



CASE STUDY: Building bridges between teachers and parents to combat violence in Honduras

In Honduras, ChildFund has piloted an innovative method to prevent violence in schools as part of the *PUENTES* (“Bridges”) project³.^{xxi} Working in 36 schools in high-crime cities over a period of 18 months, the project tested *Miles de Manos* (“Thousands of Hands”), an approach that brings together teachers and parents to reduce violent behavior at home and at school. Intensive training workshops were conducted with parents (mostly mothers) and teachers to enhance parenting and teaching skills, teach positive discipline techniques, and facilitate the development of better communication and relationships with children.^{xxii}

Honduras has been classified as one of the most violent countries in the world, with many children facing huge **challenges accessing safe education**. In our own studies we have found that students in Honduras are exposed to gang violence, peer bullying, and verbal/emotional abuse from teachers at school.

A quasi-experimental study evaluation found encouraging results, including:

- A reported 62% reduction in acts of physical violence and a 59% reduction in acts of psychological and emotional violence in classrooms – with teachers and students relating to each other in more positive ways.
- An increase in students who report feeling safe and protected in their classroom and at home, from 70% to 90% by the project's end.
- An increase in reported use of positive discipline techniques by parents, from 60% to 65%.
- A better understanding among parents and teachers about how their own behavior (hitting, yelling, and verbal abuse) constitutes violence and can negatively affect their children.
- A sense of increased duty among parents to protect children, who have learned strategies for building more positive and caring relationships.

“Milos de Manos helped us to relate to our children.”

-Mother participant in the PUENTES project

For many teachers, parents and children, the *PUENTES* project provided a welcome safe space to speak about the violence endemic to their communities – a space that had not been offered to them before. Despite some of the challenges of the project, such as low participation of fathers and the demands of working in dangerous school environments, the results from this initial pilot are promising.

Moving forward, *Milos de Manos* will be used as the foundation for ChildFund's *School-Based Violence Prevention Model*, which will be piloted over a two-year period in different regions around the world.

