



**UN
TRUST
FUND** TO END
VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
AND GIRLS

30 YEARS

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“ We started by mapping fear.

I was a very young feminist when I began walking the streets of Villa El Salvador and San Juan de Lurigancho with women leaders, sometimes at night. They showed us the places where they felt unsafe: an unlit road, a market, a construction site, somewhere they changed their route or quickened their pace.

I came from a more protected background, but I knew street harassment and the fear of sexual violence myself. Those walks made fear visible and changed how I understood both violence and the city around me.

At the time, the feminist movement was deepening its understanding of violence against women, bringing greater attention to femicide and harassment in public spaces. Yet violence was still understood largely as something that happened at home. But women's experiences showed us that they could face violence behind closed doors and then encounter different forms of fear, harassment and threat in the streets.

In 2004, with Flora Tristán, we turned what women knew about their neighborhoods into safety maps and proposals for municipalities and the police. That work led to better lighting and cleaner public spaces. But it was also testing a bigger idea: what happens when women's own experience becomes evidence for how cities are designed and governed?





The UN Trust Fund backed that work when the approach was still being tested and strengthened. That Safe Cities approach became part of a global movement to put women's safety and their right to the city on the urban agenda, informing work in cities around the world.

In 2022, the UN Trust Fund supported us again to adapt that approach with Indigenous Amazonian women and girls through Mi Ciudad Violeta. We learned that a good model cannot simply be transferred from one place to another.

The question was no longer only where women felt unsafe, but what shaped that insecurity. For an Asháninka woman, insecurity could be shaped by racism, language and clothing. Risk might lie along a river, on a transport route, around a school or on the journey into town.

At Flora Tristán, we had been working with Indigenous women in the Amazon for nearly two decades. That experience broadened our perspective: the map became more complex – as did our response. We had to connect safety with discrimination, community life and collective rights, and work with different actors, from community leaders and schools to transport providers.





Recently, young Asháninka leaders came to Flora Tristán to present their own safety maps. Listening to them, I remembered the young feminist I had been on those first walks in Lima. Our experiences are very different, but I recognized that same intensity and desire to transform things.



That is what I value about the UN Trust Fund. It is one of the few funds that explicitly recognizes feminist organizations as agents of change, supporting them to strengthen their teams, carry local learning into wider spaces and adapt as realities change, with accountability but also autonomy and trust.

What had travelled over the years was not a fixed model. It was a feminist way of working: start with women's realities, understand how different inequalities come together, and build the response from there.

The future we want begins with more feminism.

Liz Meléndez is Executive Director of the Flora Tristán Peruvian Women's Center, a sociologist and a feminist activist with more than two decades of experience. Her work has helped bring greater attention to violence against women in Peru, particularly through her efforts to combat femicide and advance sexual and reproductive rights and access to justice. She has also championed women's safety in public spaces through initiatives with women in Lima and with Andean and Amazonian women across the country.

