

Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres

Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres is one of Colombia's most significant feminist peace movements. For 30 years, spanning the length of Colombia's 50-year armed conflict and into the fragile post-agreement era, Ruta Pacífica has worked to protect women's rights, document the gendered costs of war, and demand that peace be built with women at the table. It operates as a movement: 300+ women's organisations across 13 departments, connected by a shared commitment to non-violent, feminist resistance.

Ruta Pacífica joined Equal Measures 2030 in 2017, shortly after the signing of the Colombian Peace Agreement. Making the timing of this partnership as significant as the partnership itself. Equal Measures gave Ruta Pacífica a new tool at precisely the moment they needed to shift from bearing witness to the conflict to holding government accountable for implementing its gender commitments.

400+

policymakers directly
reached with SDG
Gender Index data

10

women appointed to
departmental and
municipal positions

39

municipal development
plans influenced

A movement built in the shadow of conflict

Colombia's 50-year armed conflict did not end for women when the 2016 Peace Agreement was signed. In regions like Chocó, armed groups continue to impose their control through extortion, massacre, and forced displacement. Women, particularly Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, remain among the most vulnerable. Ruta Pacífica's existence has always been a response to this reality.

What changed with the Peace Agreement was the terrain of struggle. Suddenly there were monitoring mechanisms, implementation commitments, and formal spaces for civil society engagement. But holding governments accountable for gendered peace commitments requires a different kind of evidence than bearing witness to violence. It requires data.

“

“Thanks to the Equal Measures 2030 project, we reinforced our skills around data-driven advocacy. It helped us to understand the importance of data and evidence to ask for accountability for women's rights — to go beyond reading data only as numbers but as a political tool.” - *Regional Coordinator, Ruta Pacífica, Quindío region*

Ruta Pacífica had historically built its power on qualitative evidence: the testimonies of survivors, the documentation of different forms of violence, the voices of women from conflict-affected communities.

The Equal Measures partnership did not replace that. It extended it, giving Ruta Pacífica the quantitative tools to place Colombia's failures within a global framework of SDG accountability, and to demand more from a government that had signed international commitments it was not meeting.



THE COALITION EFFECT

Equal Measures 2030's contribution to Ruta Pacífica has been both technical and structural. As Cecilia García, Equal Measures 2030's LAC regional lead, reflected: "Our partnership with Ruta Pacífica and our impact in the work they do around the implementation of Peace Agreement exemplifies a collaboration model with a broad and diverse women's movement, rather than a traditional national-level CSO."

→ **The SDG Gender Index gave Ruta Pacífica a globally credible, internationally recognised framework to connect Colombia's Peace Accord to global development commitments.** — positioning gender equality not as an ideological demand but as a measurable obligation Colombia had signed up to. DDA training across all 13 regional offices embedded data skills throughout the movement, enabling Ruta Pacífica to shift from narrative-based advocacy to evidence-based political argumentation at every level from village to national government. Dedicated local technical support, including a locally based data expert, helped Ruta Pacífica navigate Colombia's complex data access landscape and build tools tailored to their specific territorial and ethnic contexts.

→ **Budgets doubled for women's rights.** Ruta Pacífica's data-backed advocacy in Medellín and Antioquia produced some of the most concrete financial wins in the Equal Measures portfolio. The Women's Secretariat budget in Medellín increased from 52 billion to nearly 99 billion pesos. In Antioquia, the Women's Secretariat budget doubled annually. In Quibdó, Ruta Pacífica successfully advocated to increase the Women's Secretary budget from 52 billion to 98 billion pesos over four years. These are rare, tangible examples of feminist data advocacy producing real financial change.

→ **Co-architect of Colombia's National Action Plan for Resolution 1325.** Working with 13 national women's organisations through the Alliance 1325, Ruta Pacífica played a central role in shaping Colombia's first National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, ensuring the plan included specific budgets, clear responsibilities, and four pillars fully grounded in the lived realities of women in conflict-affected regions.

→ **Peace Agreement monitoring influencing national institutions.** Ruta Pacífica's annual monitoring reports on the Peace Agreement's gender commitments have been used by the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), and the Peace Agreement Implementation Unit, which publicly acknowledged Ruta Pacífica's contributions. Ruta Pacífica's National Coordinator was appointed to the Truth Commission's post-report monitoring committee.

→ **39 municipal development plans shaped by women's agendas.** Across its territories, Ruta Pacífica submitted data-based proposals to local and departmental planning processes, influencing 39 municipal and 8 departmental development plans. In Turbaco, all of Ruta Pacífica's recommendations — covering income generation, GBV services, peacebuilding, and rights for conflict-affected women — were incorporated. In Candelaria, Ruta Pacífica's analysis led to the creation of the first ever public policy on women and gender, with resources allocated for its implementation.

→ **10 women appointed to positions of power.** DDA training translated directly into political participation. At least 10 women trained through the Equal Measures partnership were appointed to departmental or municipal positions. In Cauca, three young Indigenous women joined the municipal youth council using data-based analysis. Women moved into roles as mayors, councillors, assembly members, and gender policy advisers. Carrying the tools of data-driven accountability into formal decision-making spaces.



THE JOURNEY

When Ruta Pacífica joined Equal Measures in 2017, the partnership's first task was to build data skills across a decentralized movement. Staff across all 13 regional offices received training in collecting, analyzing, and using data, embedding a data-driven culture into an organization that had previously relied almost entirely on qualitative advocacy. This was not a light lift for a movement operating across conflict-affected territories with limited infrastructure.

The SDG Gender Index became Ruta Pacífica's primary external evidence tool. From 2018, Ruta Pacífica developed a series of annual infographic reports linking the implementation of the Peace Agreement's gender commitments to SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) positioning this peace building plan not as a political negotiation but as a binding development commitment. These reports directly reached approximately 300 public officials.

“

“Incorporating the policy recommendations of the Gender Index to accelerate gender equality in Colombia is possible, and this is where the advocacy of women's organizations using data is indispensable and strategic. Investing in processes with women, enacting legislative reforms that guarantee women's rights, promoting female leadership, supporting the work of women's organizations and expanding their spaces for dialogue, among other actions, will result—as the Index indicates—in improved living conditions for women and the entire community.” - *Former Programme Coordinator Shima Pardo Bohórquez*

The scale of that engagement was extraordinary. In 2020–2021 alone, Ruta Pacífica participated in approximately 470 meetings related to development plan formulation and submitted around 500 evidence-based proposals. Its advocacy influenced 8 departmental development plans and 39 municipal development plans, introducing women's agendas systematically into formal planning processes at a scale few civil society organizations anywhere in the world have achieved.

Equal Measures 2030 also provided targeted technical support, including a locally-based data expert to help Ruta Pacífica navigate Colombia's complex data access landscape — including Freedom of Information processes that sometimes took six months or more to yield gender-disaggregated data on violence.

Ruta Pacífica also participated in Equal Measures' 2023 Data Journalism Fellowship. Former Programme Coordinator Shima Pardo Bohórquez produced research on peacebuilding across Ruta's member organizations, analyzing the factors behind their success and their contribution to the SDGs.

[Read more: Equal Measures Data Journalism Fellows 2023](#)



→ **Colombia's National Development Plan shaped by Ruta Pacífica's advocacy.** Through the government's "Binding Dialogues" citizen engagement process, Ruta Pacífica influenced the inclusion of measures to reduce gender gaps and combat discrimination in Colombia's National Development Plan — one of the most significant policy instruments in the country.

→ **The Violence Observatory.** Alison Holder, Equal Measures 2030's Executive Director, reflected that Ruta Pacífica's development of its own observatory on violence against women may not have taken the form it did without the grounding in data methodology the Equal Measures partnership provided. An example of how DDA investment shapes institutional capacity in ways that extend well beyond any single project.

When 1,800 women walk into a conflict zone

On 8 March 2024, 1,800 women marched into Istmina, Chocó, one of Colombia's most conflict-affected areas, where armed groups continue to impose control through violence and displacement. Women came from Putumayo, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, and Eje Cafetero, some beginning their journeys on 5 March. They gathered in a territory that rarely sees feminist mobilization of this scale, organized under the framework of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. [Read the full account: Women on the move: feminist mobilisations for peace in Colombia](#)

Ruta Pacífica monitors the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement using data across the 130 gender-related measures embedded within it. The findings are stark: only 14% of these commitments have advanced for women. [As Marina Gallego Zapata explains:](#) "La Ruta monitors, through data, the 130 measures on women's and gender rights included in the Peace Agreement. Only 14% have advanced for women."

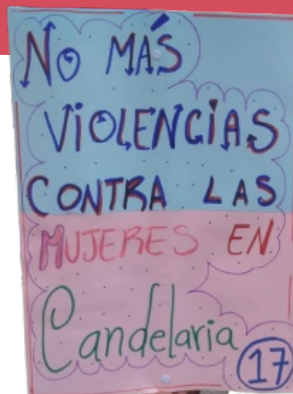
To sustain accountability, Ruta Pacífica operates the Observatorio Mujeres Enrutadas en la Observancia de las Violencias contra las Mujeres y Niñas, tracking violence against women and particularly femicide. By combining data with advocacy, the organization ensures that peace implementation does not erase women's rights from national priorities. "These are ways of putting the issues on the agenda while influencing the advancement of appropriate policies," Marina notes.

All of Ruta Pacífica's mobilizations require a minimum of one year's preparation, including dialogue with local institutions and coordination with regional and national bodies to ensure the safety and visibility of participants. The Chocó march was not a protest. It was a political statement, a protection strategy, and a data-backed demand; that the Peace Agreement's promises to women be kept.

“

“For the life, security, and rights of women, we will continue walking and demanding that these rights be freely exercised by all, for them, for us, and for others — we will keep walking” - *Activist, Ruta Pacífica mobilization, Istmina, March 8, 2024*

This is the coalition effect that goes beyond technical support. Equal Measures 2030's international visibility and the solidarity it represents has become part of the fabric of how Ruta Pacífica presents its work. As Cecilia García noted: coalition members have shared that they feel supported and “somehow protected” when Equal Measures gives visibility to their work. For a movement that walks into conflict zones, that protection is not metaphorical.



LOOKING AHEAD

Ruta Pacífica's focus going forward is on consolidating the institutional gains made through the Peace Agreement process while continuing to expand women's political participation and budget accountability at the municipal and departmental level. The 2024 launch of the SDG Gender Index in Medellín, co-led by Ruta alongside Equal Measures and CLADEM (Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres), signals a deepening of the regional coalition model.

Ruta Pacífica continues to co-lead Equal Measures' Latin American regional work alongside ASOGEN and CLADEM, including participation in ECLAC's Regional Conference on Women and joint DDA workshops across Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala. Learn more about Ruta Pacífica's work at:

equalmeasures2030.org/members/ruta-pacifica

In a country where the Peace Agreement's promises remain only partially fulfilled, and where women in conflict-affected territories continue to face violence with few protections, Ruta Pacífica's model — feminist movement building, data-driven accountability, and persistent presence in the spaces where decisions are made — is one of the most powerful examples of what sustained feminist organizing can achieve.

“

“I think it's one of the most rewarding partnerships I have experienced. What struck me is the conceptual beauty of combining the empowerment of women candidates with data — data that can power their campaigns, their promises, and the issues they want to address. That's a multiplier effect you don't easily find.”

- Albert Motivans, Head of Data & Insights, Equal Measures 2030



Learn more about Ruta Pacífica's work:



rutapacifica.org.co/



Ruta Pacífica De Las Mujeres



@rutapacificam