



S A F E R C I T I E S F O R W O M E N

How to Improve Safety in Public Spaces in  
Bogota, Colombia: An Assessment of the United Nations  
Safer Cities Program

Thesis by Paola Duran

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# ISSUE

- ♀ In 2013, 40% of women in Colombia stated that they were victims of any type of violence in public spaces, such as parks, public transportation, and streets.

*“When I have to work overtime at night, I often feel afraid of robbery, rape and harassment because it’s very dark on the way back home.”*

# KEY CONCEPTS

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



## SAFER CITIES PROGRAM GOAL

Make cities safer for women and girls based on local initiatives in connection with government policy-making.

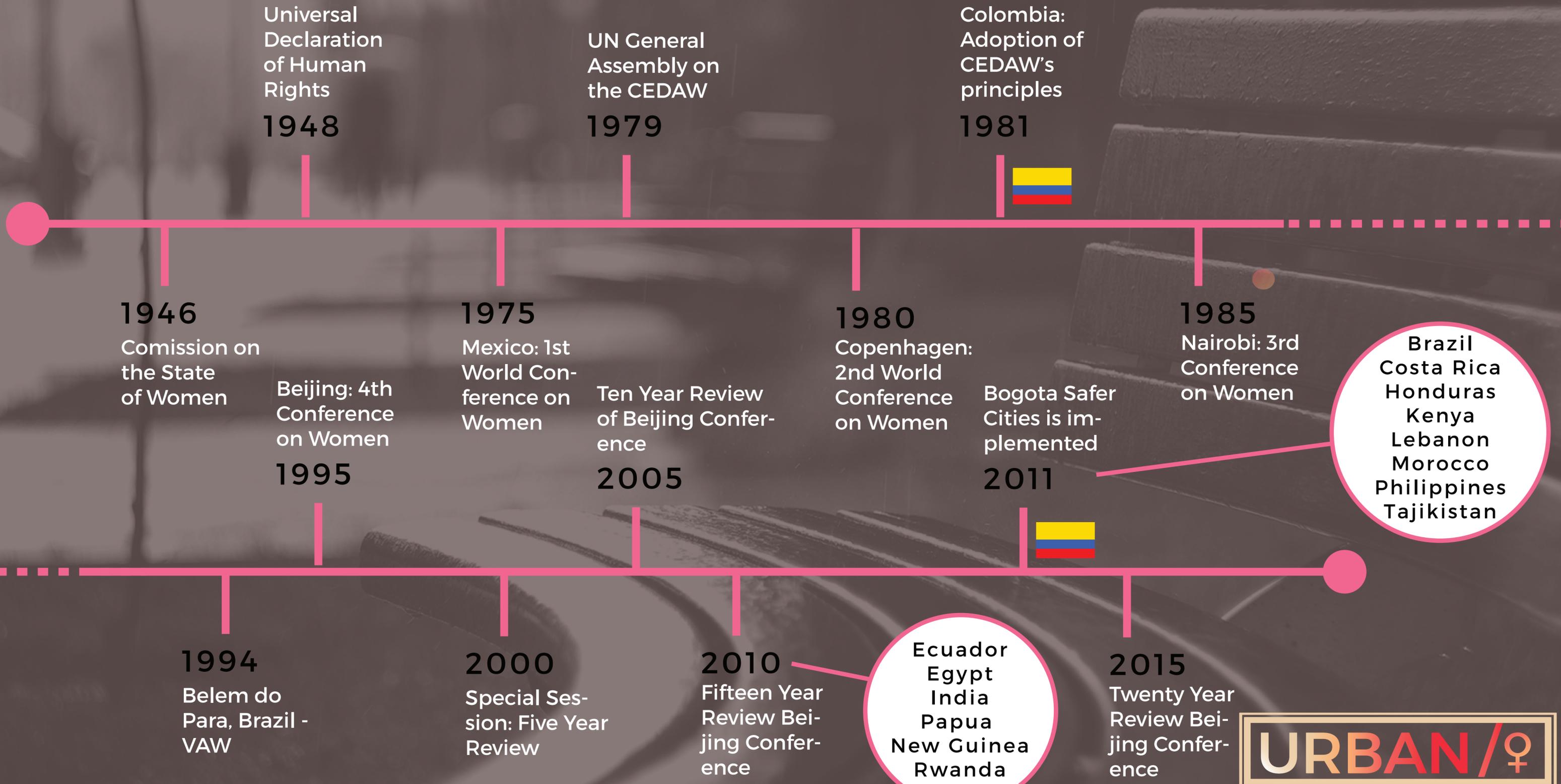
## SAFER CITIES PROGRAM

1996- UN Habitat

2010- UN Women Global Initiative “Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls”

2011- UN Habitat + UN Women + UNICEF “Safe and Sustainable Cities for All”

# TIMELINE - INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



# CONTEXT

60 years of Armed Conflict in Colombia

5.5 Million displaced

2.7 Million Women

Bogota: Largest Receptor

**Population 2013**

Colombia: 47 Million

Bogota: 8.4 Million

Women: 52.2%



# GOAL

- ♀ Analyze the effectiveness of the Safer Cities Program in Bogota, Colombia based on the Borough of Suba experience to develop recommendations towards a safer city for women and girls in Bogota.

# OBJECTIVES

**1** ■ Discuss and review literature about gender, women, and safety issues at the international, national and local level.

**2** ■ Explore issues at the local level regarding women's safety to understand how Bogota, Colombia is acting in terms of gender security, by analyzing the Suba case study.

**3** ■ Critically review the United Nations Safer Cities Program implementation in Suba and its relation to women's safety Bogota, Colombia.

**4** ■ Analyze Suba's implementation of the program to determine specific recommendations in order to improve its outcomes for future iterations.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## I. c. 1. Gender and Planning

- i. Public Space and Transportation
- ii. Right to the City
- iii. Public Participation

## I. c. 2. Violence Against Women in Relation to Public Space

- i. Domestic/Private
- ii. Public

# METHODOLOGY

## OBJECTIVES

- ♀ Discuss and review literature about gender, women, and safety issues at the international, national and local level.
- ♀ Explore issues at the local level regarding women's safety to understand how Bogota, Colombia is acting in terms of gender security, by analyzing the Suba case study.
- ♀ Critically review the United Nations Safer Cities Program implementation in Suba and its relation to women's safety Bogota, Colombia.
- ♀ Analyze Suba's implementation of the program to determine specific recommendations in order to improve its outcomes for future iterations.

## WHAT

- How have these issues been addressed over time?
- What programs have been implemented to improve women's safety conditions? What is the government doing towards safer cities in Bogota, any initiatives?
- What are the program's goals, challenges, and achievements and its relation to women's safety in Bogota?
- What recommendations can be provided to improve the existing efforts?

## METHOD

- Review of literature and Interviews
- Data collection, in - depth literature review analysis and interviews
- Existing conditions, Case study analysis and Interviews.
- Documentation, analysis and findings, assessment of other cases.

# INTERVIEWEES



**JANNETH LOZANO**  
CODACOP - Director



**HORACIO JOSE SERPA**  
Local Councils for Women's Safety



**JAN PETERSON**  
HUIAIROU Commission - Chair



**LUZ AMPARO JIMENEZ**  
Women's Secretariat  
Senior Advisor



**RACHEL WYANT**  
HUIAIROU Commission  
Governance Campaign  
Coordinator



**LUCY CARDONA**  
AVP - Advisor

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# SAFER CITIES

## What is the Safer Cities Program?

## Safer Cities Methodology

It is designed to support cities in the prevention of urban crime and the enhancement of urban safety strategies (physical interventions).

**Key partners: Local Government, Women's groups, Local entities**

**Raise awareness on gender and violence**

**Funds were given to Local Governments or NGO's to develop the program**

**2014: 77 cities in 24 countries**

**FOCUS GROUP**

Train grassroots women: VAW, crime and local governance

**PARTICIPATORY MAPPING**

Map unsafe places of their neighborhoods

**WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDITS**

Exploratory walks to assess mapped places

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To increase safety and raise awareness. To local authorities

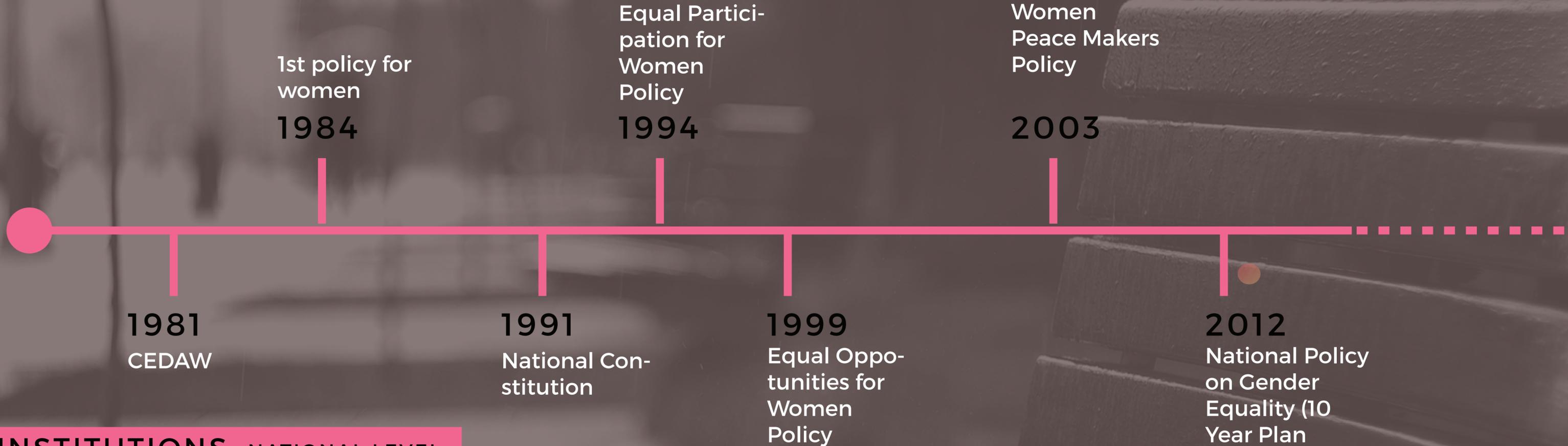
**INTERVENTIONS**

Physical and Educational

**EVALUATION**

Full Documentation and Assessment

# POLICY FRAMEWORK IN COLOMBIA



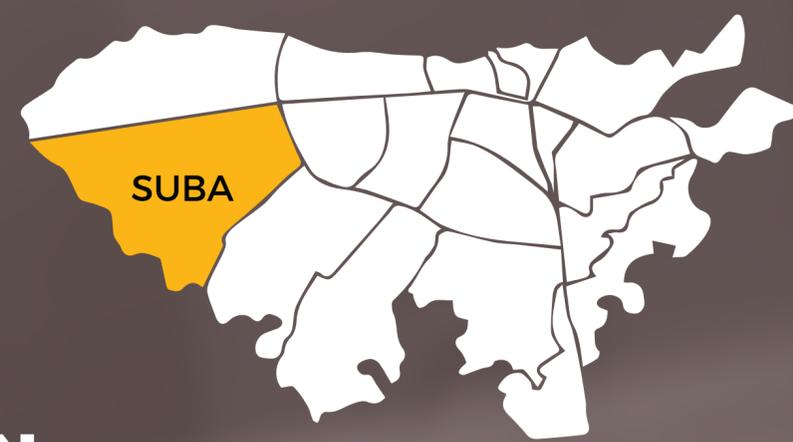
## INSTITUTIONS NATIONAL LEVEL

- Ministry for Women (1990 - 1994)
- Office for the Equality of Women (1994 - 1998)
- Presidential Office for Gender (1994 - Present)

## INSTITUTIONS LOCAL LEVEL

- Women's Secretariat (2014 - 2015)
- Local Councils for Women's Safety (2014 - 2015)

# BOROUGH OF SUBA



Population of 1.2M (2013)  
53% Women

70% Low/middle-income residents (USD\$250 per month for a family 4)

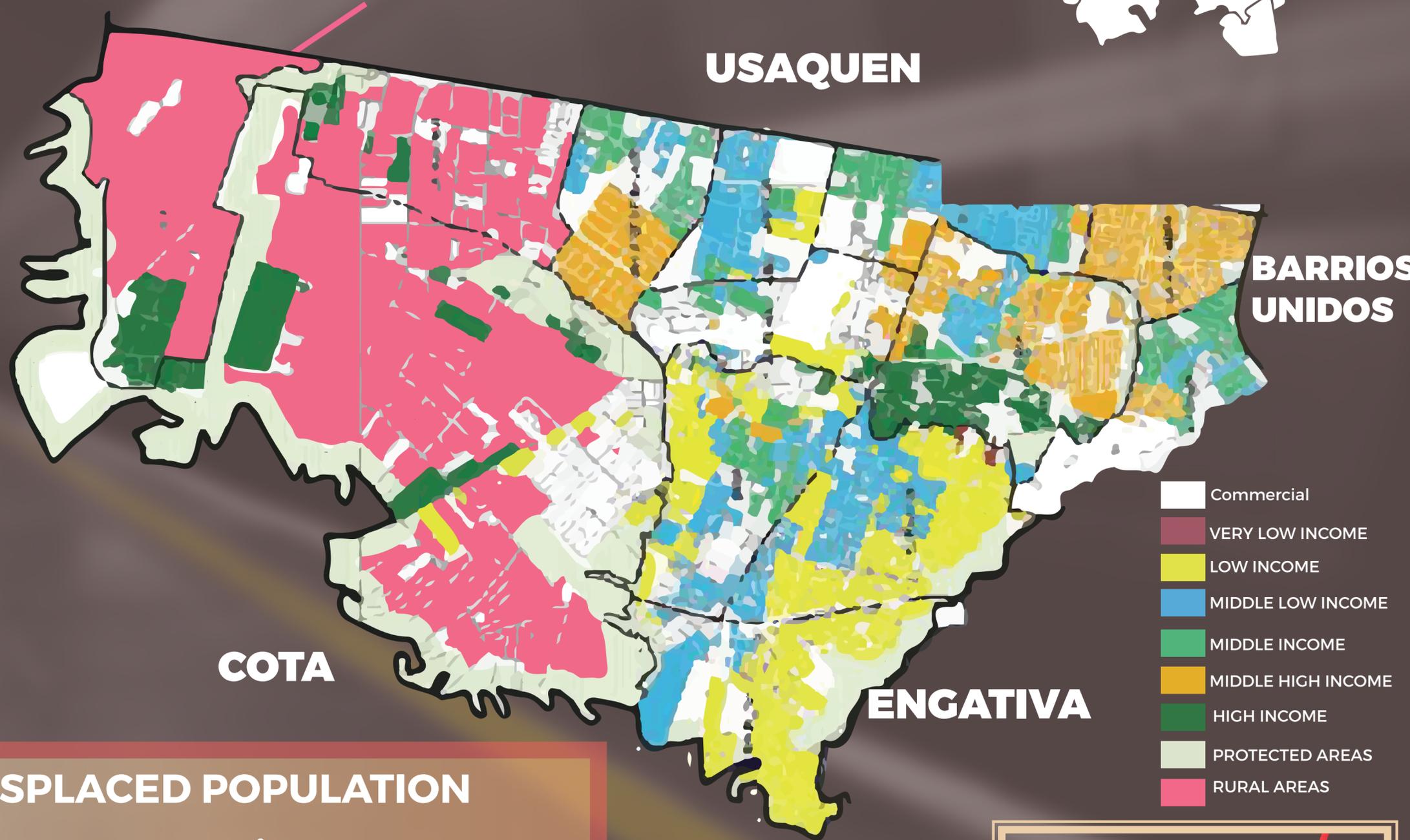
25% Very-low income (less than \$250/month)

5% High income (~\$2,000/month)

Average income in Bogota (~\$400)

Median age in Suba: 30 years old (Bogota:29)

Illegal Settlements



**DISPLACED POPULATION**

Bogota: 16,732 in 2010

Suba: 30% (Women - 50.5%)

# BOROUGH OF SUBA

## TRANSPORTATION

**72% users of Transmilenio  
in Bogota (1.5 M)  
5% in Suba (75.000)**

**Lack of coverage**

**64% Women have  
reported sexual  
harassment in  
Transmilenio**



## Transmilenio Network



# SUBA, Safer Cities

## Why in Suba?

♀ Important presence of VAW:

♀ 200 monthly cases (2,600 in Bogota)

♀ AVP: (Housing Association)

♀ Launched in 2011



Residential area near vacant lots with limited lighting and risky conditions for women



Limited access to public transportation + VAW reported cases

# SUBA, Safer Cities

## FOCUS GROUP

35 Women received training: VAW, local government structure

## PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

Women mapped unsafe areas in Suba

## WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDITS

Exploratory walks were performed by women

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Women developed a set of recommendations presented to local authorities

## INTERVENTIONS

Interventions were not developed

## EVALUATION

This stage is missing

# SUBA, Safer Cities

## ♀ Participatory Mapping



**Red Spots:**  
Unsafe spaces  
identified by  
women

- 44. Entrada al barrio Caminos de Esperanza
- 45. Puente de 3 niveles, TransMilenio estación 21 Ángeles calle 137 con carrera 85
- 46. Alrededores del colegio Compartir, calle 146B con 115
- 47. Paso en el barrio Bilbao, carrera 150 con calle 143
- 48. Potrero sabanas de Tibabuyes, Barrio La Gallana calle 139B con transversal 127
- 49. Puente que une el barrio Usboá con la localidad de Engativá, cerca a la planta de TransMilenio
- 50. Potrero cerca al colegio Toscana, calle C y barrio Usboá
- 51. Alrededor clínica Juan Corpes y barrio Villa del Campo, calle 153 con carrera 106A
- 52. Potrero Villa María, carrera 119 con calle 189
- 53. Carrera 87 con calle 150, paradero colectivo Tuna alta y Concordia
- 54. Muro trasero-portal de TransMilenio, barrio Turinje, calle 103B con carrera 150A
- Lote junto a laguna de oxidación Río Bogotá, conecta con barrio Bilbao calle 143 con carrera 148
- Ronda del Río Bogotá
- Ciclo ruta
- Puentes vehiculares y peatonales
- Paraderos del servicio de transporte público y buses

■ LUGARES INSEGUROS  
 ■ LIMITE DE LOCALIDAD  
 ■ LIMITE DE UPR

# CONCLUSIONS

## ♀ Achievements

- A group of women were educated about their rights and types of violence present in Suba
- Women's safety in public spaces made visible at the local level through campaigns in public transportation
- Valuable recommendations were created from the focus group

## Weaknesses

- The program was developed by AVP and not by a grassroots group
- Outreach campaigns about the program were only developed in strategic spaces (selected Transmilenio stations) and not in the city at large
- People in the community of Suba did not recognize the program
- Documentation process has not been completed after almost 4 years



# CONCLUSIONS

- ♀ The Safer Cities Program implementation in Suba was a first step towards women's safety in Bogota
- ♀ The Program represents a great opportunity to engage women's groups with local authorities to make improvements to the physical infrastructure of the city
- ♀ Lack of funding limited the program's evaluation phase in Suba and its expansion in Bogota
- ♀ Poor dissemination of information about Program's findings

# RECOMMENDATIONS Physical Interventions

## ♀ **What did the women of Suba recommend to local authorities?**

- Public infrastructure maintenance
- Ensure better public transport service, by increasing the frequency +provision of safety stops
- Implement employment opportunities and income generating alternatives for women
- Training on citizen participation to increase women's political impact.



## ♀ **Additional recommendations:**

- Easy access to and from public transportation (rickshaws/bikes)
- Good lighting (bus stops, glass shelters)
- Easy-to-read signs (way-finding/scape routes)
- Public space programming (community events)
- Provisions for young children and elderly

# RECOMMENDATIONS

For Safer Cities Program in Suba

## Finalize the documentation of the experience

- Women of Suba can engage in academia in order to document their experience:  
Universidad Nacional (in Bogotá) - Internship Program
- Online project management tools (Trello, Google Spreadsheets, Basecamp)
- Fundraising: academia, media and private companies (CSR)

## Replicate the Program in Suba and other Boroughs encouraging participation

### Peer Exchange

- Skype or Google Hangout meetings: Access to Internet is available in public libraries
- Women of Suba can travel to the other Boroughs

# RECOMMENDATIONS

For Safer Cities Program in Suba

## Advocacy about women's safety issues

### Campaigns

- Partnerships with the media are key in order to disseminate information about violence against women in the city
- Maps4Aid and Look at Me Campaigns (Education + Media + Tech)
- Mujeres Seguras en Transmilenio campaign

## Promote leadership and training of grassroots women

### Political Participation, Education and Training

- Women's participation through clear legislation granting their possibility to be involved in decision-making processes. Participatory budgeting
- Increase the number of female police to bridge the gap of communication with women citizens
- Online video education in liaison with on-premise certifications organized by government entities (SENA - National Service for Learning)
- Education in schools (Bocas, manos y ojos contra la violencia sexual)

THANK YOU



SAFER CITIES FOR WOMEN

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