confidence not only depends on sentences but also on judicial behavior towards system users, so it is advisable for justice institutions to adopt codes of ethics. Thus, the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal (TCP, 2013) approved its own code of ethics “to generate citizen Confidence in the Constitutional Justice Administration” (Article 1). The Supreme Court of Justice (2018), on the other hand, adopted the Ibero-American Code of Judicial Ethics,¹ which establishes the duty of judges to promote society’s Confidence in the administration of justice (Art. 43).

Despite these efforts, negative incidents that discredit the work of justice are periodically reported, especially in delicate cases such as physical and/or sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women (VAWC). For example, in its annual report for 2019, the Ombudsman’s Office (2021a) stated that the State fails to provide access to justice for victims of sexual crimes because it does not conduct investigations following protocols. In addition, the Fundación Construir together with the Plataforma Ciudadana por el Acceso a la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (2021), in their report on the state of justice in Bolivia in 2020, concluded that while the country has laws that meet international standards of protection for women victims of violence, it has not succeeded in implementing them in practice, which undermines the Confidence in the PJS.

1. Reformed on April 2, 2014 at the XVII Plenary Meeting of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit in Santiago de Chile.

The same report states that criminal investigations conducted by police and prosecutors are not effective, resulting in the lack of prosecution of perpetrators (Fundación Construir, 2021). In the report prepared by these institutions for the year 2022, it is established that there is a low level of Confidence among citizens in the institutions responsible for maintaining order, security, protecting the rights of the population, and addressing situations of rights violations. This index stands at 40.25 on a scale of 100 points (Fundación Construir & Plataforma Ciudadana por el Acceso a la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, 2023, p. 155).

All of this is compounded by the fact that some judicial authorities act unlawfully, as in the cases —known in early 2022— of a judge who illegally released a convict sentenced for the rape of more than seventy women (“Judge apprehended,” 2022); and of another judge who ordered the release of the perpetrator of the rape and murder of a girl (Corz, 2022). These cases drew the attention of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, who during his visit to Bolivia in February 2022 protested against these release processes and stated that Bolivia has a deep lack of Confidence in the judiciary (García-Sayán, 2022, para. 39).

Recently, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a judgment against Bolivia in the Angulo Losada case, establishing that this State is responsible for violating the rights to judicial guarantees, judicial protection, reasonable time of the process, and access to justice without discrimination on grounds of gender (Angulo Losada vs. Bolivia, 2022, para. 230) by obstructing a criminal process in the case of the sexual violence allegedly suffered by the victim. In this sense, the court expressed deep concern about the failures in the investigation and prosecution of the events that led, due to the passage of time, to the impunity of the present case. It reiterates that judicial inefficiency in individual cases of violence against women creates an environment of impunity that facilitates and promotes the repetition of acts of violence in general and sends a message that violence against women can be tolerated and accepted, thus promoting its perpetuation and social acceptance of the phenomenon, the feeling and sensation of insecurity among women, as well as a persistent distrust of them in the justice administration system. (Angulo Losada v. Bolivia, 2022, para. 183).

However, justice systems and their users will achieve their purposes if its components have synergy, strengthening themselves individually and collectively, and have Confidence among them. As Hardin (2006) argues, Confidence enables and makes cooperation easier. Thus, the relationship among key stakeholders involved in the management of VAWC will achieve its intended qualities and effects, to the extent that PJS officials have a firm expectation that their own colleagues, or officials in the same justice system, will act with probity, performing their tasks adequately (internal Confidence), and that users will trust that the staff will fulfill their duties with probity (external Confidence). A justice system will achieve its potential and fulfill its role when its key internal and external actors have Confidence in each other.

It should be noted that Confidence implies the belief, opinion, or perception that someone has about the suitability of someone or something (Oxford University Press, n. d.) to perform a certain role or activity. Therefore, Confidence can be weighed, as one can have a greater or lesser conviction that an individual or entity possesses these abilities. In this context, when considering the Confidence that key actors in the PJS have regarding the administration of justice in VAWC cases, the purpose is to assess their perception of the suitability of the PJS to fulfill its duties, and not the actual Performance of this system.

There are various ways to assess Confidence in criminal justice systems: applying criteria of independence, transparency, communication of actions, accountability, integrity, and responsibility (Fundación Construir, 2021); asking the public to evaluate the Performance of the system's personnel or even comparing Confidence levels in this system with those of other institutions (Roberts, 2007). In this research, the following criteria will be adopted to analyze the Confidence of key PJS stakeholders in the system itself: effectiveness of the PJS, efficiency, institutional fairness (International Justice Mission (IJM), personal communication, 2021), and sustainability of changes. The detail of each is presented below:

- **Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS:** Quantifying effectiveness serves to measure the extent to which an organization achieves its objectives (Bartuševičienė & Šakalytė, 2013). According to the IJM analysis framework, the effectiveness of the PJS should be evaluated as a whole and not in a fragmented manner through each institution. It not only analyzes overall effectiveness when PJS institutions administer justice regarding VAWC, but also whether they adhere to the law, carry out effective joint work, deter crime, and receive government support.
- **Confidence in the efficiency of the PJS:** Efficiency corresponds to the results achieved considering the conditions at hand (Bartuševičienė & Šakalytė, 2013). Following the IJM analysis framework the evaluation includes independence, timely response, accessibility, government support, and overall efficiency of the PJS when administering justice regarding VAWC.
- **Confidence in the institutional fairness of the PJS:** From a pragmatic standpoint, fairness was defined by IJM (personal communication, 2021) as the non-discriminatory and dignified treatment that the PJS provides to victims of VAWC. According to Article 14.II of the Bolivian Constitution, non-discriminatory treatment is understood as equal treatment of all individuals before the law without any distinctions. Regarding dignified treatment, it was taken from Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and is understood in this research as the humane, appropriate, and torture-free treatment that victims of physical and sexual violence, and those suspected of committing it, receive from the PJS.
- **Confidence in the sustainability of changes in the PJS:** As a contextual complement in this research, inquiries are also made about the perception of whether there are positive changes in the PJS and whether they will be sustainable over time.

Having specified these points, it is observed that, although the Confidence of users (external Confidence) in the Performance of the justice system in cases of VAWC was studied, internal Confidence of the Bolivian PJS on this issue has not received attention, despite its proven importance. Indeed, as seen in the emerging relevance and urgency of the context's needs, it is an extremely delicate sub-area of the justice system that deserves a concrete approach. Therefore, the present research seeks to evaluate the existing Confidence among key PJS actors in handling VAWC cases, to identify elements that contribute to generating a baseline for the formulation and adaptation of public policies aimed at improving that Confidence.

The general objective is broken down into four specific objectives related to Confidence in: a) the effectiveness of the PJS, b) the efficiency of the PJS, c) the institutional fairness of the PJS, and d) the sustainability of changes in the PJS.

These objectives are developed based on the following delimitations:

- Thematically, the study will focus on the existing Confidence in the effectiveness, efficiency, and institutional fairness of the PJS regarding VAWC, within the framework of the aforementioned terms.
- The analysis unit corresponds to the perception of Confidence of key actors involved in VAWC services.
- Geographically, the study is located in IJM's intervention municipalities in El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre, with Cochabamba as a control municipality.

VI.II.

RESULTS

This section presents and analyzes the results obtained in the research on Confidence in the PJS in relation to VAWC offenses in the municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre. Through meticulous data collection and application of measurement instruments, the Confidence of key actors in the Performance of the PJS in administering justice for these sensitive crimes in Bolivia was explored. The results provide a solid foundation for reflection and decision-making on this issue in our country.

In this regard, and within the framework proposed in the introduction and methodology, the results of this research are presented in the following order:

- *PJS effectiveness*, regarding its adherence to the law, effective joint work, crime deterrence capacity, and government support
- *Institutional efficiency*, in relation to independence, timely response, accessibility, and government support
- *Institutional fairness*, in terms of non-discriminatory treatment and dignified treatment
- *Sustainability of changes in the PJS*, concerning positive changes and their sustainability

Before presenting the results, three aspects must be highlighted. First, the results of each of the four mentioned dimensions are independent, which means that it is not simply a matter of adding four parts to determine Confidence in the PJS, rather each dimension implies a different evaluation. Second, this study presents the results obtained from key PJS stakeholders as a whole, whether they are system officials or not; however, in some cases, a comparison will be made between the perceptions of officials and non-officials to contrast them. Finally, although this research is carried out in the municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre —since IJM develops its activities related to the PJS there—, it also extends to the municipality of Cochabamba, with the aim of having a reference to contrast the findings. For this purpose, the comparison between these municipalities will be cross-sectional.

Confidence in the Effectiveness of the Public Criminal Justice System

The results reveal that, according to the perception of key stakeholders involved in the study, Confidence in the overall effectiveness of the PJS is only 21.7% of those surveyed

in the municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre. This percentage is consistent with each of the indicators proposed to assess the effectiveness of the PJS, as can be seen in Figure 6.1. Thus, it is observed that adherence to the law and effective joint work both receive a similar rating, at 23,3%, while Confidence in crime deterrence is at 15,5%, and government support at 17,2%.

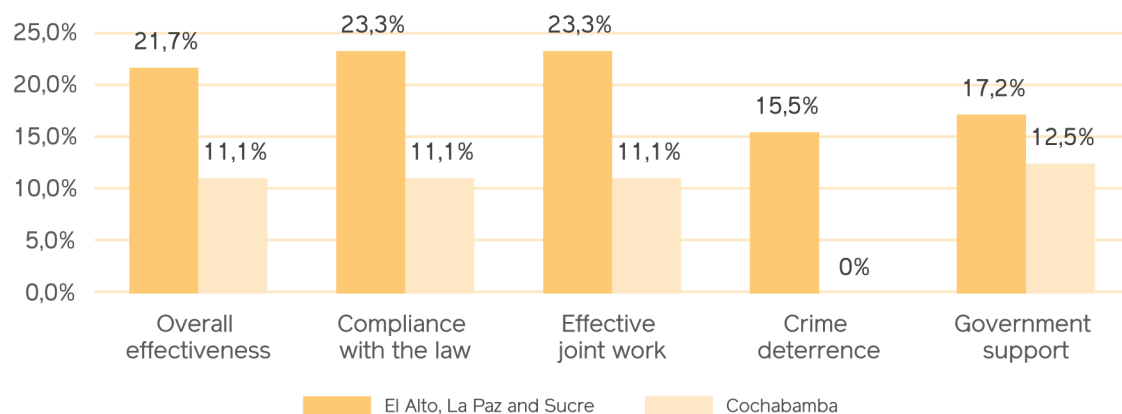
In the same figure, it is interesting to contrast what happens with the municipality of Cochabamba, which, in all cases, receives significantly lower ratings: 11,1% in its overall effectiveness, adherence to the law, and effective joint work. It even scores 0% regarding crime deterrence and achieves its highest Confidence in the effectiveness of the government support, at 12,5%.

These findings could imply that there is a widespread opinion that the PJS has acute deficiencies in its institutional and coordinated activity, which could affect the rights, guarantees, and freedoms of users. The lack of Confidence in the impartiality of the PJS is expressed in the opinion of one of the interviewees: “[The PJS] has a fairly male-dominant stance, even misogynistic; meaning, they blame the victim. They ask why she provoked [the aggressor]; they say they can’t cause the ‘civil death’ of the aggressor because he is a teacher or a politician.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant on November 11, 2022).

Similarly, it was stated that “justice is completely patriarchal, with a gender bias, adult-centered [...] and hardly objective” (personal communication with a non-official participant on September 21, 2022).

This situation could lead to the majority of people in situations of violence deciding not to demand their rights before the justice system or, even after having done so, later abandon the process, which reduces their Reliance in attempting to resolve their conflict through this means: “People grow weary, and many abandon their processes. They get tired of going to the Police, they get tired of going to the Prosecutor’s Office, they get tired of going to court and not getting an answer, you know?” (Personal communication with a non-official participant on September 27, 2022).

Figure 6.1. Confidence of Key Stakeholders in PJS Effectiveness in the Municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre, in Contrast to Cochabamba



Source: Own elaboration

The comparison of the data presented in Figure 6.2. reveals significant differences in Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS between officials and non-officials in the municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre. According to the officials surveyed, the overall Confidence in the PJS stands at 33.3%, while for non-officials, it is considerably lower at 10%. This suggests that there is a gap between internal and external Confidence in the indicators that contribute to the effectiveness of the PJS.

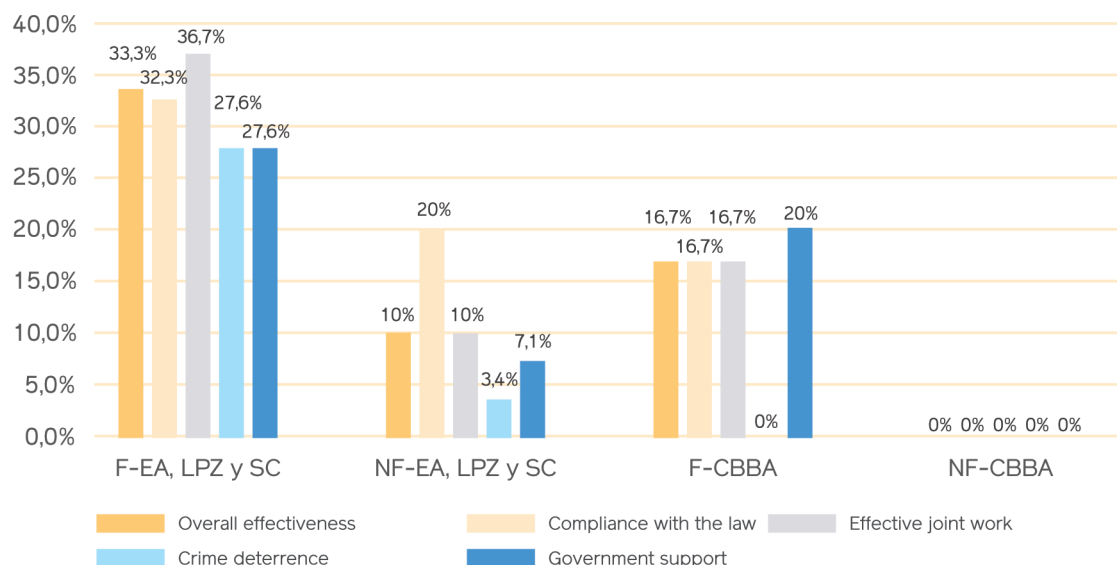
Regarding adherence to the law, it is the third highest rating given by officials (32.3%), while non-officials give it 20%. Although it is the highest-rated parameter by the latter group, the percentages of both sectors show little Confidence that criminal justice system personnel will deliver on their legal mandate when performing their duty of administering justice. This is expressed by one of the non-official individuals interviewed for this study: “That a rapist [against whom] there is all kinds of evidence [incriminating him] is declared innocent, and that this rapist requests family reunification from another judge and it is granted, and then [that] the victims, the sons, and daughters return to be with this person who has not even had psychological support is barbaric.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant on November 11, 2022).

Regarding effective joint work, officials show the highest rating, with 36.7%, while non-officials give it 10%. This highlights the need to promote greater coordination and collaboration among the different actors involved in the administration of justice for VAWC crimes to achieve more effective results.

In relation to crime deterrence, the lowest rating is recorded for both officials (27.6%) and non-officials (3.4%). This indicates that both types of stakeholders consider that the activity of the PJS does not decrease or prevent VAWC. This lack of Confidence causes in society: “A very high sense of helplessness and, on the other hand, it also results in the commission of these crimes being highly likely because this punishment is late, slow, or simply non-existent. So, in this vicious circle, we find that in the country there is a totally conscious, negligent, and hardly credible system.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant on October 13, 2022).

Finally, regarding government support, officials also rate it with the lowest score (27.6%), while non-officials give it 7.1%. As observed, although the perception gap between officials and non-officials is wide, both groups still have low Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS.

Figure 6.2. Confidence of Municipal Officials and Non-officials in PJS Effectiveness in the Municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre, in Relation to Cochabamba



Note. F: officials; NF: non-officials; EA: El Alto; LPZ: La Paz; Suc.: Sucre; Cbba.: Cochabamba

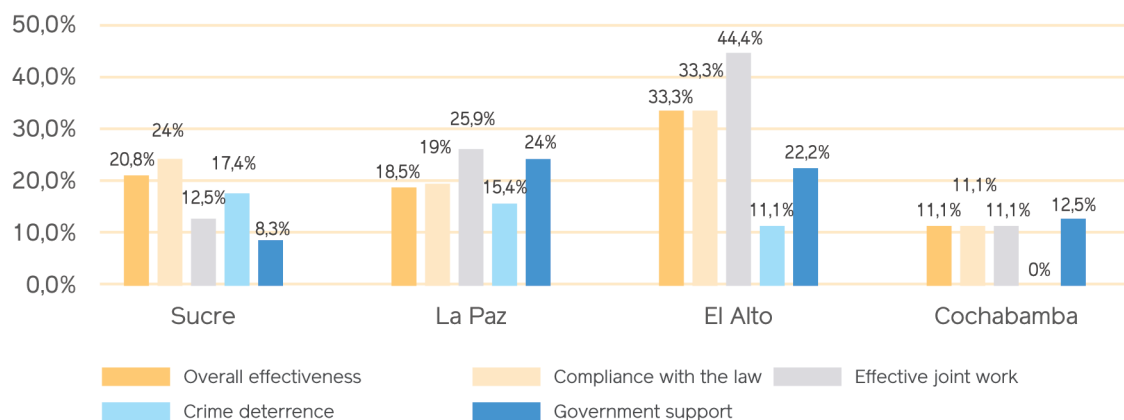
Source: Own elaboration

Figure 6.2. highlights that the participants from the control municipality scored lower compared to the intervention municipalities, even reaching an absolute lack of Confidence in the perception of non-official participants in all cases. In both groups of municipalities, both among officials and non-officials, crime deterrence receives the lowest ratings.

Confidence in the Effectiveness of the Public System of Criminal Justice, by Municipality

The results disaggregated in the studied municipalities, although they reveal different perceptions about the effectiveness of the PJS (see Figure 6.3.), in general, do not differ significantly. The lowest levels in Confidence were recorded in crime deterrence and government support for the PJS, while effective joint work, adherence to the law, and overall effectiveness received higher Confidence levels. These findings demonstrate the urgency of improving Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS and defining appropriate strategies for each context to improve the system's effectiveness in resolving VAWC crimes.

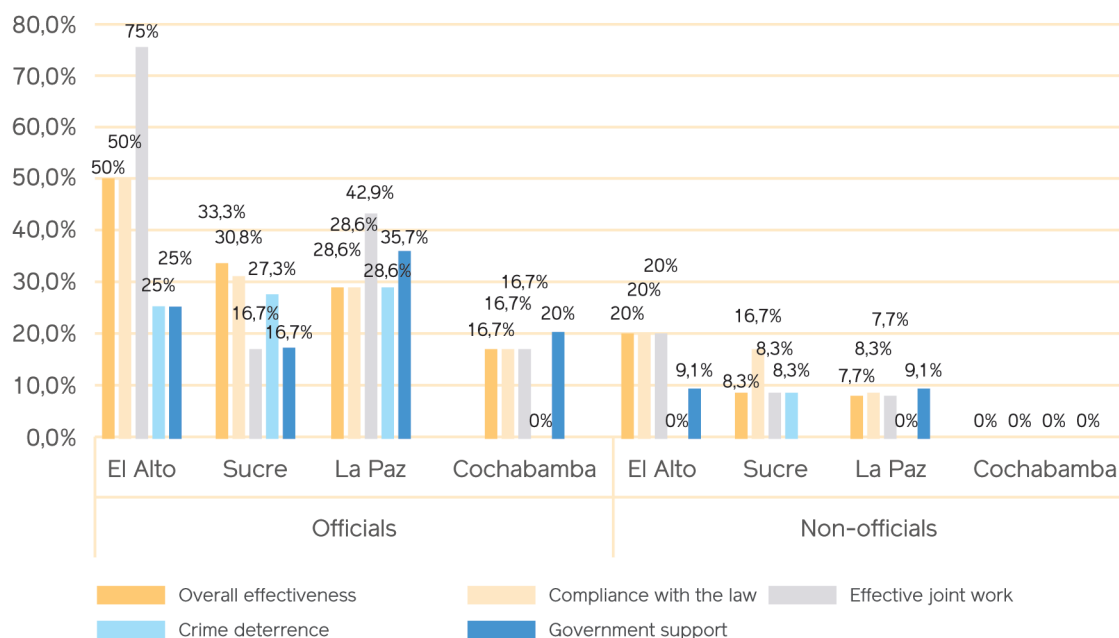
Figure 6.3. Confidence of Key Stakeholders in PJS Effectiveness Disaggregated by Municipality



Source: Own elaboration

The contrast observed between officials and non-officials can be seen, disaggregated by municipality, in Figure 6.4. It is remarkable that the PJS officials in the municipality of El Alto are the only ones expressing Confidence in joint work (75%), resulting in Cochabamba municipality registering the lowest scores in terms of effectiveness.

Figure 6.4. Confidence of Municipal Officials and Non-officials in PJS Effectiveness, from El Alto, La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba Disaggregated by Municipality



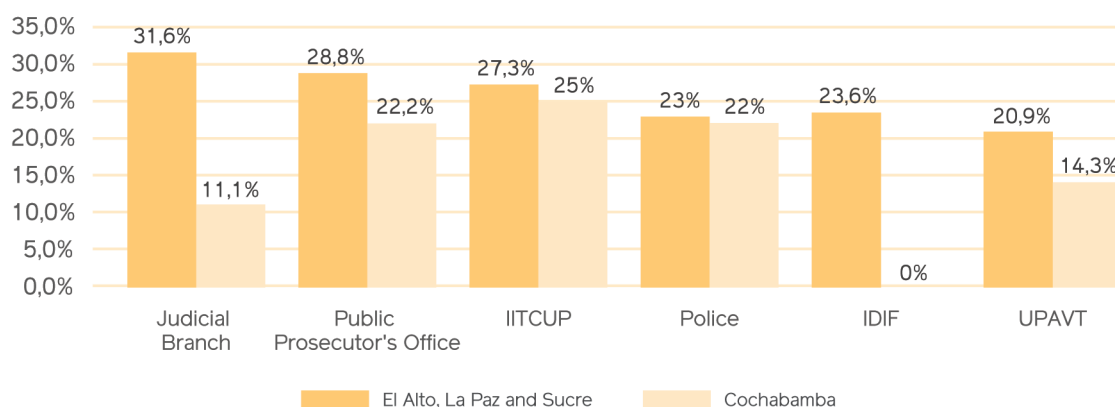
Source: Own elaboration

Confidence in the Institutional Efficiency of the Public Justice System

This section presents the results of the evaluation of the institutional efficiency of the PJS in relation to independence, timely response, accessibility, and government support. The results are presented disaggregated by PJS institution and organized by municipality, comparing the intervention municipalities with the control municipality.

Figure 6.5. shows the Confidence that PJS key stakeholders have in the efficiency of each system institution. This data shows the alarming situation of Confidence among PJS institutions, as ratings range from 31.6% Confidence for the Judicial Branch to 20.9% for the UPAVT. Contrasting this data with that of Cochabamba, lower ratings have been recorded in all cases in this municipality; especially regarding the IDIF —Cochabamba has completely lost all Confidence— and regarding the Judicial Branch (there is a gap of just over 20 points compared to the intervention municipalities). About the IDIF, there are certain peculiarities (as commented later in the “Cochabamba municipality” section), since, although it obtained a 0% Confidence rating on its overall efficiency and on the government support it receives, it scored 33.3% regarding its independence and 14.3% regarding its accessibility.

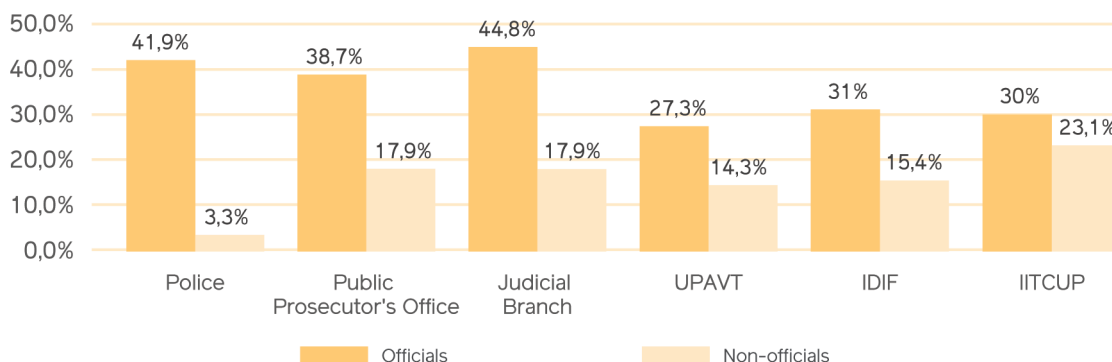
Figure 6.5. Confidence in the Overall Efficiency of PJS Institutions in Intervention Municipalities in Contrast with the Control Municipality



Source: Own elaboration

The overall efficiency of the PJS varies significantly among the evaluated institutions, both among officials and non-officials, as revealed in Figure 6.6. It stands out that the greatest Confidence gap in overall efficiency, between officials and non-officials, is regarding the Police (almost 39 points). In contrast, the smallest gap is verified with the IITCUP (almost 7 points), showing a closer perception between both groups regarding this last institution.

Figure 6.6. Confidence of Municipal Officials and Non-officials in the Overall PJS Efficiency, Considering All Intervention Municipalities

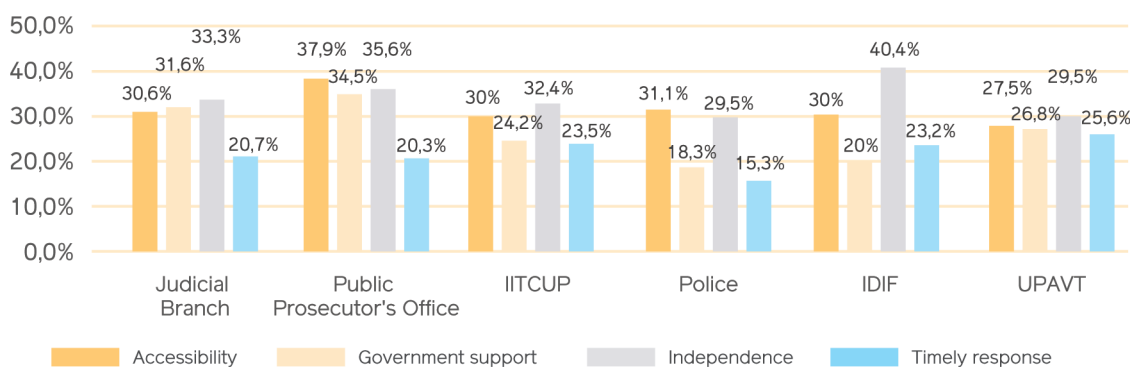


Source: Own elaboration

This contrast is manifested in the interviews. A non-official stated that: “I have absolutely no Confidence in the Bolivian justice system,” (Personal communication on September 23, 2022); while another official acknowledged that: “The entire administrative and judicial process in VAWC cases is very slow, and unfortunately, is damaging and reflects poorly on the officials themselves because they may be willing, but how they actually work with the facts is something else.” (Personal communication on September 27, 2022.)

Now, although it is expected that these differences exist between both types of participants, given that officials will normally have a better perception of their work because they know the difficulties and challenges faced on a daily basis, it is interesting how they, despite seeing themselves as comparatively better, end up having high percentages of lack of Confidence. In explaining this aspect, an official asserted that: “We lack too many things. We lack resources, economic means; training for all those who work in the system; a bit of empathy as human beings, as well.” (Personal communication with official participant on November 9, 2022.)

Figure 6.7. Confidence in PJS Efficiency, by Independence, Timely Response, Accessibility, and Governmental Support in Intervention Municipalities



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 6.7 shows low Confidence in the indicators for independence, timely response, accessibility, and governmental support in PJS institutions. However, Table 6.1 highlights that the highest scores correspond to independence, except in the case of the Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office, as in these institutions, accessibility is rated first and independence, second. Conversely, it is noteworthy that, except for the IDIF —whose lower Confidence refers to governmental support (20%)— in all other cases, the lowest rating corresponds to the timely response of the institutions, suggesting a perception of delayed justice by the PJS.

These contrasts highlight the need to take specific measures to improve Performance in the indicators where the institutions obtained lower scores. Furthermore, one can learn from the institutions that received higher scores to identify good practices and promote their implementation in other areas.

Table 6.1. Highest and Lowest Confidence Scores in PJS Efficiency in Intervention Municipalities

Institution	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Judicial Branch	Independence (33.3%)	Timely response (20.7%)
Public Prosecutor's Office	Accessibility (37.9%)	Timely response (20.3%)
IITCUP	Independence (32.4%)	Timely response (20%)
Police	Accessibility (31.1%)	Timely response (15.3%)
IDIF	Independence (40.4%)	Governmental support (20%)
UPAVT	Independence (29.5%)	Timely response (25.6%)

Source: Own elaboration

The procedural delay of the PJS is one of the most complex challenges affecting the fulfillment of the mandate for all its institutions. Although the law mandates preference for VAWC cases and requires officials to work on the processes to administering justice (that is, to handle cases *ex officio*, theoretically and supposedly making it unnecessary for victims to move processes after initiating them), in daily practice, this does not happen. In this regard, an official stated the following:

The law mandates transparent justice, without delays, a justice that applies certain principles. However, for justice operators, authorities who impart justice, in this case, the Judicial Branch, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Bolivian Police, the principle of expediency is null. It is null. If the victim or the complainant or plaintiff is going to follow up, is going to insist, only then will the files move "*ex officio*." The *ex officio* procedural drive does not exist in this country. The *ex officio* procedural drive is basically null. (Personal communication with official participant on December 14, 2022.)

This comparison between higher and lower scores also shows the relative strengths and weaknesses of each institution in each evaluated indicator in terms of Confidence; although, due to the low scores achieved it is difficult to consider that PJS institutions have

true strengths. In this sense, the situation of the Police is especially concerning since it is lagging in several indicators, especially in timely response and governmental support. Since Confidence in the Police is essential to ensure compliance with the law and citizen security, these low percentages could lead to a negative perception of citizen security and a lack of willingness of the population to collaborate with authorities in the prevention and resolution of crimes. These possibilities become more prominent when considering the almost non-existent Confidence in the overall efficiency of the Police by those who are not officials (as shown in Figure 6.6.).

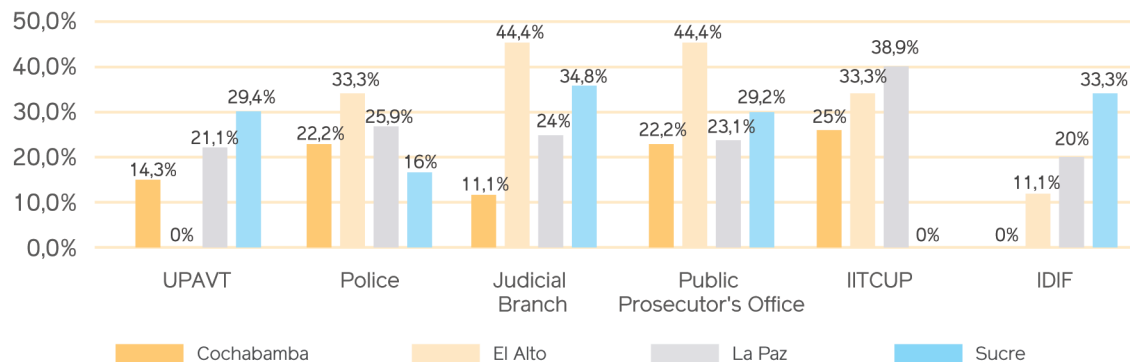
Consistent with this data, participants commented that a greater allocation of resources and support is required to address the large number of VAWC cases that arise daily, stating that otherwise, they will not be able to provide adequate responses to victims, especially in the most operational institutions of the PJS, including the Police. It is worth remembering that the Police plays an investigative and operational role in the development of the criminal process, under the direction of the Public Prosecutor's Office and judicial control. It is one of the institutions that has the most direct contact with VAWC victims during the investigative stage and "is the first institution to face the illicit incident." (Personal communication with official participant on October 3, 2022.)

However, this activity is unfeasible if the Police do not have the economic means, infrastructure, and other logistical support, as stated by a PJS institution official: "There is no full governmental support. I mean, we are asked to address feminicides, infanticides, etc., but if there are no supplies, what can we do?" (Personal communication with official participant on September 27, 2022.)

Institutional Efficiency of the Public Justice System, by Municipality

In order to analyze the institutional efficiency by municipality but before moving on to the specific examination of each, it is relevant to show Figure 6.8, which describes the global findings by municipality and institution, and provides a complete overview of PJS key stakeholders' perception about this matter. In this figure, the extremes stand out with a gap of 44 points between the 0% obtained by the UPAVT in El Alto, the IITCUP in Sucre, and the IDIF in Cochabamba, compared to 44.4% obtained by the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judicial Branch in El Alto. A participant rightly argued that efficiency "varies from city to city." (Personal communication with non-official participant on September 12, 2022.)

Figure 6.8. Confidence of Key Stakeholders in the Overall PJS Efficiency, disaggregated by Municipality



Source: Own elaboration

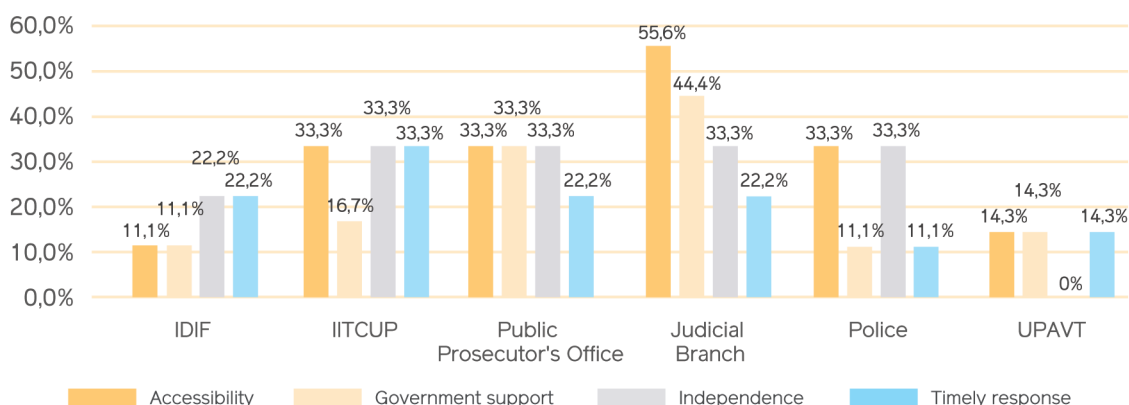
Next, an analysis by municipality and institutions is presented to understand the characteristics of each reality and to direct efforts towards the implementation of specific policies and measures that promote a reliable justice system. Since the results of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre are contrasted with those of Cochabamba, the data for this municipality is presented last for clarity. Additionally, a Confidence analysis of the efficiency of PJS institutions by municipality is presented according to the number of indicators with higher and lower ratings obtained in each of them. Finally, concluding this efficiency section, a global analysis is offered on the possibility of inter-institutional cooperation. The analysis includes quotes from testimonies of both officials and non-officials for a better understanding of the context.

Municipality of El Alto

As seen in Figure 6.9., El Alto recorded the lowest ratings for timely response for all institutions. The Judiciary was the PJS institution that obtained the highest Confidence ratings in accessibility (55,6%) and governmental support (44,4%), while the lowest Confidence in this municipality was recorded for the UPAVT, IDIF, and then the Police. However, Confidence is low in El Alto in all cases.

The Police deserves a particular mention for the contrast between its records on independence and accessibility (33,3%), and its data on timely response and governmental support (11,1%). In the former, the Police has similar Confidence ratings to most PJS institutions; in the latter, however, it has the lowest ratings, showing a negative perception of the delay in response and the absence of governmental support. Both factors could be intertwined, considering that the lack of means and resources hinders the Police from acting promptly as required in VAWC cases.

Figure 6.9. Confidence in PJS Efficiency in the El Alto Municipality by Sub-indicator



Source: Own elaboration

Municipality of La Paz

According to Figure 6.10., governmental support to PJS institutions in La Paz is the parameter that recorded the highest Confidence. Next are independence and accessibility, and lastly, timely response. However, there is low Confidence in all parameters. One official commented that much governmental support is needed for the Police to deal with VAWC cases:

There is a need for everything to better serve people. Because if they have to go here and there, providing services to a victim of rape and another victim of violence, there is no privacy. Also, we don't have paper to print or pens to write with, nor the money to go notify or accompany the victim to the IDIF or accompany them home. And there are not enough vehicles. (Personal communication with a participant official on September 13, 2022.)

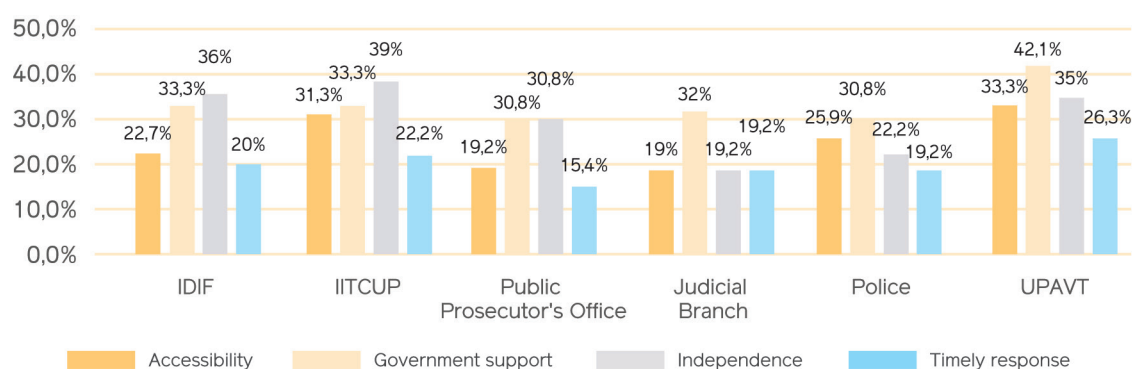
Some participants perceived the Judicial Branch as inaccessible, leading to criticism. For example, a PJS operator emphasized that she has not had the opportunity to meet with a judge, "I think they are at the top of the pyramid, unreachable even for us. Victims need an intermediary to access these people." It is also believed that if material and infrastructural deficiencies are resolved, this institution would be more accessible. (Personal communication with a participant official, December 2, 2022.).

Timely response of PJS institutions was the criterion that received the lowest Confidence in this municipality. The Judicial Branch and the Police received the lowest scores (both 19.2%), and the Prosecutor's Office, 15.4%. An official remarked about the judges, "Honestly, I don't know what they do. They take so long to respond. They even let... all the samples collected in a femicide case get all dusty that's how long it takes them..." In contrast, another official explained that the workload and the challenges it implies cause delays in the Judicial Branch, "Because of the number of cases. All they do is try to advance as much as they can with the cases, without knowing exactly what typology it is, what opinion they should give, and what priority they should give to some cases." (Personal communication with a participating official, November 16, 2022.)

Regarding the Public Prosecutor's Office, an PJS official justified the difficulties of this institution regarding speed and accessibility. He stated about prosecutors, "Unfortunately, like [in] many institutions, they do not have the tools. Even [physical] space is very limited." (Personal communication with a participating official, September 6, 2022.)

Participants also spoke sharply about the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office in this municipality, "The FELCV and the FELCC, or even the Police, catch the offender, go to the Public Prosecutor's Office, and somehow, I don't know what happens, but the perpetrator goes free." (Personal communication with a participating official on September 27, 2022.) Furthermore, a non-official explained that "the simple fact that a third of the cases have a conviction sentence [...] shows that [prosecutors] are not being very efficient." (Personal communication with a non-official participant on December 7, 2022.)

Figure 6.10. Confidence in PJS Efficiency in the La Paz Municipality by Sub-indicator

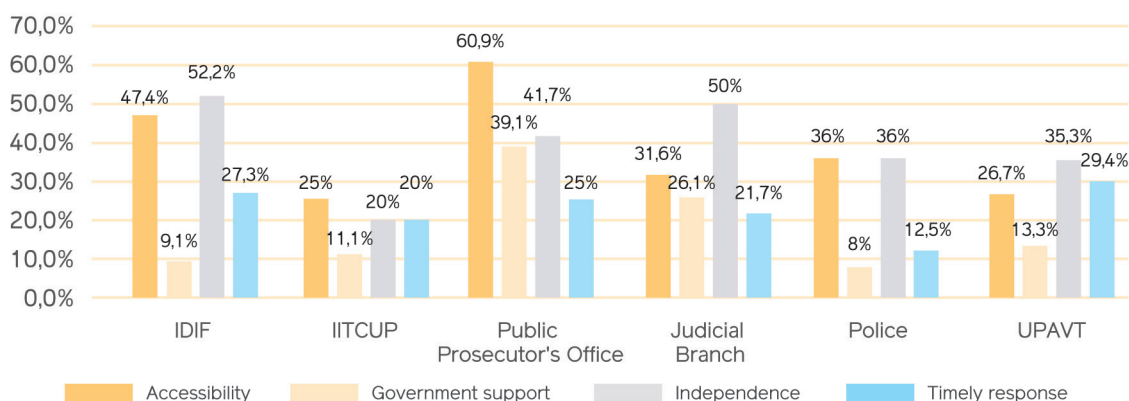


Source: Own elaboration

Municipality of Sucre

According to Figure 6.11, in the municipality of Sucre there is greater Confidence in the independence and accessibility of PJS institutions, less Confidence in their timely response, and even less in the governmental support they receive. Regarding specific institutions, the Public Prosecutor's Office is the highest-rated along with its research institute, IDIF. They are followed by the Judicial Branch and the UPAVT, while the least Confidence was expressed about the Police and its research institute, IITCUP. This difference in perceptions could suggest that IDIF and IITCUP are differentiated by the institutions they depend on. Thus, in an interview, an official commented, "The IITCUP, which is part of the Police, has even less endorsement than the IDIF, because IDIF is part of the Public Prosecutor's Office." Despite these differences, it is important to note that, in all cases, the percentages correspond to low Confidence.

Figure 6.11. Confidence in PJS Efficiency in the Sucre Municipality by Indicator



Source: Own elaboration

According to some interviewees, due to staff turnover, some new prosecutors lack sufficient experience and training. Likewise, others commented that these officials sometimes lack a gender perspective:

There are still [PJS officials] who have not understood the gender perspective and its application in cases involving women and child victims. And we continue to find accusations of sexual freedom violations against minors without evidence. Advance statements are non-existent for underage victims to prevent revictimization. (Personal communication with a participant official on October 18, 2022.)

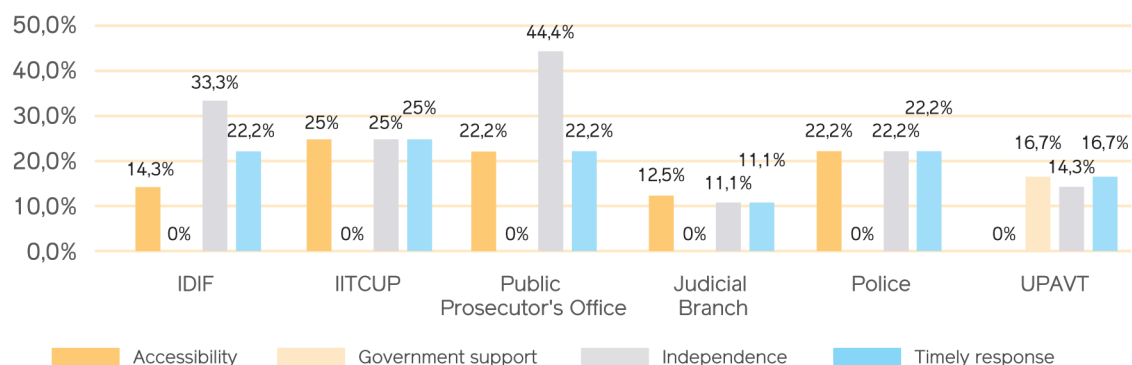
A similar situation would occur with the Police, as due to the frequent rotation of its personnel, new officials carry out their work without the benefit of the training offered to their predecessors. “For many years, training has been provided to personnel, to make them proficient in the matter, but unfortunately, turnover in this area always brings us back to square one.” (Personal communication with a participant official on November 25, 2022.)

In Sucre, it is believed that the Public Prosecutor’s Office (39.1%) and the Judicial Branch (26.1%) receive more governmental support than other PJS institutions. To confirm this assessment, an official explained, “We have what is necessary, we have supplies [and] computers. What we are missing is a larger building. We have personnel, but we need more prosecutors [and] assistants due to the excessive workload. But we are well-equipped.” (Personal communication with a participant official on September 16, 2022.)

Municipality of Cochabamba

From the analysis of the indicators of independence, timely response, accessibility, and governmental support in the different PJS institutions in Cochabamba (see Figure 6.12), the following results stand out:

Figure 6.12. Confidence in PJS Efficiency by Independence, Timely Response, Accessibility, and Governmental Support in the Cochabamba Municipality



Source: Own elaboration

All PJS institutions receive ratings equal to or lower than 25%, except for IDIF and the Public Prosecutor's Office, which stand out for their independence with scores of 33.3% and 44.4%, respectively. The Public Prosecutor's Office is one of the institutions that receives the highest Confidence from key PJS stakeholders. One testimony explained this preference, "Regarding the legal framework, prosecutors are much more aware both nationally and internationally, about treaties and international conventions that protect these vulnerable populations. The Public Prosecutor's Office is indeed aware." (Personal communication with a participant official on October 3, 2022.)

Another official pointed out that the Public Prosecutor's Office does positive work, "It does everything mandated by law. It does everything that is in the law with the resources it has, and [its officials] assist the victim and not only assist the victim but also ensure that the aggressor is punished." (Personal communication with a participant official on December 2, 2022.)

On the other hand, it is evident that in this municipality, governmental support was consistently rated at 0%, except for the 16.7% granted to the UPAVT. This underscores the need to improve government support and collaboration for the functioning of the PJS. Compared to the other institutions evaluated, the Judicial Branch has the lowest percentages of all indicators, except for accessibility (the UPAVT has lower results). Regarding its independence (11.1%), from the public service standpoint, the Judicial Branch, "If it complied with those two norms, Law 348 and 1970, and all the new ones inherent to them and followed the principle of independence, Confidence would be complete. But we know that there is no independence." (Personal communication with a participant official on December 2, 2022). These findings suggest that the Judicial Branch faces significant challenges in Confidence and it is the institution requiring the most attention in this municipality.

Possibility of Inter-institutional Coordination

The findings collected show that institutions responsible for handling VAWC cases have little Confidence in the institutional effectiveness of the PJS, meaning there is a lack of overall Confidence in the system. This shows that the criminal justice system hardly ever acts or could act as a coordinated system or whole. The low Confidence among PJS institu-

tions implies that each institution hesitates on the usefulness of its attributions, possibly assuming that others will not fulfill theirs. This situation can undermine and hinder the necessary coordination to achieve the ultimate goal of delivering justice in VAWC cases. The prevailing lack of Confidence between institutions thus becomes a serious challenge and even an obstacle.

For these reasons, it is not surprising that participants expressed little or no coordination between PJS institutions to allow it to perform organically as one. An official commented that the general lack of coordination does not allow progress, “Although institutions work in the fight against gender-based violence and VAC, the lack of coordination remains a stumbling block.” (Personal communication with a participant official, September 20, 2022.)

PJS institutions are not individual entities that can work independently to resolve VAWC cases. On the contrary, all must relate to and coordinate within the framework of the law, respecting their hierarchies and responsibilities in order for criminal justice to function as a system. In this study, participants often referred to the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Judicial Branch as axis for inter-institutional coordination tasks, perhaps because they occupy central positions in the investigation stage and require constant interaction to achieve their objectives. In this context, the testimonies collected expressed strong criticism of their coordination roles: “Not all investigative action depends on the Bolivian Police,” as their efforts and actions “are directed by the Public Prosecutor’s Office and courts,” so “if it cannot be met one hundred percent, it is because there is no coordination or urgency with the Public Prosecutor’s Office and courts.” (Personal communication with a participant official, December 6, 2022.)

It was also emphasized that there is not even coordination in simpler and operational aspects, such as the delivery of reports from the institutions to the Public Prosecutor’s Office:

We have to stand in line on the street along with other people who are doing personal procedures, including lawyers. And if it’s already four o’clock, the door closes. And we, who only [needed] to turn in a report in response to [prosecutorial] requirements, no longer have access [...] [to the Prosecutor’s Office]. I believe that, from that point on, the Public Prosecutor’s Office [has] failed, because it’s not like we are processing personal matters. We are trying to submit reports, within the possibilities of the existing workload, that can help the investigation to continue. (Personal communication with a participating official, December 2, 2022.)

In contrast, an official stated that the lack of collaboration from other institutions with the Public Prosecutor’s Office prevents them from fulfilling their obligations in a timely manner: “I have more requests than answers, which prevents me from moving [forward with the process] in a reasonable time. It is not up to me, but rather on... the work with various institutions... We don’t have the necessary support when we need that documentation. (Personal communication with a participating official, September 16, 2022.)

Highlighting this lack of coordination, it was observed that “the Public Prosecutor’s Office obviously has a very strict relationship with the Police; the relationship is not all that fluid between the two.” (Personal communication with a participating official, October 3, 2022). Furthermore, it was mentioned that the efforts of the UPAVT are frustrated by a lack of coordination with the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Police. In the following statement, the Public Prosecutor’s Office was urged to carry out joint and collaborative tasks:

They should coordinate with the FELCV, with the FELCC, with us, with the different programs in the different municipalities, because if we take action and carry out the corresponding actions, it is because we are somehow conducting an in-depth investigation. But there comes a time when the [Public] Ministry releases the offender. (Personal communication with a participating official, September 27, 2022.)

The results call for improved Confidence and thus coordination between PJS institutions to have better attention in VAWC cases. “There has to be direct coordination. I’m talking about an ‘internalized’ coordination [in] all these institutions. And that opportunity is a two-way information exchange, which has not yet materialized.” (Personal communication with a participating official, December 7, 2022).

To build an effective justice system, it is necessary to foster a collaborative attitude among the stakeholders involved, urging them to be proactive bridge-builders between institutions. This stance is more necessary and useful than adopting a purely critical position, focused solely on identifying the alleged perpetrator. Collaboration between justice system institutions is essential to efficient and equitable operations in the system. This implies committing to a broader approach and addressing challenges comprehensively seeking solutions and improvements in the system as a whole to strengthen it.

Confidence in the institutional fairness of the Criminal Public Justice System

This section presents the Confidence findings related to the institutional fairness of the PJS, first considering the overall results obtained in all municipalities and then disaggregating them by municipality and institution. Two central criteria were considered in this indicator: non-discriminatory treatment and dignified treatment provided by institutions when fulfilling their roles regarding VAWC.

As shown in Table 6.2, there are low percentages of Confidence in the fairness of the PJS regarding its dignified and non-discriminatory treatment. They range from 20% to 34.4%, indicating deficiencies in how these institutions treat individuals who come in contact with them.

Table 6.2. Confidence of Key Stakeholders in PJS Fairness

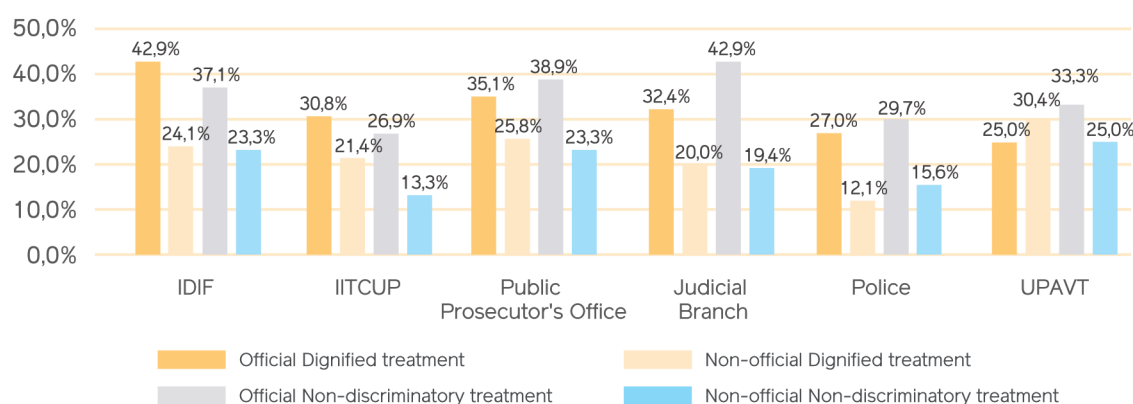
Sub-Indicator	Judicial Branch	Public Ministry	IITCUP	Police	IDIF	UPAVT
Dignified Treatment	26,6%	30,9%	27,5%	20,0%	34,4%	27,7%
Non-discriminatory Treatment	31,8%	31,8%	22,0%	23,2%	30,8%	29,2%

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding dignified treatment, the IDIF (34.4%) and the Police (20%) stand out as having the highest and lowest Confidence among PJS institutions, with a difference of just over fourteen percentage points. In the rest of the institutions, there are no Confidence differences exceeding four percentage points. Concerning non-discriminatory treatment, both the Judicial Branch and the Public Prosecutor's Office share equal Confidence (31.8%), followed closely by IDIF (30.8%) and UPAVT (29.2%). In contrast, the Police (23.2%) and IITCUP (22%) are the institutions receiving the lowest Confidence ratings.

Figure 6.13 illustrates the differences in Confidence between PJS officials and non-officials for institutional fairness regarding dignified and non-discriminatory treatment. The Confidence of officials in the fairness of PJS institutions is higher than that of non-officials, except in one case: Confidence in the dignified treatment by UPAVT. This trend is similar to that recorded in the previous section on PJS efficiency.

Figure 6.13. Confidence of Municipal Officials and Non-officials in PJS Fairness



Source: Own elaboration

Institutional Fairness of the Public Justice System, by Municipality

According to the data shown in Table 6.3, Sucre is the municipality with the greatest contrasts, as it records high Confidence in the dignified service provided by IDIF (45.5%) and no Confidence in IITCUP (0%). These ratings are the most extreme recorded in the analyzed municipalities. This situation follows the same trend in terms of efficiency in these institutions. A similar situation occurs for the Public Prosecutor's Office (33.3%) — on which the IDIF depends— compared to the Police (16%), on which IITCUP depends.

Table 6.3. Institutional Confidence in Dignified Treatment, by Municipality

	El Alto	La Paz	Sucre	Cochabamba
IDIF	22,2%	29,2%	45,5%	33,3%
IITCUP	33,3%	41,2%	0,0%	25,0%
Public Prosecutor's Office	44,4%	19,2%	33,3%	44,4%
Judicial Branch	33,3%	20,8%	31,8%	22,2%
Police	22,2%	22,2%	16,0%	22,2%
UPAVT	14,3%	27,8%	37,5%	16,7%

Source: Own elaboration

A horizontal reading of Table 6.3 reveals which institutions are most trusted in dignified treatment among the municipalities studied. The Public Prosecutor's Office and the IDIF stand out, followed by the Judicial Branch, IITCUP, UPAVT, and, lastly, the Police. These results suggest a need to focus attention on the institutions that received less Confidence to strengthen the quality of treatment they provide.

It is noteworthy that El Alto is where Confidence is higher in more PJS institutions to provide dignified treatment compared to the other municipalities. It has the highest scores for three institutions: the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judicial Branch, and the Police (the rating is the same in Cochabamba and La Paz). It is followed, with two institutions each, by the municipalities of La Paz (IITCUP and the Police) and Sucre (IDIF and UPAVT). Interestingly, these municipalities also record the lowest ratings for dignified treatment: In El Alto, regarding IDIF and UPAVT; in La Paz, regarding the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judicial Branch; and in Sucre, regarding the IITCUP and the Police.

During the interviews, some criticism was made of PJS institutions in various aspects. For example, one official stated that they have become dehumanized, and another stated that sometimes the Police are insensitive to victims: "For them, they are not dealing with people, they are dealing with cases. So, they do not see the person from the perspective of a victim. They just see another case, just another number." (Personal communication with participant official, September 29, 2022). Furthermore, the Police: "Does not have psychological therapy programs for [officials to] release all those emotions that build up at work." (Personal communication with participant official, September 13, 2022). "The overload and stress they have as officers reduces the quality [of the treatment]" (Personal communication with a non-official participant, September 19, 2022). On the other hand, it was expressed that the Police often provide preferential treatment depending on who reports and with whom: "It is not the same when a person from the countryside [or] a person from the city reports" (Personal communication with an official participant, September 29, 2022).

Additionally, interviews suggested that some institutions within the PJS often evade the responsible exercise of their functions. For example, it was mentioned that investigative institutes often omit the truth in their reports: "Especially in cases of rape, all cases are elastic hymen" [alleging no rape was thus committed]; (Personal communication with a

non-official participant, November 16, 2022). “These difficulties are exacerbated because personnel are constantly changed from position to position.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant, September 21, 2022).

According to the participants in this study, PJS officials often treat people seeking services poorly and often do not consider appropriate approaches to handle cases of VAWC. It is common for professionals working in these institutions to lack knowledge on how to address “gender perspectives, training on how to handle children or intercultural [awareness] in cases of sexual violence. There is no specialized staff for the treatment of violence” (Personal communication with a non-official participant, November 16, 2022).

One interviewee commented: “I know cases in which victims have not been treated with the sensitivity that victims of sexual violence deserve, particularly. And sometimes they show prejudice or express the typical stereotypes in how they treat women” (Personal communication with an official participant, September 13, 2022). It is appropriate “not to treat children or women as if they are to blame for what has happened to them.” (Personal communication with an official participant, December 2, 2022).

Furthermore, it is argued that PJS institutions require greater governmental support to provide better treatment, as they are understaffed and have heavy workloads (Personal communication with an official participant, November 7, 2022). To its users: “They have them go from desk to desk, they tell them to come back. It takes months. The prosecutor has already rejected us and they still haven’t made the report or they have lost it, etc., etc. Or they have changed personnel. It’s a total tragedy.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant, September 27, 2022).

This worsens with the creation of more bureaucratic obstacles, as commented regarding the IDIF: “Getting the physical evaluation and forensic examination was very simple before. We prepared a coordination sheet; it was entered into the computer system and then we proceeded. However, now... you have to request a form from the prosecutor, which sometimes takes time, because there are no prosecutors on duty on Saturdays and Sundays, and/or because they are in other proceedings.” (Personal communication with an official participant, November 25, 2022).

Some testimonies indicated that the delays incurred by forensic investigation institutes also cause delays in VAWC processes: “There are not enough professionals. And, well, the Confidence level drops because they take too long, as they are scientific studies. When I have a trial scheduled for a certain date and the IDIF has not yet done any work, it has to be rescheduled.” (Personal communication with an official participant, October 3, 2022).

Final Contrasts on the Confidence placed in the Public Justice System

After presenting the findings on Confidence in effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness in the previous sections, this section offers a final and concise comparison among the four municipalities, regarding each of the classes of Confidence investigated.

Table 6.4 shows that in the municipality of El Alto, the highest Confidence ratings were given to effectiveness. La Paz and Sucre follow, while Cochabamba obtained the lowest ratings. It is noteworthy that, despite the best perception of effectiveness in El Alto, one of the lowest ratings of Confidence in crime deterrence was recorded there. Sucre recorded the highest score in this aspect.

Table 6.4. Comparison of Confidence Perception in PJS Effectiveness in the Municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba

Municipality	Overall Effectiveness	Adherence to the Law	Effective Joint Work	Crime Deterrence	Governmental Support
El Alto	33,3%	33,3%	44,4%	11,1%	22,2%
La Paz	18,5%	19%	25,9%	15,4%	24%
Sucre	20,8%	24%	12,5%	17,4%	8,3%
Cochabamba	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	0%	12,5%

Note: For a visual appreciation of the results in the table, colors are assigned according to the following Confidence percentages: 90% or more, 70% to 89%, 50% to 69% and 49% or less. Likewise, the municipalities are ordered in the table from the best rating summed horizontally to the lowest rating.

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding Confidence in institutional efficiency, Table 6.5 shows that in the municipality of La Paz, better ratings were given to the IITCUP in general, except for timely response time. The Police also received better ratings, although Confidence decreases significantly in their timely response and governmental support. Likewise, the UPAVTs were also better rated in this municipality.

In Sucre, there is greater Confidence in the IDIF —except regarding the governmental support it receives— and in the Public Prosecutor’s Office, in general. In El Alto, greater Confidence was generally given to the Judicial Branch. In contrast, Cochabamba recorded the lowest Confidence in the IITCUP, regarding its accessibility and the governmental support it receives, although it obtained better ratings in the remaining indicators. In this municipality, the Public Prosecutor’s Office is perceived differently: with higher ratings in independence and timely response, but with the lowest regarding its accessibility and the governmental support it receives, making it a particular case.

The Judicial Branch and the Police also reported lower Confidence in this municipality, except for the timely response time of the latter entity mentioned. In Cochabamba, this indicator was rated with the highest Confidence, compared to the other municipalities.

In El Alto, lower Confidence was given to the IDIF, except regarding the governmental support it receives; the perception in this regard is the second highest compared to the remaining municipalities. Confidence in the UPAVT is also the lowest in this municipality.

Table 6.5. Comparison of Confidence Perception in PJS Efficiency in the Municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba

	Municipality	Independence	Timely Response	Accessibility	Governmental Support
IDIF	Sucre	52,2%	27,3%	47,4%	9,1%
	La Paz	36,0%	20,0%	22,7%	33,3%
	Cochabamba	33,3%	22,2%	14,3%	0%
	El Alto	22,2%	22,2%	11,1%	11,1%
IITCUP	La Paz	39,0%	22,2%	31,3%	33,3%
	El Alto	33,3%	33,3%	33,3%	16,7%
	Sucre	20,0%	20,0%	25,0%	11,1%
	Cochabamba	25,0%	25,0%	25,0%	0%
Public Prosecutor's Office	Sucre	41,7%	25,0%	60,9%	39,1%
	El Alto	33,3%	22,2%	33,3%	33,3%
	La Paz	30,8%	15,4%	19,2%	30,8%
	Cochabamba	44,4%	22,2%	22,2%	0%
Judicial Branch	El Alto	33,3%	22,2%	55,6%	44,4%
	Sucre	50,0%	21,7%	31,6%	26,1%
	La Paz	19,2%	19,2%	19,0%	32%
	Cochabamba	11,1%	11,1%	12,5%	0%
Police	La Paz	22,2%	19,2%	25,9%	30,8%
	Sucre	36,0%	12,5%	36,0%	8,0%
	El Alto	33,3%	11,1%	33,3%	11,1%
	Cochabamba	22,2%	22,2%	22,2%	0%
UPAVT	La Paz	35,0%	26,3%	33,3%	42,1%
	Sucre	35,3%	29,4%	26,7%	13,3%
	Cochabamba	14,3%	16,7%	0%	16,7%
	El Alto	0%	14,3%	14,3%	14,3%

Note: For a visual appreciation of the results in the table, colors are assigned according to the following Confidence: 90% or more, 70% to 89%, 50% to 69% and 49% or less. Likewise, the municipalities are ordered in the table from the one with the best ratings summed horizontally to the one with the lowest ratings.

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding institutional fairness, Table 6.6 shows that in the municipality of El Alto, there was generally greater Confidence in the fair and non-discriminatory treatment of PJS institutions, with the exception of cases involving the IDIF and the UPAVT. On the other hand, in the municipality of La Paz, lower ratings were given, except in the case of the IITCUP and the Police regarding their fair treatment, and the IITCUP regarding its non-discriminatory treatment.

Table 6.6. Comparison of Confidence Perception in PJS Efficiency in the Municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, Sucre, and Cochabamba

Fairness	Municipality	IDIF	IITCUP	Public Prosecutor's Office	Judicial Branch	Police	UPAVT
Dignified Treatment	El Alto	22,2%	33,3%	44,4%	33,3%	22,2%	14,3%
	Sucre	45,5%	0%	33,3%	31,8%	16%	37,5%
	Cochabamba	33,3%	25%	44,4%	22,2%	22,2%	16,7%
	La Paz	29,2%	41,2%	19,2%	20,8%	22,2%	27,8%
Non-discriminatory Treatment	El Alto	11,1%	33,3%	37,5%	44,4%	62,5%	28,6%
	Sucre	54,5%	0%	34,8%	43,5%	16%	37,5%
	Cochabamba	33,3%	25,0%	55,6%	11,1%	22,2%	16,7%
	La Paz	16%	27,8%	19,2%	24%	18,5%	26,3%

Note: For a visual appreciation of the results in the table, colors are assigned according to the following Confidence: 90% or more, 70% to 89%, 50% to 69% and 49% or less. Likewise, the municipalities are ordered in the table from the one with the best ratings summed horizontally to the one with the lowest ratings.

Source: Own elaboration

Confidence in Identified Changes and their Sustainability

In response to the generic question of whether they perceive a positive change or significant progress in the Performance of the justice system, participants responded favorably with 56.9% and negatively with 43.1%. Participants frequently highlighted as a favorable change the modification and updating of laws and legal norms in Bolivia, both locally and internationally, related to the protection of victims, punishment of crimes, and management of VAWC cases. However, all agree that the laws are not enforced: “We have wonderful regulations, but they are not enforced” (Personal communication with a non-official participant, November 21, 2022).

This deficiency can occur, for example, due to the lack of human capital, as this interviewee states: “They need real leaders who know about administration, who not only theorize.” (Personal communication with an official participant, October 3, 2022). The lack of application of laws may also be due to economic deficiencies: “They come up with laws and provisions for advanced regulations, which I find wonderful, but they have to have economic support.” (Personal communication with an official participant, October 3, 2022).

Other positive changes were identified, such as the school for judges and prosecutors, which contributes to having a focus on women and children (Personal communication with a non-official participant, November 3, 2022), and to make VAWC visible before society and the justice sector. Therefore, there are more and more complaints about this issue: “People did not lodge complaints, but now we are overflowing with complaints, we are overwhelmed with cases.” (Personal communication with an official participant, September 16, 2022).

On the other hand, when participants were asked if the (positive) change or progress identified was sustainable, the majority stated that it is sustainable (61.8%); some said it is not very sustainable (35.3%), and only one person said that the change or progress is not sustainable (2.9%): “I believe there is a small change, at least in that: in acknowledging some data and crimes. But the change is not present in implementation. That’s why I said it is not really sustainable. Because it is pointless to have good regulations in several areas dealing with violence against women and children if they are not going to be implemented.” (Personal communication with a non-official participant, August 30, 2022).

As can be seen, these global perceptions are more encouraging than those related to Confidence placed in the PJS and its institutions in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness. However, since this optimism focuses mainly on legislative changes –the training of judges and prosecutors, as well as the more active behavior of complainants–, it does not necessarily translate into a favorable change in the Performance of the PJS. This situation could explain the existing contrast between the more favorable ratings obtained in these aspects and the less favorable findings regarding Confidence in the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the system. In other words, although positive changes have been implemented and the possibility exists for their sustainability, these seem to be insufficient to increase the Confidence of key stakeholders in the Performance of the justice system.

VI.III. CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the Confidence of key stakeholders in the PJS regarding the handling of VAWC cases in the intervention municipalities of El Alto, La Paz, and Sucre, as well as in the control municipality, Cochabamba. This objective was broken down into specific objectives to evaluate Confidence in the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the PJS’s institutions, as well as the sustainability of the positive changes it underwent.

In this framework, the results obtained illustrate that in the studied municipalities, there is low Confidence in the effectiveness of the PJS and in the efficiency and fairness of its institutions. On the other hand, results show that there is a better Confidence rating vis-à-vis the positive changes in the justice system and in its sustainability. However, these better ratings are not related to PJS Performance but to legislative modifications, training of judges and prosecutors, and the increase in complaints in cases of VAWC. The Confidence perceptions gathered in this study are shared by both officials and non-officials of the system, although it is highlighted that officials show greater Confidence than non-officials.

The low Confidence situation identified in this research coincides with the results of the “World Values Survey,” which not only places Bolivia among the countries with the highest

overall distrust but also among those with the lowest Confidence in their courts and police institutions (Citizenship, Community of Social Studies and Public Action, 2019, pp. 37-41).

To develop these conclusions, the aspects identified as deserving of lower Confidence are addressed, some differences between the studied municipalities are described, and some possible consequences and recommendations are discussed below.

Aspects Deserving of Lower Confidence

Regarding the effectiveness of the PJS, lower Confidence refers to its capacity to deter crime and the absence of governmental support. According to the testimonies collected, this is mainly due to the lack of sufficient and trained personnel in PJS institutions to address the constant demands of VAWC cases, the inadequate infrastructure of the system, and the lack of minimal resources.

The Fundación Construir and the Plataforma Ciudadana por el Acceso a la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (2021; 2023), in their reports on the state of justice in Bolivia, support these findings and describe a scant state willingness to support the justice system. In this sense, they recommend greater support be given to it, allocating a reasonable budget, and generating public policies that enable its institutionalization, independence, and effectiveness. On the other hand, it is observed that the lower Confidence in institutional efficiency is related to the lack of timely response among the justice institutions themselves and to the requests of the users.

These situations are also concomitant with similar results on low Confidence in the dignified and non-discriminatory treatment provided by PJS institutions. Given that PJS officials are overwhelmed with the cases and work they handle, they may experience fatigue, dehumanization, and lack of interest. It can be inferred that PJS institutions delay in addressing VAWC cases due to the low governmental support they receive. For example, the lack of sufficient PJS personnel to address the number of existing cases causes delays, and this deficiency can also negatively affect crime deterrence. Chalfin and McCrary (2017) present robust data on the deterrent effect when there is more personnel in police forces and there is a prompt response to crime.

In line with this reality, Sampietro-Arruba (2008) deems it necessary to rethink the criminal justice system by humanizing it, avoiding its massification, and supporting victims with a democratic criminal policy that provides effective solutions.

Some Differences Between the Intervention Municipalities

The existing low Confidence in the PJS or its institutions, as described in the obtained results, shows variations among the municipalities and the analyzed institutions. These differences could be due, as explained by Indermaur and Roberts (2009), to people, who instead of seeing the criminal justice system as a whole, see each component individually.

Regarding the effectiveness of the PJS, the municipality of El Alto presents the best ratings, while Cochabamba obtained the lowest. Regarding institutional efficiency, the best ratings are in the municipalities of La Paz (IITCUP, Police, and UPAVT), Sucre (IDIF and Public Prosecutor's Office), and El Alto (Judicial Branch); and the lowest in Cochabamba (IITCUP, Judicial Branch and Police), El Alto (IDIF and UPAVT), and La Paz (Public Prosecutor's Office). Finally, regarding Confidence in dignified and non-discriminatory treatment by

PJS institutions, the municipality of El Alto shows the highest ratings in contrast to La Paz, which received the lowest.

However, although it is urgent to concentrate greater efforts and interventions in those municipalities where extreme low Confidence situations are present, it seems advisable to do so with a comprehensive vision that also considers their greatest strengths, as these are possibilities that can be used to increase the existing Confidence. This would be the case, for example, in the lack of Confidence in the efficiency of the justice system in El Alto (except in the case of the Judicial Branch), in contrast to the relatively greater Confidence that exists in that municipality for the effectiveness and dignified and non-discriminatory treatment provided by the Public Prosecutor's Office, the IITCUP, the Judicial Branch, and the Police. In this way, it would be possible to improve the equitable and non-discriminatory treatment of some institutions to increase Confidence in the efficiency of the others. There are lessons learned from isolated experiments where, for example, greater fairness in justice resulted in an increased Confidence in the legitimacy of the system (Sherman, 2001).

In the same line, Confidence stands out in Sucre regarding the accessibility and governmental support received by the Public Prosecutor's Office; the independence of the Judicial Branch and the dignified and non-discriminatory treatment provided; the independence, timely response time, accessibility, and fairness of the IDIF; and the independence and accessibility of the Police. Among the contrasting factors between Sucre and the other municipalities, a consideration is that, e.g., the Supreme Court of Justice, the Plurinational Constitutional Court, and the Attorney General's Office are based in this municipality. This would also explain the lower number of reports of sexual violence occurring in the department of Chuquisaca (505, approximately 5% of the entire country in 2022) compared to the department of La Paz (1,908, about 21% in 2022) and Cochabamba (1,519, around 17% in the same year), according to data from the Gender Observatory of the Coordinadora de la Mujer (2022).

Some Possible Consequences and Recommendations

Confidence facilitates cooperation (Velásquez Salazar, 2021) and coordination among public stakeholders to fulfill their purpose. It allows system users to have greater Confidence in the capabilities of public actors to achieve those goals and is generally a symptom of healthy societies (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). In contrast, the low Confidence identified in the study could suggest a severe difficulty among PJS institutions to harmonize joint actions and achieve their expected objectives.

If the PJS institutions do not see themselves as capable to act effectively, efficiently, or fairly against VAWC, the public will also not have certainty on their real capacity to confront crime. As Verduzco Chávez (2017) argues in the case of the police, it is a “circular and cumulative” problem of delegitimization of the security institutions due to the low Confidence they see in themselves and the little Confidence that the community has in them.

On the other hand, since it is a system in which each institution influences the others and the intermediate and final results, it can be argued that this widespread low Confidence could cause system users to abandon their judicial processes. Despite the proactive work that the law requires from the PJS in prosecuting crimes against VAWC, their work often faces the abandonment of cases due to the PJS's heavy workload. This phenomenon leads, in the long term, to the closing of processes, which generates greater distrust, lack of Reliance in the system and in the application of the law, in addition to impunity for the

perpetrator, frustration in the victims, and the resulting impact on society in general. According to Pimbosa Ortiz and Arias Montero (2022), dropping out of the process and the mentioned effects are among the main problems of the current judicial system.

The implementation of public policies that guarantee the adequate Performance of criminal justice in cases of VAWC is urgent. In operational terms, this would mainly translate into reasonably increasing the quality and quantity of PJS resources and subsequently proposing cycles of continuous improvement in the management of cases, processes, and information channels. Effectiveness, efficiency, fairness in treatment, and inter-institutional cooperation should be the main criteria considered when seeking to strengthen the PJS. These improvements could result in victims of VAWC crimes having greater Confidence in the justice system and relying on it for resolution with responses that are humane, fair, and timely.

In parallel, considering that in general, all institutions suffer from low internal and external Confidence, actions are urgently needed in each institution to correct their major weaknesses. In this sense, it would be necessary to identify the causes of PJS's failures in its timely response and in the dignified and non-discriminatory treatment it gives its users. Additionally, strategies should be designed to increase the governmental support received by PJS institutions. In this way, the officials working in these entities will be able to carry out their roles under more adequate working conditions.

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CHAPTER VII

RELIANCE OF THE POPULATION IN THE PUBLIC JUSTICE SYSTEM

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The goal of this chapter is to determine the level of Reliance of the population on the Public Justice System (PJS), the degree of willingness to rely on it, and the gaps in such Reliance among adolescents and adult women victims of physical and/or sexual violence in the municipalities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Sucre. Additionally, the chapter seeks to identify possible factors that arise from the population's interaction with the justice system, associated with greater Reliance.

For the purposes of this study, Reliance should be understood as: The level of permanence of victims of physical and sexual violence in the justice operating and administrative institutions, from their entry point through the complaint of the incident, until obtaining a definitive resolution that concludes the criminal process they initiated, with strictly necessary participation within said process.

The Reliance of victims of violence on the PJS to rely or lean on the PJS to find justice will be measured based on 1) the willingness to rely on the PJS in the event of experiencing an act of violence; 2) entry into the PJS through a formal complaint of the incident; and 3) remaining in the PJS until obtaining a sentence for the perpetrator. For the purposes of this chapter, the indicators mentioned above will be condensed into the general term of Reliance.

It is important to mention that Bolivia currently has a normative body that seeks to make reporting, investigation, criminal prosecution, and sanctions effective, in addition to guaranteeing compensation for victims. However, despite the existence of institutional regulations, the process followed by complaints from adolescent and women victims is extremely complex; from the moment they decide to report, there are various social and institutional barriers that promote silence, crime (Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2015), and impunity for the perpetrators, perpetuating the gap between the number of victims requiring PJS attention and the number who actually receive it.

In fact, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) stated that the institutional response to violence against women and adolescents in Bolivia is not timely, it generates further victimization, and it questioned the degree of victim Reliance in the response of the PJS. Additionally, its customer service is poorly coordinated, confusing, and lacking specialized personnel, all of which obstructs the investigation process (2019). These elements are hurdles to access and the search for justice, and it also reduces the number of victims that appeal in the judicial system; this distrust tends to generate impunity (CIDH, 2019, p. 69).

VII.I.I. Reliance in the PJS by Adolescents

While any person—including girls, boys, and adolescents— can report an incident remotely or in person and anonymously to the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents (DNA), to formally enter the PJS through a complaint, and rely on it to obtain justice, the State requires that in the particular case of children and adolescence, they be accompanied by a family member, guardian, or representative of the DNA (General Prosecutor's Office & Ministry of Justice of Bolivia, 2014, pp. 105-107). Additionally, it is this latter instance that should promote and continue *ex officio* if the victim does not appear again. If the victim, boy, girl, or adolescent, participates in the process, they must always be represented and accompanied by an adult.

The Ombudsman's Office (n. d.) expressed its duty to ensure the best interests of the child, to consider any minor as a full subject of rights, and to act as a guarantor for their protection, assistance, and defense in light of their interests and rights. However, the process of seeking justice depends, in many instances, on the involvement of adults, which reduces the agency of girls, boys, and adolescents. Thus, instead of being considered as full rights-holders, they need to resort to adults to have their voices heard.

Perhaps precisely because of this, the CIDH calculated that in 2019, 47% of violence reports against adolescents were rejected by the Prosecutor's Office. Six out of ten of these rejections occurred after the victims abandoned the processes, having waited up to two years without a response, with constant and unjustified contact with the PJS and suffering constant revictimization (IACHR, 2019).

An investigation into the child and adolescent protection systems identified that their officials have a protectionist, developmentalist, misogynistic, and patriarchal mentality (Behavioral Sciences Research Institute & World Vision Bolivia, 2019). Additionally, it is known that the successful report of violence against children often depends on factors related to third parties —adults— rather than the victims themselves (Kuruppu et al., 2020; Schek et al., 2018).

In summary, adult-centrism negatively influences the entry and permanence of adolescent victims in the PJS, as the Bolivian legal system still consider children and adolescent victims more as evidence than as subjects of rights within the criminal process, as a result of their limited knowledge of the rights of the child, as alerted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2022).

VII.I.II. Reliance in the PJS by Adult Women

Although to date there are no specific studies on PJS Reliance by women victims of violence in Bolivia, available data shows that among women who reported experiencing violence at home, 53% took no action and only 17% formally reported the incident to the PJS (Impelling Committee of the Legislative Agenda from Women, 2013). On the other hand, according to data from the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (National Institute of Statistics, 2016), only 2.6% of the women participants in the study who suffered violence reported the incident to the Bolivian Police, and less than 1% filed a complaint with the Prosecutor's Office. Additionally, between 2013 and 2020, 68.74% of the reported cases of femicide remained without a sentence, highlighting the gap between the Prevalence of VAWC, the number of victims entering the PJS, and those remaining in it to obtain justice.

Despite the existence of Law No. 348, whose objective is to guarantee a life free of violence for women and girls, the Bolivian state's response to violence against women has received criticism ranging from the general, such as the coverage of the law, to the specific, such as reconciliation with the perpetrator, in addition to revictimization in the PJS, the lack of resource allocation or the slowness with which processes progress once initiated (Daza, 2022). As established in the study published by Ciudadanía, Comunidad de Estudios Sociales y Acción Pública y Alianza Libres sin Violencia (2018), the problems described above —originating in patriarchal and misogynistic logic and practices— prevent violence against women from becoming a public issue and deserving state action to protect the fundamental rights of this population.

Gaps in the law and a society that penalizes and puts women victims of violence at a disadvantage affect their relationship with the PJS, reducing their chances of entering and remaining in the system. As in the case of children and adolescents, the State has the obliga-

tion to continue with the judicial process to obtain justice, under the principle of officiality and enhanced due diligence, even if the victim does not accompany said process. However, the data contradicts this assumption: Of 83 femicide cases recorded in Bolivia in 2021, in which the perpetrator was known, sentence was passed only in 30 cases (Daza, 2022).

VII.I.III. Gaps and Factors Associated with PJS Reliance

There are high prevalence rates of violence against adolescents and adult women, but few victims choose to file complaints, and many of those that do, abandon their cases before these conclude. This means that these populations have a low level of Reliance in the PJS. The differences between experiencing violence and the actions to 1) enter the justice system and 2) remain in the justice system will be explored in this chapter as gaps in the Reliance of the population on the PJS.

This description may lead to the belief that reporting an act of violence and seeking justice are voluntary acts and personal decisions when in reality, they are due to factors beyond the victims' will and are related to external elements beyond individual control, i.e., the role of the institutions within the PJS, their interaction with the victims, and the victims' perception of the legitimacy of the judicial system (Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2015). These elements can hinder the Reliance of victims of physical and sexual violence on the PJS.

A similar situation was exposed by International Justice Mission (IJM, 2018), in a study that concluded, among other aspects, that the delay in reporting and the abandonment of the process reached 62% in cases of physical and sexual violence due to rejections by the PJS, revealing the lack of protection for victims when reporting the incident, in addition to the lack of a sentence defining their situation. These precedents are an example of the complexity of Reliance in the judicial system, and of the existence and relevance of various adjacent elements that can increase or hinder the Reliance of victims in obtaining justice.

Faced with this problem, the need arises, first, to study the level of Reliance of victims of physical and sexual violence in the PJS, their willingness to rely, and the gaps that hinder such Reliance; and second, to identify possible factors linked to interaction with the justice system that impede the Reliance in the PJS. About this last point, three variables were established that, from the perspective of the victims and their interaction with the PJS, could influence the decision to report and remain in the process until justice is obtained. They are as follows:

The credibility of the Justice System: According to Bradford & Myhill (2015), it implies perceiving that these institutions are effective in their fight against crime and in reducing the rate of offenders. Thus, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women (IACHR, 2007), established that the impunity of a crime causes victims to distrust justice, which reduces their intention to report a crime and enter the PJS. The degree of credibility of the PJS perceived by victims of violence has already been studied and linked to a greater likelihood of reporting the crime (Boateng, 2018; Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2015; Nadal & Davidoff, 2015), that is, reporting to an official instance and entering the PJS.

Satisfaction with the response of the justice system: The degree of satisfaction of victims with the response of the PJS depends on a) Their experience in judicial processes; b) the behavior of judicial personnel; c) how they are treated; and d) the fulfillment of their expectations about the service (Saxton et al., 2021). The satisfaction generated by a previous experience can not only increase the probability of reporting a new case (Iratzoqui & Cohn, 2020) but is also related to the restoration of victims (Kunst et al., 2015; Quintas & Sousa, 2021) and their permanence in the system.

Boateng (2018) also identified that higher levels of satisfaction with police attention significantly increased the likelihood that victims of sexual violence would file a complaint. In this sense, if the victims are satisfied with the interaction they have with the justice personnel, they may continue to promote the rest of the judicial process.

The use of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC), from the victims' perspective: An approach in the care of victims of violence that proposes interaction with them, seeking their recovery and avoiding retraumatization (McKenna & Holtfreter, 2021; International Justice Mission, personal communication, 2020; Rich, 2019). According to Butler et al. (2011), care based on TIC consists of understanding the victims considering the context of their experiences, and not seeking to know what is wrong with them, but trying to minimize possible harm and revictimization during interaction. It has been proven that TIC has a positive impact on victims and their recovery, increasing their self-efficacy (the perception of being capable in some skill) and empowerment (Sullivan et al., 2018). The use of TIC in the justice system is advisable, given the psychological vulnerability of victims of violence and the need to adapt services to their needs to ensure safer care is provided. This could generate greater Reliance of victims on the justice system.

Based on the evidence suggesting the connection of the mentioned variables with the likelihood of: 1) Reporting a crime and entering the PJS, and 2) remaining in the judicial process when strictly necessary —elements that make up Reliance in the PJS— three hypotheses are proposed for this research: The Reliance of victims on the judicial system is influenced by: 1) *Higher levels of perceived Reliance (H1), which encourage access to the system; and, once in the system, by, 2) Higher levels of satisfaction with the services received (H2), and, 3) Greater number of interactions with trauma-informed care (H3);* as evidenced in remaining in the system. The measurement of these factors and of Reliance originate in the Population Survey on Prevalence, Reliance, and Vulnerability to Violence, EPDVV (more information about the survey is available in the Methodology chapter of this book).

The result of measuring the level of Reliance of victims of physical and/or sexual VAWC in the PJS, the willingness to rely on the system, and its possible associated factors, may later translate into instruments for demand, from civil society, of legislative reforms that promote increased rates of reporting, Reliance in the PJS, and customer satisfaction. All of this as a result of an enforceable sentence that contributes to punishment and reparation, in response to the need of an effective reporting mechanism that contributes to keeping complainants in a judicial process until its conclusion.

VII.II. RESULTS

This part of the document has four sections: The first presents the results of two indicators on the willingness of the population to rely on the PJS —in terms of willingness to file a complaint and to participate in the judicial process— and provides data on the number of people who would enter the PJS and remain in it until justice is obtained. The following five indicators, presented in a second section, refer to the population that needs to rely on the PJS because they have experienced an act of violence at some point in their lives and in the last twelve months prior to the present study.

They are presented in the following order: People who file a complaint with the PJS, people who report outside the PJS, people who disclose the act of violence to a member of their

community, people who remain in the PJS until justice is obtained, and people who report having received some service for their restoration. Next, the results are included on two indicators for gaps in Reliance of victims of violence at some point in their lives that did not file a complaint, and of those who filed a complaint but abandoned the case before obtaining justice.

The fourth section includes the results of the statistical associations to determine whether high levels of Reliance in the justice system, satisfaction with the process, and the application of a trauma-informed care approach are associated with higher levels of Reliance by the victims.

VII.II.I. Results on the Reliance Indicators Regarding the Willingness to Rely on the PJS

Table 7.1 presents the frequencies and percentages of adolescents and women who show willingness to file a complaint about an act of violence and, once the complaint is made (in the hypothetical case of being victims of violence), to engage in the justice processes.

Table 7.1. Adolescents and Adult Women Willing to Report and Participate in the Justice Processes

	Willingness to Report Crime		Willingness to Participate in Justice Processes	
	Adolescents (N = 894) Yes (%)	Women (N = 715) Yes (%)	Adolescents (N = 848) Yes (%)	Women (N = 678) Yes (%)
Total	848 (94,85)	659 (92,17)	755 (89,03)	597 (88,05)
El Alto	215 (94,30)	151 (90,96)	183 (88,41)	136 (87,18)
La Paz	223 (95,30)	143 (92,86)	197 (89,95)	130 (87,84)
Sucre	185 (92,04)	190 (91,35)	169 (88,02)	168 (87,50)
Cochabamba	225 (97,40)	175 (93,58)	206 (89,57)	163 (89,56)

The first thing to highlight is that the vast majority of adolescents (94.85%) and women (92.17%) state that they would report an act of violence if they experienced it. When analyzing the data by municipalities, no significant differences are detected. For both women and adolescents, in the control municipality (Cochabamba), there is a higher percentage of willingness to report (97.4%), than in IJM intervention municipalities (Sucre, El Alto, and La Paz). Sucre is the municipality where adolescents are less prone to report (92.04%), and El Alto, in the case of adult women (90.96%).

Regarding the willingness to participate in justice processes, slightly lower percentages are observed for both population groups: from 94.85% to 89.03% in the case of adolescents, and from 92.17% to 88.05% among adult women. In all municipalities, high and fairly similar percentages are presented in the case of adolescents: ranging from 88.02% in Sucre to 89.95% in La Paz. Among adult women, similarly high values were also recorded, between 87.18% in El Alto and 89.56% in Cochabamba.

VII.II.II. Results of Reliance Indicators on the Prevalence of Physical and/or Sexual Violence

Adolescents and women who report having been victims of violence throughout their lives

In contrast to the data on willingness to rely on the PJS, Table 7.2 shows the distribution of adolescents, as well as adult women who, after being victims of violence, filed a complaint with a justice institution or reported to a complaint-promoting institution outside the PJS.

Table 7.2. Complaints in the PJS and Reports to Complaint-promoting Institutions Filed by Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence at Some Point in Their Lives

	Complaints Made to Justice Institutions		Reports to Complaint-promoting Institutions	
	Adolescents (N = 640) n (%)	Women (N = 740) n (%)	Adolescents (N = 690) n (%)	Women (N = 912) n (%)
Total	29 (4,53)	125 (16,89)	13 (1,88)	39 (4,28)
El Alto	8 (4,97)	32 (16,84)	3 (1,71)	7 (2,99)
La Paz	9 (6,12)	34 (17,00)	7 (4,22)	13 (5,26)
Sucre	5 (2,70)	31 (19,50)	2 (1,04)	9 (4,50)
Cochabamba	7 (4,76)	28 (14,66)	1 (0,64)	10 (4,33)

Firstly, it should be noted that the percentage of people who file complaints is significantly higher in women than in adolescents; out of 740 women who suffered violence, only 16.89% filed a complaint with a state justice institution. Sucre is the municipality with the highest percentage (19.50%), followed by La Paz, El Alto, and Cochabamba, with percentages of 17.0%, 16.84%, and 14.66%, respectively.

Regarding adolescents, the data is even more concerning: Of 640 victims of violence, only 4.53% reported it to justice institutions in the country. By municipalities, La Paz recorded the highest percentage (6.12%), followed by El Alto (4.97%), Cochabamba (4.76%), and Sucre (2.70%).

On the other hand, the number of reports made to complaint-promoting institutions, outside the PJS (ombudsmen, NGOs, etc.), does not paint a better picture, as it is even lower compared to the number of complaints in state justice institutions. From the sample of adolescents, only 1.88%, out of 690 cases, reported in these types of institutions. Again, La Paz has the highest number of reports for that population (4.22%), and Cochabamba has the lowest number of cases (0.64%).

Out of 912 women who answered the question about this indicator, only 4.28% stated having filed a complaint in a complaint-promoting organization other than the PJS. In La Paz, more cases were reported to non-state institutions (5.36%), which contrasts with the

municipality of El Alto, which, despite its geographical proximity, has the lowest percentage of cases with reports outside the system: 2.99%.

Adolescents and Women Who Reported Having Been Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months

As with the indicator of complaints by victims of violence throughout life, the rate of adult women who suffered violence in the last 12 months and reported it is significantly higher than among adolescents. Out of 278 adolescents who suffered violence, only 4.68% decided to report the incident to PJS institutions, while out of 163 adult women who were victims of violence, 26.99% filed the corresponding complaint with PJS. Although the data related to women is higher, they only represent a third of the surveyed sample, which means that two-thirds of women decided not to report.

From the analysis of the information by municipalities, none of them exceed 10%, in the case of adolescents. La Paz has the highest percentage of adolescents who reported (8.20%), followed by Cochabamba, Sucre, and El Alto, with 5.36%, 3.66%, and 2.53%, respectively. Regarding reports made by women, the municipality of El Alto has the highest number (35.9%). Then follow Sucre (33.3%), Cochabamba (32.43%), and, with a much lower percentage, La Paz: 12.96% (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3. Complaints in the PJS and Reports to Complaint-promoting Institutions Filed by Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months

	Complaints in Justice Institutions		Reports to Complaint-promoting Institutions	
	Adolescents (N = 278) n (%)	Women (N = 163) n (%)	Adolescents (N = 300) n (%)	Women (N = 215) n (%)
Total	13 (4,68)	44 (26,99)	6 (2,00)	7 (3,26)
Sucre	3 (3,66)	11 (33,33)	0 (0,00)	0 (0,00)
El Alto	2 (2,53)	14 (35,90)	2 (2,35)	2 (3,64)
La Paz	5 (8,20)	7 (12,96)	4 (5,63)	4 (6,15)
Cochabamba	3 (5,36)	12 (32,43)	0 (0,00)	1 (1,96)

Regarding reports made to complaint-promoting institutions (Table 7.3.), the data allow us to assert that, in the case of adolescents, only two of the four municipalities reported violent incidents with figures lower than 5%, except in La Paz (5.63%). As stated above, the significant difference between that municipality and El Alto (2.35%) is noteworthy, despite being contiguous. Similarly, among women, there are low percentages of reports made to intermediary institutions or complaint-promoting institutions: 3.26% in La Paz; 6.15% in El Alto; 3.64% in Cochabamba, and 1.96%. In Sucre, neither adolescents nor women reported violence incidents to institutions outside of PJS.

Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence at Some Point in Their Lives Who Shared Their Experience with a Community Member

The low percentage of cases that stated having made a report, whether or not in a state institution, can be contrasted with the number of adolescents and women who disclosed their experience to a member of their community, such as a family member, friend, or neighbor. Table 7.4. presents the distribution of cases where they disclosed their experience to someone outside of justice institutions: 57.25% for adolescents and 54.09% for adult women.

Table 7.4. Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence at Some Point in Their Lives Who Shared Their Experience with a Community Member

	Adolescents (N = 697) n (%)	Women (N = 917) n (%)
Total	399 (57,25)	496 (54,09)
El Alto	105 (60,0)	126 (53,16)
La Paz	100 (58,82)	136 (55,06)
Sucre	90 (46,39)	107 (53,23)
Cochabamba	104 (65,82)	127 (54,74)

The highest percentage of cases among women is in the municipality of La Paz (55.06%), followed by Cochabamba (54.74%), Sucre (53.23%), and El Alto (53.16%). The control municipality was where most adolescents revealed their experience of violence (65.82%). It should be noted that the group shows significant differences in percentages between municipalities: from 46.39% in Sucre to 60% in El Alto. Meanwhile, in the group of women, the data is similar between municipalities.

Adolescents and Women Who Revealed to Someone in Their Community That They Had Been Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months

The percentages of adolescents and women who suffered violence in the last 12 months (prior to the present research) and disclosed the incident to someone in their community (see Table 7.5.) are higher than those of reports and complaints. In both age groups, more than half disclosed their experiences to someone they trust: 58.22% of 304 adolescents and 60% of 215 women. Regarding adolescents, it is noteworthy that in the four municipalities, the data ranges from 51.16% in Sucre to 66.67% in Cochabamba. For women, the situation is similar, with a difference of almost 20 percentage points between Sucre (45.45%) and El Alto (65.45%). Both for adolescents and women, it was found that the values found in El Alto and La Paz are not significantly different. Cochabamba has higher values than Sucre, and Sucre presents lower values compared to all municipalities.

Table 7.5. Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months Who Shared Their Experience with a Community Member

	Adolescents (N = 304) n (%)	Women (N = 215) n (%)
Total	177 (58,22)	129 (60,00)
Sucre	44 (51,16)	20 (45,45)
El Alto	50 (58,82)	36 (65,45)
La Paz	43 (58,90)	42 (64,62)
Cochabamba	40 (66,67)	31 (60,78)

Adolescents and Women Who Remain in the PJS After Reporting Violence at Some Point in Their Lives

A penultimate indicator to assess the actual Reliance of adolescents, as well as of surveyed adult women, is presented in Table 7.6., and refers to the permanence in the PJS.

Table 7.6. Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence at Some Point in Their Life Who Reported the Incident and Remained in the PJS

Remain in the PJS		
	Adolescents (N = 29) n (%)	Women (N = 125) n (%)
Total	16 (39,61)	45 (36,0)
El Alto	2 (25,0)	9 (28,13)
La Paz	7 (77,78)	14 (41,18)
Sucre	4 (80,0)	14 (54,16)
Cochabamba	3 (42,86)	8 (28,57)

36% of women and 39.61% of adolescents remain in the justice system after filing a complaint. Sucre is where the highest number of surveyed individuals from both groups who claim to have remained in the system was reported: 54.16% and 80%, respectively. Next are La Paz (41.18% and 77.78%) and Cochabamba (28.57% and 42.86%). El Alto presents similar percentages to Cochabamba, in the case of adult women (28.13%), but shows a marked difference in the case of adolescents (25%). If the percentages of cases that remain in the justice system after filing the complaint are compared, with the exception of El Alto, there is a trend for the adolescent group to remain.

Adolescents and Women Who Remain in the PJS After Reporting Having Suffered Violence in the Last 12 Months

The permanence in the judicial system of adolescents and young people who reported an incident of violence suffered in the last twelve months (76.92%) is much higher than those who experienced this at any time in their lives (39.61%) by more than 30 percentage points (compare Tables 7.6. and 7.7.). The difference in the case of women is less, but there is also a higher permanence in the group of women who faced violence in the last year (43.18%). However, it should be clarified that, in both cases, it is a small number of individuals: 10 adolescents and 19 women (see Table 7.7.).

From the disaggregated data by municipality, in the case of adolescents, the control municipality presents a 66.67% retention, in contrast to the 80% in the intervention municipalities. In the municipality of La Paz, there is retention in all cases. Sucre, Cochabamba (both with 66.67%), and El Alto (50%) follow. In adult women, the differences are less: the municipality with the highest percentage is Sucre, with 45.45%, and the one with the lowest percentage, the control municipality of Cochabamba with 41.67%.

Table 7.7. Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months Who Reported the Incident and Remained in the PJS

	Remain in the PJS	
	Adolescents (N = 13) n (%)	Women (N = 44) n (%)
Total	10 (76,92)	19 (43,18)
Sucre	2 (66,67)	5 (45,45)
El Alto	1 (50,00)	6 (42,86)
La Paz	5 (100,00)	3 (42,86)
Cochabamba	2 (66,67)	5 (41,67)

Adolescents and Women Victims of Violence Throughout Life Who Received Restoration Services

Finally, Table 7.8. presents the number of cases of adolescents and adult women victims of violence who received some type of service from a governmental or civil society organization or network that works for their restoration at the physical, economic, educational, psychological, social, and legal levels.

Table 7.8. Adolescents and Women Receiving Services From a Government Organization or Network or from a Civil Society Organization

	Adolescents (N = 697)		Women (N = 917)	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Total	79 (11,33)	618 (88,67)	81 (8,83)	836 (91,17)
El Alto	16 (9,14)	159 (90,86)	18 (8,96)	220 (92,83)
La Paz	28 (16,47)	142 (83,53)	26 (10,53)	221 (89,47)
Sucre	14 (7,22)	180 (92,78)	18 (8,96)	183 (91,04)
Cochabamba	21 (13,29)	137 (86,71)	20 (8,62)	212 (91,38)

The data suggests that only one in ten victims of physical or sexual violence, throughout life, who told someone about the violence, received some type of restoration service. Although the percentage of adolescents is slightly higher (11.33%) than that of adult women (8.83%) both groups show low comprehensive care for victims of violence when seeking psychological, physical, legal, and social restoration. In La Paz, the highest number of cases that received some service was reported, while in Sucre, the lowest number of adolescent victims reported receiving services. The same happens in El Alto, in the case of adult women. To conclude with the description of this last indicator, a consideration is that the services that victims of physical and sexual violence can access include medical services and social or community support, among others.

In this study, the most reported service by adolescents was psychological support; ranging from 3.52% in Sucre to 9.1% in La Paz; followed by having received security services (between 1.51% in El Alto and 2.35% in La Paz), and receiving support to be in a safe and risk-free housing (between 0.59% in La Paz and 1.27% in Cochabamba). On the other hand, a smaller number of adolescents said they received total or community support (from less than 1% in Sucre to 3.16% in Cochabamba), or received economic or educational support, legal support, or access to medical services, categories in which less than 1% of cases were reported.

The sample of adult women shows similar results. Psychological support was the most reported (between 1.26% in El Alto and 6.40% in Sucre), followed by support to be in safe housing (less than 1% in Sucre and up to 2.52% in El Alto), receiving security and protection services against new risks and threats (less than 1% in all municipalities, except Cochabamba, with 2.1%), and legal support (less than 1% in Sucre and Cochabamba, and less than 2% in El Alto and La Paz). With the exception of La Paz (3.24%), social support was mentioned in less than 1% of cases. Finally, access to medical services and economic or educational support were recorded in less than 1% of cases of adult women in the four municipalities.

Adolescents and Adult Women Victims of Violence in the Last 12 Months Who Received Restoration Services

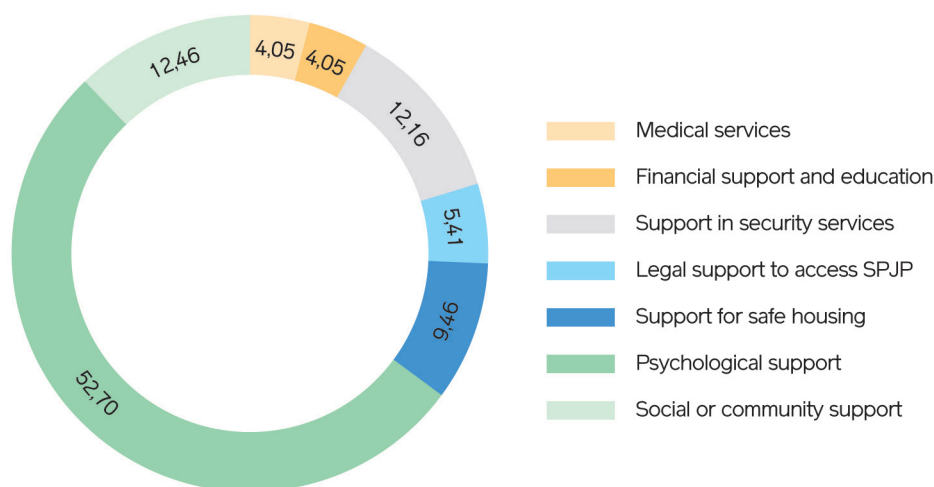
It should be noted that no significant differences were identified between the percentages of adolescents (13.03%) and women (13.49%) who experienced violence in the last 12 months and received some service seeking their restoration, in any of the dimensions considered: physical, economic, educational, psychological, social, and/or legal. In the case of adolescents, there was an approximate difference of 10 percentage points between the municipality of La Paz (17.81%), at the upper end, and Sucre (7.95%), at the lower end. In the group of women, 13.49% reported having received some service. In the control municipality (Cochabamba), 23.53% of women who suffered violence in the last 12 months received some service, contrasting with the 5.45% in El Alto (see Table 7.9.).

Table 7.9. Adolescents and Women Receiving Services from a Government Organization or Network or From a Civil Society Organization

	Adolescents (N = 304)		Women (N = 215)	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Total	40 (13,16)	264 (86,84)	29 (13,49)	186 (86,51)
El Alto	10 (11,63)	75 (88,24)	3 (5,45)	52 (94,55)
La Paz	13 (17,81)	60 (82,19)	9 (13,85)	56 (86,15)
Sucre	7 (7,95)	79 (91,86)	5 (11,36)	39 (88,64)
Cochabamba	10 (16,67)	50 (83,33)	12 (23,53)	39 (76,47)

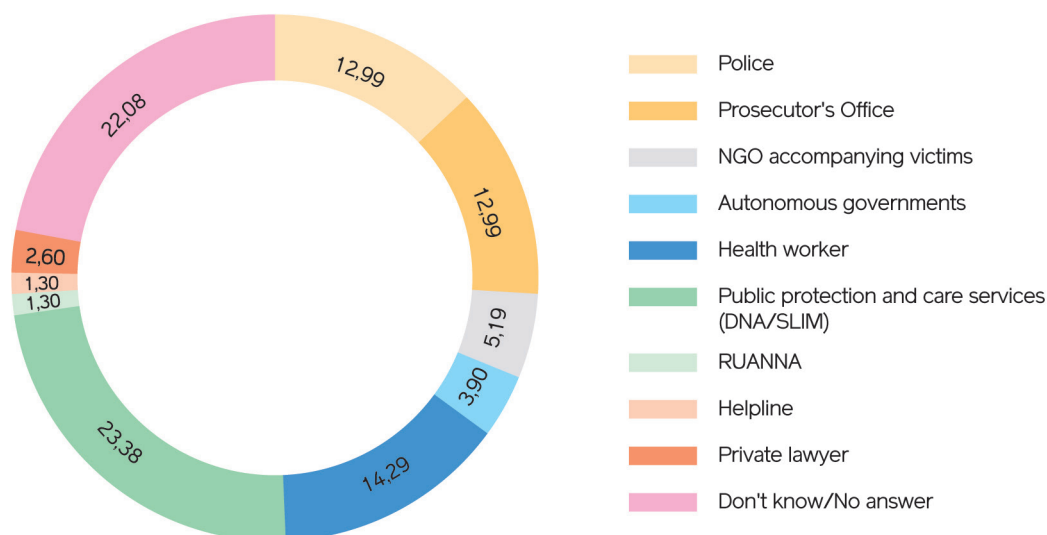
Of the 69 participants who received some service, as seen in Figure 7.1., just over half received psychological support (52.7%). The rest of the services are distributed as follows: 12.16%, both for security services and community support; support to be in a safe and risk-free housing, and afterward, medical services, and economic and educational support. It is noteworthy that only 52.7% received psychological support when all victims of violence should have this type of support; the same should be the case with medical services, as all individuals who experience violence should receive medical attention. This highlights the absence of a comprehensive approach, which should be based on an assessment to define which services are priorities for each person. This not only allows for an appropriate restoration but also allows victims and their families to continue their Reliance in the PJS.

Figure 7.1. Types of Services Provided to Adolescents and Women by Government Organization or Network or From a Civil Society Organization



Complementing the information presented above, Figure 7.2., provides information about the providers of restoration services: First are the protection providers and public care services (DNA/SLIM), with 23.38%; followed by private attorney [legal counsel] (14.29%); and the Police and Prosecutor's Office (13% in both cases).

Figure 7.2. Government Organization or Network or Civil Society Organization Providing Aftercare Services to Adolescents and Women



* Single Registry of Lawyers for Technical, Free, and Specialized Defense of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents Violence Victims

VII.II.III. Results on Indicators of Gaps in Reliance in the PJS

Adolescents and Women Who Do Not Report Having Been Victims of Physical and/or Sexual Violence Throughout Their Life

Studying Reliance in the PJS also implies identifying and quantifying its existing gaps. Table 7.10. presents data on cases of violence whose victims —adolescents and women— did not file a complaint.

Table 7.10. Contrast Between Adolescents and Women Victims Who Did Not File a Complaint

	Adolescents (N = 690) n (%)	Women (N = 912) n (%)
Total	640 (92,75)	740 (81,14)
Sucre	185 (95,85)	159 (79,50)
Cochabamba	147 (94,23)	191 (82,68)
El Alto	161 (92,00)	190 (81,20)
La Paz	147 (88,55)	200 (80,97)

In the sample of adult women, 81.14% did not file a complaint; the percentage was surpassed in the sample of adolescents: 92.75. For the first group, there were fewer complaints in the control municipality, Cochabamba (82.68%); followed by El Alto (81.20%), La Paz (80.97%), and Sucre (79.50%). In the group of adolescents, in Sucre, there was less willingness to file a complaint (95.85%), followed by Cochabamba (94.23%), El Alto (92.00%), and La Paz (88.55%). This data suggests that there is a considerable gap between the number of adult women and adolescents who report acts of violence in the four municipalities, and the total number of those who suffer violence, in each of which, adolescents tend to keep their experiences of violence silent and not get involved at the institutional level compared to adult women, a difference corroborated by statistics.

Adolescents and Women Who Do Not Report, Disclose or Reveal Having Been Victims of Physical and/or Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months

In the group of adolescents and women with a prevalence of violence in the last 12 months, the first gap indicator refers to those who suffered violence and kept absolute silence, that is, did not report the incident to PJS instances, did not report the incident to institutions promoting complaints or intermediaries, and did not tell anyone in their community about the incident.

Table 7.11. shows that the percentages of those who kept absolutely silent are similar between adolescents (39.67%) and women (34.42). In the first group, in all municipalities, the percentages range from 33.33% (Cochabamba) to 48.84% (Sucre). The control municipality presents a lower percentage in this gap, compared to the intervention municipalities, with 41.22%. In the case of women, the municipality with the highest frequency is Sucre (43.18%), followed by La Paz (33.85%), Cochabamba (31.37%), and lastly, El Alto (30.91%).

Table 7.11. Contrast Between Adolescents and Women Victims Who Remained Silent

	Adolescents (N = 305) n (%)	Women (N = 215) n (%)
Total	121 (39,67)	74 (34,42)
Sucre	42 (48,84)	19 (43,18)
El Alto	33 (38,37)	17 (30,91)
La Paz	26 (35,62)	22 (33,85)
Cochabamba	20 (33,33)	16 (31,37)

Adolescents and Women Who Reported Being Victims of Physical or Sexual Violence at Some Point in Their Lives and Who Abandoned the Justice Process

Table 7.12. presents the percentage of cases of adolescents and women who suffered violence at some point in their lives and dropped out of the process after entering the PJS.

Table 7.12. Adolescents and Women Who Abandoned the Justice Process

	Adolescents (N = 29)			Women (N = 125)		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	DK/NA (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	DK/NA (%)
Total	12 (41,38)	16 (55,17)	1 (3,45)	77 (61,6)	45 (36)	3 (2,4)
El Alto	6 (75,00)	2 (25,00)	0 (0,00)	22 (68,75)	9 (28,13)	1 (3,13)
La Paz	8 (22,22)	7 (77,78)	0 (0,00)	19 (55,88)	14 (41,18)	1 (2,94)
Sucre	1 (20,00)	4 (80,00)	0 (0,00)	17 (54,84)	14 (45,16)	0 (0,00)
Cochabamba	3 (42,86)	3 (42,86)	1 (14,29)	19 (67,86)	8 (28,57)	1 (3,57)

Finally, evaluating cases that abandoned their legal processes after filing a complaint also involves contrasts in terms of age group. Adolescents are less likely than women to abandon the processes: 41.38% compared to 61.60% of the total sample of both groups. This trend is replicated in the municipalities of Sucre (20.0% vs. 54.84%), Cochabamba (42.86% vs. 67.86%), and La Paz (22.22% vs. 55.88%). The only exception is El Alto, where 75% of adolescents abandoned their complaint, compared to a lower rate of women: 68.75%.

Adolescents and Women Who Reported Being Victims of Physical and/or Sexual Violence in the Last 12 Months Who Abandoned the Justice Process

Regarding the abandonment of the criminal process once initiated, the trend identified for the data on lifetime violence is replicated. In other words, as seen in Table 7.13, adolescents (15.38%) significantly abandon processes less than adult women (56.82%).

Table 7.13. Contrast Between Adolescents and Women Who Abandoned the Justice Process

	Abandoned the Justice Process					
	Adolescents (N = 13)			Women (N = 44)		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	DK/NA (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	DK/NA (%)
Total	2 (15,38)	10 (76,92)	1 (7,69)	25 (56,82)	19 (43,18)	0 (0,00)
Sucre	1 (33,33)	2 (66,67)	0 (0,00)	6 (54,55)	5 (45,45)	0 (0,00)
El Alto	1 (50,00)	1 (50,00)	0 (0,00)	8 (57,14)	6 (42,86)	0 (0,00)
La Paz	0 (0,00)	5 (100,00)	0 (0,00)	4 (57,14)	3 (42,86)	0 (0,00)
Cochabamba	0 (0,00)	2 (66,67)	1 (33,33)	7 (58,33)	5 (41,67)	0 (0,00)

Adolescents in the intervention municipalities dropped out of their process by 20%, while no dropouts were reported in the control municipality. Meanwhile, in El Alto (33.3%) and Sucre (50%), adolescents dropped out of the processes, while no one did in Cochabamba and La Paz. It is worth mentioning that approximately 7% responded “did not know/did not respond.” In contrast, women in the studied cases abandoned criminal processes to a greater extent, both in the control area (33.3%) and in the intervention area (41.22%). Cochabamba presents a higher percentage (58.33%), followed by the municipalities of La Paz and El Alto, both with 57.14%, ending with Sucre (54.55%).

It should be noted that, although the number of adolescents who dropped out of the justice process is lower than that of women, there should be no dropout of the former, considering that the principle of the best interest of the child should prevail (Law 348, article 12, section a), in all actions and decisions affecting girls, boys, and adolescents, whether carried out by public or private institutions, courts, administrative authorities, and/or legislative bodies.

VII.II.IV. Results on Variables Associated with Reliance

Table 7.14 presents descriptive results of the three additional variables measured in the module of Reliance in the Population Survey on Prevalence, Reliance, and Vulnerability to Violence (EPDVV). The distribution of cases is presented globally and according to age group. No disaggregation was included at the municipal level, given the low —or nonexistent— number of frequencies per municipality.

Only 25.7% of the sample of adolescents and women who suffered violence expressed Reliance in the PJS when deciding whether or not to file a complaint. This percentage increases when evaluating the adolescent group (34.2%). 65.8% of adolescents expressed very little or no Reliance, while in the case of adult women, the percentage rose to 80.8%.

Table 7.14. Results of TIC-based Approach to Reliance, Satisfaction, and Interaction Variables to Determine Proper Treatment

Variable	Categories	Total n (%)	Adolescents n (%)	Women n (%)
Reliance in the SPJ (n = 1481)	Very little or no Reliance	1101 (74,3)	420 (65,8)	681 (80,8)
	Some or a lot of Reliance	380 (25,7)	218 (34,2)	162 (19,2)
Satisfaction (n = 153)*	Dissatisfied, very dissatisfied	135 (88,2)	28 (84,8)	107 (89,2)
	Satisfied, very satisfied	18 (11,8)	5 (15,2)	13 (10,8)
Interactions based on TIC approach (n = 153)*	Does not report majority of TIC-based interactions	91 (59,5)	14 (50,0)	77 (61,6)
	Reports majority of TIC- based interactions	62 (40,5)	14 (50,0)	48 (38,4)

* Variables measured only in participants who entered the PJS

A minority reported feeling satisfied with the services received after entering the PJS (11.8%). As with Reliance, in the adolescent group, a higher percentage of cases reported being satisfied or very satisfied (15.2%) compared to the group of adult women (8.9.2%). The low percentage of people satisfied with the services obtained after filing a complaint in the PJS is a data point that must be considered in the critical analysis of Reliance gaps in the PJS.

Finally, regarding interactions based on the TIC approach, 40.5% of the sample that entered the system has a frequency of TIC-based interactions greater than 80%. In the case of adolescents, half of the sample was in the category with the most TIC-based interactions (50.0%); while in the group of adult women, the percentage of cases identified with the most TIC interactions decreased to 38.4%.

Table 7.15 presents the data on the association between Reliance in the PJS (entry and permanence) and the variables of Reliance, satisfaction, and interactions with TIC. In order to test the three hypotheses presented in the introduction of this chapter, the table also shows the coefficients of χ^2 and their level of significance. This data makes it possible to determine the existence of a statistically significant association between the variables.

Table 7.15. Connection between PJS Reliance and TIC Reliance, Satisfaction, and Interaction

Variable	Categories	Entry into PJS		χ^2	<i>P</i>
		No	Yes		
Reliance of the PJS (<i>n</i> = 211) ^a	Poca o ninguna credibilidad	32,50%	67,50%	1,128	0,288
	Algo o mucha credibilidad	25,80%	74,20%		
Satisfaction (<i>n</i> = 153) ^b	Insatisfecha/o, muy insatisfecha/o	63,70%	36,30%	8,505	<0,01
	Satisfecha/o, muy satisfecha/o	27,80%	72,20%		
Interactions based on TIC approach (<i>n</i> = 153) ^b	No reporta mayoría de interacciones basadas en el enfoque CIT	69,20%	30,80%	12,612	<,001
	Reporta mayoría de interacciones basadas en el enfoque CIT	40,30%	59,70%		

^a Variable associated with entry into the PJS

^b Variable associated with permanence in the PJS

Regarding the Reliance of the justice system and its association with the onset of Reliance in the PJS, although a higher number of cases entering the PJS were identified among individuals who perceived some or much Reliance in the PJS when deciding whether or not to file a complaint (74.20%), compared to those who reported little or no Reliance (67.50%), no statistically significant association was found between these variables ($p = 0.288$).

On the other hand, the satisfaction levels with the services received once in the PJS, and their relationship with the permanence in the system, it is possible to affirm that permanence in the process was higher in cases that reported satisfaction with the services received after entering the justice system (72.20%), compared to 36.30% of cases that remained and expressed dissatisfaction. And, regarding the relationship between the degree of permanence of the victims in the judicial system and a higher number of interactions based on trauma-informed care (TIC), a statistically significant association was also found ($p < 0.001$): the data presented shows that 59.70% of the cases that reported the most TIC-based interactions remained in the judicial process, in contrast to those cases that had less than 80% of TIC-based interactions; of them, only 30.80% remained in the PJS.

VII.III. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this chapter was to study the level of Reliance of victims of physical and sexual violence (adolescents and adult women) in the PJS, their willingness to enter and remain in the system, and the gaps in Reliance, according to PJS data and information provided by the victims themselves. In addition, it sought to identify possible factors hindering the Reliance of victims in the PJS.

Regarding the first objective, the indicators extracted from the population survey on Reliance in the PJS, the willingness to rely on it, and the identified gaps, provide a scenario that corroborates what previous studies on violence have shown in other contexts (Cullen, 2020; Wallace et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2019): The number of victims who end up entering the PJS and seeking legal action against violent incidents is very low. This is manifested in: 1) The low percentages of cases that filed a complaint and remained in the process; 2) The quantified gaps of victims who do not file a complaint and abandon the process; 3) The inconsistency of the previous two elements with the willingness to file a complaint and participate in the process; 4) The low number of victims receiving some type of service from local organizations or networks to ensure their restoration.

The high rate of willingness to file a complaint and to remain in the process among adolescents and adult women who have not experienced violence, while encouraging, must be contrasted with the real rate of complaints and cases that remain in the system. This leads us to affirm that willingness or intention is not necessarily a predictive behavior because filing a complaint is not as individual or voluntary a decision as one might think, and more than having the intention of filing a complaint, other factors that end up hindering victims' intention to enter the system in search of justice after experiencing physical or sexual violence must be considered.

Beyond the willingness to file a complaint and participate in the process, with regard to the Reliance indicators per se, it was identified that the number of complaints made in the PJS, while slightly higher than the number of reports made to institutions outside this system, represents less than a third of the number of adult women who were victims of violence. The data is even more discouraging for adolescents: Less than 10% of victims who have ever experienced violence in their lives or in the last year file a complaint and receive services for their comprehensive restoration. This may be because there are greater barriers in the PJS for an adolescent to file a complaint and remain in the process until justice is obtained. This assertion is supported by the results of other indicators and the statistically significant associations found given the lower percentage of cases of adolescents who file a complaint and remain in the PJS, compared to adult women in the sample.

In addition to the low rate of persons who managed to enter the system, less than half reported that they remained in it until justice was obtained. This data is not only replicated among the four municipalities but it is also evident in the inverse logic when exploring the identified gaps in Reliance, with a high number of cases of adolescents and adult women stating they did not file a complaint or abandoned the case. Once again, there are significant differences between the age groups that merit further discussion, as follows.

Reliance of Adolescents in the PJS

Adolescents may face greater barriers when attempting to access the PJS, starting from the normative obligation to be accompanied by an adult to file a complaint in the PJS and thus indicating greater Reliance. These difficulties are visible in a lower percentage of adolescents filing a complaint compared to adult women. Given this, it should not be overlooked that adolescents are the ones who showed the greatest willingness to file a complaint, and yet, they are also the ones who show the least access to the PJS. A significant number of cases decided to confide the violence to some member of their community. Then, it is worth asking whether telling someone outside the institutions about the violent incident is, in fact, an attempt to seek justice while also identifying that Reliance in the PJS presupposes significant challenges and obstacles when one is an adolescent.

Moreover, the literature suggests that often the protection systems themselves end up promoting the silencing of child violence through reductionist institutional practices, transferring responsibility to third parties, or excluding perpetrators from prevention and intervention processes (Schek et al., 2018). Furthermore, previous studies indicate that the likelihood of children and adolescents who are victims of violence receiving help depends on factors such as the type of persons they live with (Pereira et al., 2020) or the characteristics of the adults who have the option and obligation to report; the level of certainty they have about the existence of violence; their relationship with the victim's family; their level of Reliance in child protection systems, etc. (Kuruppu et al., 2020). Based on this background an alarming lack of impact of the adolescent victims' voice in their own process of seeking justice in today's society is evident.

Therefore, it is worth knowing that when it comes to children and adolescents, elements such as their agency and the fulfillment of their rights must definitely be considered, as acknowledged by the State itself (Ombudsman's Office, n. d.). This should occur from the initial stages of the process, which includes finding someone who believes their account of the violent event and subsequently accompany the adolescent to file a complaint. It also includes facing the likely obstacles in an adult-centric judicial system that oftentimes does not consider adolescents as a subject of rights or as a wholly capable person, leading the PJS to actions —often unreliable or not ideal— that increase revictimization and take away the victim's agency.

Beyond the complaint, the permanence of adolescents in the PJS, while slightly higher than that of adult women in all municipalities, continues to be less than half of the cases in two of the four municipalities, a worrying fact considering that part of the State's responsibilities is to monitor *ex officio* and ensure the continuity of legal processes in cases of violence against children and adolescents. The high percentage of cases of adolescents who drop out of the system may be due to the lack of Reliance in it and the unnecessary exposure of the victims during the process. The latter exacerbates revictimization and can cause psychological traumas. In addition to these causes, the adult-centric view of justice and the notion that children and adolescents are more “evidence” for judicial trials than full subjects of rights can also be mentioned (UNICEF, 2022).

Additionally, thinking of Reliance in the PJS as an exercise of the right to justice, part of a system that alleges quality and promptness in its procedures, it is necessary to emphasize that a greater permanence of victims in the PJS does not necessarily reflect this latter point. More than participating at strictly necessary moments of the process, or voluntarily exercising their right to participate in matters that concern them, the permanence of adolescents could expose the ineffectiveness and obstruction of legal processes, which the system seeks to compensate with individual attempts to do justice for the victims. This should not be the case, as it is not only harmful to victims of violence, but justice must work beyond the procedural drive of the victim.

Reliance of Adult Women in the PJS

Although among adult women there is a higher percentage of reports of violence and a higher relative access to the PJS compared to the adolescent group, this should not suggest the misconception that it is easier for an adult woman to file a complaint. In fact, according to existing literature on this subject, reaching adulthood as a woman entails thinking about a series of particular obstacles. On the one hand, women often find themselves in the role of mothers or caregivers (Tennent & Weatherall, 2019), which makes it more difficult for them to decide to file a report, as the possible negative effects of such a

determination would not only affect them. On the other hand, as wives or partners of their aggressors, and having to rely economically, emotionally, or in some other way on them, can force victims to tolerate violence and do nothing about it.

On the other hand, although it is expected that adult women exercise their full agency and self-manage their participation and permanence in the PJS, once the report is made, the data found in this study reflects that they tend to abandon the process more frequently than adolescents (these, incidentally, benefit from the follow-up that, by law, the State must carry out with their cases). All of this suggests that, despite a greater independence or capacity of agency attributed to adult women, they also face different obstacles that condition their permanence in the PJS, which, combined with a lack of guarantees from the State to continue the process, as in the case of adolescents, ends up perpetuating the impunity of aggressors.

Factors Associated to Greater Reliance

This chapter found that the victim of violence may not necessarily file a complaint with the PJS, although in their perception, it is reliable. Whether they rely on it or not, the system may not end up being one of the determining factors when victims decide to file a complaint. Available literature suggests that various situational and contextual factors explain the behavior followed in reporting an incident of violence and these actions go beyond PJS Reliance (Xie & Baumer, 2019; Zaykowski et al., 2019). Therefore, purely institutional circumstances are not sufficient to understand a decision as crucial for the victim as filing a complaint. On the other hand, the possibility of exploring their role model or potential mediator role vis-à-vis other individual or contextual variables affecting PJS Reliance should be explored in future studies.

Secondly, it was found that the higher the satisfaction with the PJS's response to the complaint, and the greater the number of interactions that employed the TIC approach, the higher the level of permanence in the judicial process by the victims. The data revealed by this study, on the association between the level of satisfaction and permanence in the judicial process, coincide with empirical backgrounds from other contexts (Boateng, 2018; Kunst et al., 2015), which found that if PJS users, in their interaction with operators (for example, the police), perceive that their quality standards and expectations have been met, they are more likely to remain in the system, as satisfaction linked to the Reliance in the system allows victims to at least visualize the possibility of obtaining justice from it.

Regarding the use of the TIC approach and its association with permanence in the PJS, the data establishes that victims whose interactions were mostly with system operators under this approach tend to remain in the process longer than those who did not have TIC. This association coincides with previous studies and documents from other areas that recommend the inclusion of TIC in the justice system to ensure better results (McKenna & Holtfreter, 2021; Rich, 2019). This confirms the importance of providing quality treatment to victims throughout the process starting with the moment when they decide to access it, because the less they are exposed, judged, and victimized, the more likely they are to remain in the PJS.

To conclude this chapter, it is worth considering the situational and structural factors that could influence the Reliance of the population on the PJS and that allow for a deeper understanding of the factors that impact the decision not to report, or to abandon the process once the complaint is filed. This, in particular, entails recognizing that Reliance in the PJS is a phenomenon that does not depend solely on the victim but rather on their

interaction with the institutions that serve them, the PJS itself, and the community. This means that when a person is a systematic victim of violence, their individual intention to seek justice is not sufficient, as they need to have adequate institutional and community resources and inputs to ensure their voice is heard.

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CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND CALLS TO ACTION

Natalie Guillén

The data presented on the Prevalence of violence studied in the four municipalities of the study, particularly towards adolescents and adult women, is concerning and reveals alarming patterns in terms of frequency, types of violence, and contexts. It shows that women experience higher levels of sexual violence compared to men, while men are more likely to face physical violence. These differences highlight the need for differentiated and specific approaches to combat these problems, recognizing gender disparities in the experience of violence.

The evidence presented in two of the chapters shows that almost half of the cases of sexual violence occur at home or at school, and that family members or close friends are usually the main aggressors, a situation that underscores the importance of implementing intervention strategies focused on these specific contexts.

Regarding the willingness to report and file an effective complaint, a clear difference was observed between adolescents and adult women. These findings are revealing and raise important questions about the Reliance of the population on the institutions that are part of the PJS. If the population does not adhere to the PJS, the lack of reporting in cases of violence can perpetuate a cycle of abuse, lead to impunity for the perpetrators, hinder access to resources and support for victims, increase distrust in institutions, and underestimate the true magnitude of the problem. In this sense, it is critical to raise awareness on the importance of reporting violence, eliminate barriers to reporting, and ensure that victims feel safe and supported when seeking help.

The study also found that for those who ultimately decide to file a complaint and follow the process, satisfaction with the services received and a Trauma-Informed Care approach by officials are critical factors for the victims' permanence in the criminal process. These findings highlight the importance of providing a supportive environment and specialized services that recognize and address the trauma experienced by victims of violence.

The entire PJS must acknowledge a series of deficiencies and significant challenges regarding the handling of cases of violence, one of them being to increase the response to victims, which at present leaves more than 30% of violence cases unresolved, demonstrating the deficiencies in its ability to effectively address and resolve these situations. This leaves many victims without the necessary support and justice, generating distrust and vulnerability. Another major challenge for the PJS is the lack of established deadlines for the entire criminal process, which often results in considerable delays in case resolution and has negative impacts in the victims' search for justice. These delays are not only frustrating to them but also compromise their safety and well-being during the process.

The analysis presents a disturbing panorama of the PJS and its response to VAWC, although it is also possible to identify strengths and opportunities for change. These include recent initiatives, such as training schools for judges and prosecutors, care protocols based on trauma-informed care, and detailed, gender-focused, legal characterizations. Additionally, acknowledging a common institutional agenda among all parties involved in the response to VAWC is a significant strength that, if used efficiently, can result in comprehensive and collaboration changes. It is also crucial to materialize the normative body related to VAWC through concrete actions and measures to foster effective punishment against perpetrators and reduce the Prevalence of violence.

In conclusion, we understand that combatting the phenomenon of violence is the responsibility of society as a whole; however, it is the Bolivian State that must decisively lead this fight and protect those who are most vulnerable to abuse. This task requires the implementation of structural changes to strengthen the institutional capacity of the PJS,

through the adequate allocation and execution of resources, staff training, information to the population, and mechanisms of jurisdictional control, among others. If the justice sector institutions in Bolivia implement evidence-based initiatives that dignify and assist victims of VAWC, the mentioned elements will lead to the immediate apprehension and conviction of perpetrators; and if communities defend and care for vulnerable people or victims of VAWC, fewer crimes of this nature will go unreported, and therefore, there will be less impunity.

Finally, two important considerations: First, as structural changes are being implemented, they must be accompanied by immediate action strategies to assertively care for all people suffering violence today. Second, it is necessary to highlight the urgency of understanding that the best way to combat this phenomenon is prevention, and therefore, preventive actions directed towards different groups in society are urgent.

All of the above highlights the pressing need for comprehensive reforms in the criminal justice system. Changes are needed that include greater sensitivity to victims, adequate training for officials responsible for handling these cases, access to updated information and resources, as well as specific deadlines to ensure a timely and effective response to violence. These reforms are essential to guarantee adequate protection and effective support for victims of violence, as well as to improve the effectiveness and humanity of the criminal justice system as a whole.

Based on the presented data, we suggest measures to the following institutions working with victims of violence:

Plurinational Legislative Assembly (ALP)

- Implement changes in the criminal justice system that include specific deadlines for each step of the criminal process, as well as strengthening sanctions for non-compliance with deadlines to reinforce a more efficient and timely justice.
- Encourage the ALP to eliminate the crime of statutory rape, which is being used in trial to determine the decision.
- Harmonize the age of the crime of rape against infants, girls, boys, and adolescents with Law 548, which recognizes, develops, and regulates the exercise of the rights of the girl, boy, and adolescent, providing protection up to 18 years of age.
- Include incest as an independent crime within the criminal typology established by law, given its severity and incidence.
- Establish sexual crimes as crimes with no statute of limitations.

Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency

- Conduct periodic controls and studies for a more efficient and transparent judicial system to ensure a more effective and reliable administration of justice for all citizens.
- Ensure the Vice Ministry of Equal Opportunities (VIO), as the lead sector, enforces compliance with the roles and competencies of SIPPROINA stakeholders in the protection of girls, boys, and adolescents against violence.

- Encourage compliance with the Child and Adolescent Protection Networks (DNAs) as promoters of reporting violence against children and adolescents by leading and guiding the reporting in cases where aggressors are the parents, guardians, or close to the child.

Council of the Judiciary, Supreme Court of Justice

- Develop implementation protocols for trauma-informed care to be implemented and evaluated semi-annually in all institutions, as an essential step to ensure a victim-centered service.
- Develop specific protocols for each stage of the criminal procedure to guarantee a thorough investigation, with a generational and gender perspective, in cases of violence, and implement effective protection measures to safeguard survivors and their families.
- Strengthen the SIREJ information system and improve its interrelation with the JL2 “Justicia Libre”, in coordination with the Public Prosecutor’s Office, to provide complete, expedited, and updated information for the monitoring of cases of violence.

PJS: Departmental Courts of Justice, Public Prosecutor’s Office, and Police

- Prioritize cases and ensure reinforced due diligence, provide safe and comfortable spaces, focused on trauma-informed care (TIC), and above all, coordinate with complaint-promoting entities, to avoid duplicative actions, as well as facilitate and expedite processes.
- Fully apply existing regulations to protect girls, boys, adolescents, and women victims of violence and reinforce mechanisms for control and accountability in the enforcement of laws.
- Ensure the minimum essential data is entered into the JL2 system to describe the characteristics of the violent incident, such as: Age, sex, place, relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, type of violence, time from the incident to the complaint, etc., allowing this data to be accessible for statistical purposes.
- Ensure the application of the principle of due diligence and the best interests of the child and monitor its application in all criminal processes, from the beginning to the effective conclusion of each case, through:
 - Specialized training: For judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other justice system professionals, regarding the principles of due diligence and the best interests of the child. This would include legal, psychological, and social aspects related to children.
 - Specific guides and protocols: Develop and disseminate specific guides and protocols to guide justice system professionals in the application of trauma-informed care, the practice of due diligence, and the best interest of the child at all stages of the criminal process. These documents should be clear, accessible, and tailored to the distinctive features of cases involving minors.
 - Age-appropriate interviews for children: Establish practices and protocols for conducting interviews with children, including the use of age- and developmental-appro-

appropriate techniques for girls, boys, or adolescents, such as the Gesell Chamber or other functional video recording methods, as possible. This will ensure an accurate and respectful testimony of the child is taken while being mindful of the child's well-being.

- Active participation of the child's legal representative: Ensure the active and effective participation of the child's legal representative in all phases of the criminal process. This involves providing adequate resources and ensuring that defense attorneys have the necessary training to address issues specific to minors.
- Customize judicial environments: Adapt judicial environments to be more friendly and understandable to the child, considering aspects such as the arrangement of furniture, lighting, and the presence of emotional support. This will help create environments that are less intimidating.
- Bio-psychosocial assessments: Incorporate bio-psychosocial assessments into judicial decision-making, especially when determining precautionary measures or sentences. These assessments should be conducted by trained professionals considering the specific impact on the child's well-being.
- Sensitization and awareness: Conduct campaigns aimed at justice system stakeholders and society, on the importance and application of due diligence and the best interests of the child.

Ministry of Economy

- Ensure the allocation of sufficient resources for the proper functioning of the PJS by allocating specific human, technical, and financial resources at all levels.
- Conduct audits and monitoring of resources systematically to evaluate compliance with and implementation of the principles of due diligence and the best interests of the child in criminal proceedings. This could include periodic case reviews and evaluations of the practical application of protocols.

Judges, Prosecutors, and Police Schools

- Capacity building for officials responsible for assisting victims of violence on the Trauma-Informed Care approach, with a focus on self-awareness, self-care, and, therefore, ensuring trauma-informed care.
- Continuous training of authorities and support personnel to ensure everyone uses the same language with generational, gender, and TIC approaches.

Complaint-Promoting Entities: DNAs and SLIMs

- Strengthen their spaces and promote them in a better way to make them accessible, known, and used by families, especially by girls, boys, and adolescents.
- Execute all budget allocated for improvements in human resources and infrastructure effectively, so that their spaces are ideal to guarantee protection and attention to girls, boys, and adolescents.

- Foster stable working conditions that allow experienced and trained officials to handle victims of violence, with the quality and warmth that ensure the sustainable fulfillment of their rights.

Ombudsman's Office

- Facilitate access to free legal counsel for victims, ensuring they have adequate legal representation.
- Keep a follow-up record of cases and user services, in order to safeguard and systematize information on user adherence to the criminal process.
- Ensure victims of violence have access to health, psychological, and social services, contributing to their holistic recovery.

Civil society (NGOs, Foundations, advocates and other organized groups)

- Commit to the prevention and care of victims of violence by generating more pro-bono sponsorship spaces, as well as training and awareness-raising for professionals, promoting interdisciplinary, joint, and coordinated work by civil society.
- Activate support networks for hearings and accompany victims from different areas.
- Implement prevention and intervention approaches to combat violence. It is urgent for Civil Society Organizations, the Protection System, and the Gender Committee of the PJS to address violence considering the gender approach from multiple perspectives: from early prevention and education to continuous support for victims.
- Carry out scientific evidence-based interventions produced by the academic sector to overcome barriers to reporting, such as fear, lack of Confidence in the system, and ignorance of rights.
- Propose policies that promote Confidence in the system and remove obstacles to reporting, ensuring protection and support for victims who come forward.

To all PJS authorities as a whole

Finally, **collaboration between judges, prosecutors, police, civil society**, and all the instances that make up the system that provides care to victims of violence is very important. They must work together in a coordinated manner, setting up periodic, work and debate working groups for an efficient, transparent, and fair judicial system. If all stakeholders work in this way, more effective results can be achieved in the administration of justice and in the construction of a safer society for everyone.

These **recommendations seek to promote a more effective and sensitive response** to violence, involving preventive policies, awareness-raising actions, adequate training of staff, and comprehensive reforms in the criminal justice system. It is essential to address the barriers to reporting, improve support for victims, and strengthen the capacity of the system to face these challenges more effectively and humanely.

STUDY OVERVIEW:

“IN MY SHOES. STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS, BOYS, AND WOMEN AND THE RESPONSE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM”

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Ever since the beginning of the millennium, it has been argued that Latin America is the region with the greatest variety and types of violence (Imbush, Misse, & Carrion, 2011). This idea is reconfirmed in the latest Regional Human Development Report, based on data on homicides, feminicides, infanticides¹, as well as indicators related to domestic or sexual violence: “The region has the third highest Prevalence of lifetime sexual violence perpetrated by non-partners and the second highest Prevalence of lifetime violence committed by partners. Violence against sexual minorities is also one of the highest in the world” (UNDP, 2021, p. 208).

In this scenario, Bolivia is no exception. Although there is little official data to compare the country with the rest of the region², newspaper records indicate that, in terms of domestic violence, for example, the country has: “one of the highest rates of domestic violence” (Dotti in El Deber, 06/29/2021). The same applies to infanticides and feminicides, a field in which, as mentioned in the text following the ECLAC report, Bolivia ranks first in the region.

This situation has led to the development of a multitude of studies seeking to explain it by referring to the patriarchal configuration of society, economic imbalances, personal interrelationships, or the mismanagement of public administration and deficiencies in the Criminal Justice System.

The Study

“IN MY SHOES. A Study on Violence Against Girls, Boys, and Women and the Response of the Justice System,” coordinated by A. Cámara and M. Losantos, corresponds to the last phrase above. It starts from the hypothesis that, although it is a problem of collective responsibility, the Public Justice System (PJS) “plays a central role [...] since it has the intrinsic responsibility of ensuring both the safety and the pursuit of justice for victims, in addition to imposing punishment on aggressors to prevent impunity in these cases.” However, its operation shows significant deficiencies that must be identified in order to be countered.

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1. According to UNICEF: “This region ‘is the place in the world with the highest rate of infanticides on the planet: 25,000 each year’” (in Opinion 06/25/2017).
 2. In fact, one of the major hurdles in tackling the problem alternatively has to do with the lack of transparent public information. This problem constitutes another dimension of institutional and State violence in this area.

The fact that Bolivia's Justice System is classified among the “worst justice systems” intersects with the problem. VAWC is compounded by the “institutional violence” reflected in the inability—for various reasons— of the public system to respond adequately.

Based on this finding, the research addresses the problem, emphasizing four dimensions: i) The Prevalence of sexual and physical violence; ii) Public Confidence in the judicial system; iii) The quality and efficiency of the System's Performance; and iv) The level of Reliance of the population in the system and the willingness to report acts of violence.

An overview is outlined regarding the physical and sexual violence suffered by adolescents and women, and perceptions of the Performance of the PJS are presented. Thus, a kind of general evaluation of the problem and its public management is established, providing important material to shed light on rethinking—and readjusting—the ways in which the issue is managed from the public sector.

Main Contributions

In a country where data is scarce, this type of report is valuable. Surveys conducted among adolescents and women show trends similar to other studies at the local and national levels, which tell how alarming the situation is. Some of the highlighted data, according to the analyzed dimensions, includes:

- “Prevalence”: i) Adolescent males are also subjected to multiple forms of violence. This requires moving away from the commonly held view by the public, which only associates domestic violence with women; domestic violence affects everyone; ii) It is noted that once violence has been experienced, there is a “significant increase in future risk,” resulting in a kind of “escalation of violence” (Choque, 2021) among women and adolescents; iii) The family—or the known environment—is where there is the greatest likelihood of experiencing violence; iv) Those who are now victims of violence may become future perpetrators, generating new cycles of violence—always inconclusive—in the future.
- Performance of the Judicial System: Trends recorded in previous studies (Cf. Baptista, 2015) are confirmed, showing: mismanagement of time in judicial processes (identifying bottlenecks in processes); processes of revictimization; inefficiency in the application of Trauma-Informed Care.
- This leads to low Confidence in the PJS among officials, both regarding its efficiency and the treatment provided (which is not dignified and is discriminatory).
- Regarding the Reliance of the population, there seems to be greater Reliance among the younger population—among whom there is a greater willingness to report incidents and remain in the system. The percentage decreases as age increases, affecting the likelihood to abandon initiated processes.

This scenario requires rethinking public policies in this field. Another contribution of the document is that it includes “calls to action,” such as providing support and specialized services for victims of violence, training processes for judges and prosecutors³ and the creation of new care protocols. Additionally, structural changes are suggested for “institutional strengthening” that includes “adequate allocation and execution of resources.”

The emphasis on victims, a perspective successfully developed in other countries, stands out. This is the case of the Crime Victim Assistance Center that operates in Argentina, which proposes focusing on the victim, considering them as a “subject” and not just an object of investigation (Aramburo, 2024) and points to the need for comprehensive support “seeking appropriate methods and procedures to respond quickly and effectively to their demand for assistance” (Marchiori, 2024, p. 423).

It also implies abandoning the punitive approach that has proven to be insufficient. Other perspectives—which could be incorporated into the objectives of this study— propose complexifying the analyses in order to expand the range of action alternatives to the problem. To conclude this review, we have outlined some.

Expanding Perspectives

Some authors (Cf. Ramírez & Camacho, 2024) propose assuming multidimensional and multifactorial approaches: Generational and gender violence, of various types (sexual or physical), must be understood as intertwined with other violences, be they economic (including those linked to illicit economies), related to lack of access to decent housing, to conflictive relationships between citizens—and between them and authorities—, environmental, health-related, digital, and others.

If violence is viewed from this perspective, then public policies can only address the problem in an integrated manner. Training courses or new protocols are not enough; the multiple dimensions surrounding them must be addressed. Moving from a punitive management to a “governance of violence” (Carrión, 2004), based on the strengthening of a harmonious social fabric.

And, as evidenced in the Prevalence Annex of the text, the data collected in the study also refers to these multiple dimensions (economic, housing, social capital of victimized individuals are addressed). In this sense, although these multiple dimensions are not specifically addressed in the document, the study as a whole presents an opportunity to continue thinking about new alternatives to manage—comprehensively—the problem.

The next step should be to make the collected information available to a wider audience, in order to promote new readings and solution proposals.

3. The question is whether they would manage to reverse the imaginaries and gender stereotypes present in this group, as Borja (2024) asks in another study.

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ANNEXES

If you wish to access the annexes, you can request them through the QR code.



International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global non-profit organization with 33 offices in 23 countries around the world, whose mission in Bolivia is to fight against physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women, especially those victims living in conditions of poverty and vulnerability. Its mission is to protect people from violence by working to strengthen public justice and citizen security systems; improve the articulation of communities and civil society organizations for protection purposes, and achieve the restoration and empowerment of survivors so they can influence change.

The Institute of Behavioral Sciences Research (IICC), of the Catholic University of Bolivia "San Pablo" (UCB), is a research center that develops various studies in the field of Social Sciences, now consolidated as a national reference for its research on childhood, adolescence, and their relational agents. Both institutions, with the support of the Judicial Council and the Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontificia San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca (UMRPSFXCH), joined efforts to measure the response of the PJS to physical and sexual violence against girls, boys, adolescents, and women, in four municipalities of the country: La Paz, El Alto, Sucre, and Cochabamba.