



EMPOWERMENT AND SEX EDUCATION
FOR GIRLS IN
CHAPALA, JALISCO

"THE SIRENA PROJECT"





EMPOWERMENT AND SEX EDUCATION FOR GIRLS "THE SIRENA PROJECT"

The **SIRENA** model consists of creating "clubs" for girls and teenagers between the ages of 12 to 15 in vulnerable situations, where they are provided with weekly training sessions on the following topics:

- Human Rights
- Assertive Communication and Leadership
- Life Plans and Dreams
- Menstrual and Sexual Health
- Self-esteem
- Gender Violence Prevention, among others

Sessions are held once a week for a period of **three months** and last for **two hours** in a community safe space, which can be a local library, a classroom, a cultural community center, etc. where privacy, security, openness, and necessary physical elements for the sessions are guaranteed.

The methodology takes as a basis liberating and popular education, so each session starts with games and dynamics based on real life scenarios, then the girls get to learn and discuss each new topic and end with an individual reflection. This structure allows participants to apply the contents to their own life, strengthening decision-making and promoting significant changes in their personal, family and community environment enabling them to become agents of change.

Activities in the clubs are coordinated by a young woman known as "the mentor", who not only facilitates the sessions but also provides close support to the Girls and Teenagers, becoming a role model that inspires them to establish life plans that encompass their personal and professional development.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIRENA PROJECT

Some of the most relevant characteristics of the SIRENA are the following:



Weekly two hour session



For girls and teenagers between the ages of 12 to 15 in vulnerable situations



Each session is designed to develop specific life skills (strengths, attributes and abilities) that increase the possibility for the girls of having more tools that guarantee full development in different areas of life.



Each session is guided by a mentor, who, in addition to facilitating the activities, performs a close accompaniment with the Girls.



Girls may receive a **sustainable menstrual kit** containing the sustainable product of their choice (menstrual underwear, reusable cloth pads or a menstrual cup), a bag for storage, and other products.



SIRENA is a fun acronym for "Sistema de Redes y Empoderamiento para Niñas y Adolescentes" which means System of Networks and Empowerment for Girls and Adolescents.

STAGES OF THE PROJECT

The project is divided into several different phases and lines of action. The most important are the following:



Generate alliances with partners: So that more and more girls and adolescents can continue to strengthen their knowledge and achieve their maximum potential, SIRENA requires strategic alliances to implement the model in your locality.



Form and train the implementing team: The mentors are the people responsible for the implementation of the model locally through weekly sessions. During the implementation period, they receive training on Human Rights, Interculturality and Gender.



Map safe spaces: The safe place requires certain characteristics and conditions to ensure that the sessions take place in a safe and reliable environment.



Call for girls: The implementing team invites family members, friends and girls from different schools to attend the clubs of SIRENA. They are provided with information about the activities and topics to be addressed.



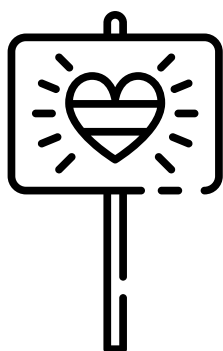
Weekly Sessions: Sessions are held once a week. The sessions last two hours. Girls play, create deep bonds and learn about gender equality, personal empowerment, community, sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention, among others.



Monitor and evaluate results: The results of the implementation are evaluated constantly at different levels: What do the Girls think, implementing team and community, through baseline questionnaires, weekly visits and monitoring to the clubs and assets and objectives achieved.

IMPACT OF THE SIRENA PROJECT

The impact of SIRENA is observed at different levels, including girls, mentors, allies, communities and families.



Girls participating in SIRENA recognize themselves as human rights holders, know that they are valuable and intelligent, defend their right to a life free from violence, and increase their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, as well as their ability to live a life free from violence, and have more tools for formulating a life plan.

Results in adolescent girls:

- They increase their self-esteem and self-knowledge.
- Create community and support networks.
- Learn to make assertive decisions and establish healthy limits.
- Lose the fear of participating.
- Learn about their body, menstrual cycle and sexual health.



Mentors who participate in SIRENA assume themselves as human rights defenders and strengthen their leadership.

- They receive teaching training with gender perspective and learn about all the topics and activities.
- They acquire a sense of love and responsibility for children and adolescents.



Families and caregivers, in addition to perceiving the changes in the participants, strengthen the relationship with their daughters, establishing a more assertive communication and more egalitarian practices.

WHY CHAPALA

Chapala is a town that has been known for its tranquility, kind citizens and perfect weather, reasons why a large population of american citizens has decided to make Chapala its home. As a consequence, Chapala has had amazing intercultural practices and projects, making it clear how the two cultures can work and grow together.

However, despite of the numerous efforts of the municipal government. Chapala is among the municipalities considered on **alert for gender violence**. During 2021, the most frequent crime reports were Robbery and Threats, which accounted for 61.4% of the total complaints. Then, in 2022 things changed and now, when comparing the number of reports in December 2021 and December 2022, those with the highest growth were **sexual abuse** (100%) and threats (80%).

Also, only 15% of Chapala's population have a university degree, and 28% studied until primary school, so it's urgent to implement extracurricular educational programs that contain relevant information on gender equity, prevention of violence, life plan and sexual health to support Chapala's educational system.

