

Year-end 2021

A look back at the activities of the Unidas women's network

Dear Unidas members,

As 2021 draws to a close, I would like to wish you and your family season's greetings and a great start to the New Year!

Since the foundation of the women's Network Unidas between Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany in 2019 we have made progress in thematic and organisational terms. The network has grown steadily, numerous events have been held and projects have been successfully implemented.

Also, in the year 2019 the association "Unidas e.V." was founded and its constituent meeting was held in September 2020. This letter is to update you on our activities and priorities and to look ahead to 2022.

We would like to thank you, as Unidas members, for your valuable cooperation in these challenging and exceptional times and look forward to seeing you again early in the New Year.

Thank you, and festive best wishes,



Marian Schuegraf
Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the German Federal Foreign Office
Chair of the Unidas Board



Context

As part of the German Federal Foreign Office's Latin America and Caribbean Initiative, the Unidas women's network was set up in 2019 between Germany and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. Regional launch meetings were agreed in Salvador de Bahia, Mexico City, Bogotá and Berlin with the following focuses: (1) violence against women/femicide; (2) reproductive rights and self-determination; (3) the rule of law and women's rights; (4) crisis prevention, women in peacekeeping and human rights defenders; and (5) economic participation.

Unidas brings together women campaigning for fair societies and equal opportunities. The objective is to strengthen the participation and rights of women in politics, the media, society, the private sector and academia and to promote exchange between them. Since the network was set up, it has grown steadily and now has 240 members and nine partner organisations.

Unidas e.V. was set up in October 2019. One of its roles is to approve applications for membership. The Advisory Board advises Unidas e.V. on strategic issues and awards the annual Unidas prize for women's rights and democracy. The Advisory Board has 22 members, 11 from the LAC region and 11 from Germany.

Activities within the Unidas network since the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board of Unidas e.V.

September to December 2020

N.B.: Reports on individual activities can be accessed on the [Unidas platform](#) by following the links in the text. If you are not already registered, you can register [here](#).

Despite significant restrictions as a result of COVID-19, the network has organised a series of events in and around its thematic priorities. Between 50 and 70 participants attended each of two online dialogue formats in [August](#) (in Spanish) and [September 2020](#) (in German) at which panellists and members discussed **prevention of domestic violence during pandemics** and the **influence of COVID-19 on the economic and social situation of women in the LAC region**.

In November 2020, a four-day conference, [Unidas Dialogues](#) (in German) **with women's rights activists and feminists in Brazil and Germany**, was held jointly with the Goethe-Institut in Salvador da Bahia. In another online event with 25 Unidas members in [early December](#), the **UN Women campaign 'Generation Equality'** and the scope for Unidas to be involved in fora were presented in Mexico (March 2021) and Paris (June 2021).

The economic participation and livelihoods of women in the LAC region and Germany formed the focus of a hybrid [business meeting](#) in December **as part of a meeting of EU and LAC Foreign Ministers** in cooperation with the Association for Latin America and the



Agency for Business and Economic Development. The event attracted nearly 80 participants.

Alongside virtual exchange formats, **Unidas supported a series of projects in LAC in 2020**. These include setting up and running a **cultural centre for women** in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut based in the city. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the location gave women access to information about the virus. Staff members also distributed care packages to poor women.

In cooperation with the **Data-Pop Alliance**, one project made targeted use of **Big Data to identify at-risk individuals and sectors for violence against women in Bogotá and São Paulo** as the basis for creating specific prevention measures during and after the pandemic. The objective is to take targeted measures to strengthen local stakeholders and measures.

Between May and December 2020, the first four Unidas projects were also financed by the **zivik programme run by the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Foreign Relations Institute) (ifa)** to a total value of around EUR 253,000. The four projects focused on **crisis prevention, conflict resolution, stabilisation, and peacebuilding in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico**. In November 2020, Unidas organised a virtual information event on successful project support from ifa zivik.

January to December 2021

At members' request, there has been a **virtual monthly exchange** (*'Espacio Abierto'*) **within the network** since February 2021. Over the course of the year, thematic priorities included the Generation Equality Forum ([March](#)), civil protest and police violence in Colombia ([June](#)), religious fundamentalism ([July](#)), violence against women in Latin America and the strategies of women's rights organisation ([September](#)), and the role of women in care ([December](#)).

The webinar series launched in the second half of 2020 also continued, including a specialist exchange with the **Justice Studies Centre of the Americas (JSCA) on access to justice for female victims of domestic violence in Latin America**. In June, a virtual event was held with Plan International entitled [Girls in Crisis – Venezuela](#) (in Spanish). A two-day event in September run in cooperation with ifa focused on the importance of [Resolution 1325 for Latin America](#) and the experiences of the Unidas women's network.

In March 2021, the next phase of **project support under the ifa zivik programme** got under way and runs until December 2021. Financing worth around **EUR 296,000** was spent in 2021 on supporting projects on **the active participation of women and consideration of gender-specific matters in the constitutional process in Chile**, on **urban conflict in connection with access to land and appropriate living space in Brazil**, on **the dynamics of violence against human rights and environmental activists in the Amazonas region, including in Brazil**, and **development of a network for exchange on perspectives on and approaches to security, mediation and peacebuilding in Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico**.



The data-supported project with the **Data-Pop Alliance on identifying reporting capacity in the case of domestic violence during the pandemic as a basis for targeted prevention measures in São Paulo and Bogotá** was completed and the final report, [Reporting and Registering Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls in São Paulo and Bogotá: A Data-Driven Model](#), was published.

A project run jointly with the Goethe-Institutes in Salvador da Bahia and Santiago promotes [women in the culture and creative industries](#) (in Spanish) and includes workshops on internationalisation and on building women's occupational capacity. The virtual launch event, '6 Voices', was held in early December and took the form of a mini-festival to build digital bridges between the two project countries and Germany.

In November, a survey was conducted among members **to map and explore experiences of strategies to prevent and combat violence against women in Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany**. The objective was to boost the visibility of activities conducted by Unidas member organisations and to identify areas for joint action.

Alongside thematic cooperation, measures were also put in place to develop the structure of the network, including a process to admit new members (May) and to appoint 'nodal points' (particularly engaged members who function as national multipliers) in the LAC region.

With support from these nodal points, some countries have established 'country calls' between members, including in [Colombia](#), [Guatemala](#) and [Brazil](#). In November, two initial national network meetings were also held between members, Embassies and German organisations locally in [Mexico](#) (online) and [Colombia](#) (hybrid).

Outlook for 2022

In January 2022, the network will cooperate with Kiron Open Education to provide an **online course on secure handling of digital media** that aims to raise awareness of threats and basic security measures to protect online personal data. The course covers protecting accounts and data, safe web-surfing and communications, how to handle misinformation, hate speech and online abuse, and a toolkit for digital self-defence.

Cooperation on **Resolution 1325 and the 'Women, Peacebuilding, Security' agenda** for Latin America and the Caribbean will probably resume in February or March with a series of virtual workshops enabling network members to share experiences, strategies and communications on implementing this agenda in their specific country contexts.

The objective of the network will continue to be **promoting the relationship between members in Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany and German and multilateral foreign policy actors and thematic areas** and strengthening links between them via exchange formats and project support.

Next year, as soon as pandemic conditions permit, a **supraregional Unidas network meeting** will take place in Berlin. The first meeting will include award of the (first) **Unidas prize for women's rights and democracy**.



In the second half of 2022, a **joint research symposium is planned with the Latin American Institute (LAI), the Ibero-American Institute (IAI) and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).**



The national network meeting on 22 November 2021 in Bogotá, Colombia, contributed to the UN campaign 'Orange the World'.

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