

AIR Experience in Honduras

Violence, harassment, and mistreatment in the workplace continue to challenge safe, dignified, and respectful working environments in Honduras. The maquila industry, one of the country's largest employment-generating sectors, employs approximately 155,000 people, many of them women. These forms of workplace abuse disproportionately affect women workers, limiting their ability to exercise their rights, pursue professional development, and participate fully in the workforce.

Addressing workplace violence and mistreatment requires more than regulatory change. It also depends on equipping those who prevent, address, and respond to these situations: public institutions, employers, trade unions, legal professionals, and, above all, women workers themselves.

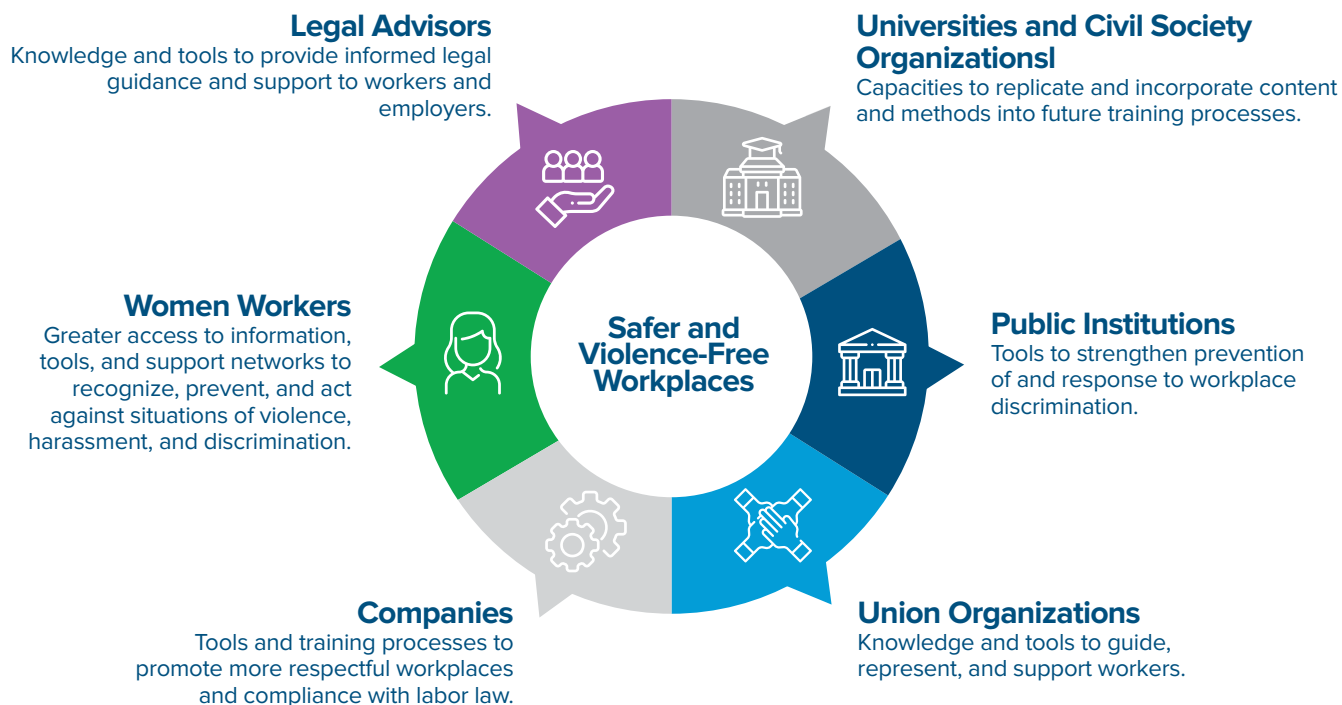
Since 2022, American Institutes for Research (AIR) has implemented a comprehensive strategy in Honduras through two complementary initiatives:

- Building Safe and Respectful Work Environments (COSER), funded by the U.S. Department of State.
- Promoting Labor Rights and Women's Empowerment in the Maquila Sector (PROFEM), funded by the AIR Opportunity Fund.

Both initiatives have strengthened the capacities of different actors within the labor ecosystem to contribute to the creation of safer, more respectful workplaces free from violence

An Ecosystem of Actors for Change

AIR's experience in Honduras demonstrates that workplace violence and harassment are best addressed when workers, employers, unions, legal professionals, and public institutions are strengthened to play their respective roles.



Strengthening the Conditions for Change

The first step consisted of strengthening the institutional framework through which the State can more effectively prevent and respond to workplace discrimination, harassment and violence.

As part of COSER, AIR worked closely with institutions affiliated with the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security (SETRASS) to develop tools, procedures, and skills that strengthened the institutional response to workplace violence and mistreatment.

Key achievements include: Development of the **Labor Inspection Protocol on Gender Discrimination in Employment and Occupation** (Agreement No. SETRASS-160-2024). Training of labor inspectors. Development of digital tools to provide guidance and facilitate access to reporting mechanisms.

Supporting Compliance from the Private Sector

AIR strengthened tools and capacities to support compliance with labor regulations related to discrimination and violence within the private sector through: Updating the model Internal Work Regulation (RIT) and training employers through PROCINCO.

Local Capacities to Sustain and Expand Impact

A central component of this phase was the strengthening of local capacities through a Training of Trainers (ToT) model. In partnership with the Honduras Bar Association and later with the Technological University of Honduras (UTH), the project trained 29 professionals to replicate the methodology and strengthen prevention of and response to workplace mistreatment.

Strengthening Individuals and Their Support Networks

Building on COSER's achievements, PROFEM expanded the strategy by integrating two key actors in Honduras's labor relations ecosystem: women workers and union leaders, and professionals who can guide and support them in exercising their rights.



Women Workers and Union Leaders

PROFEM worked with 93 women maquila workers and trade union leaders, equipping them with knowledge and skills to recognize situations of violence, harassment, and workplace mistreatment, understand their rights and available pathways for support or grievance reporting, and share information and tools with other workers.



Legal and Human Resources Professionals

The project strengthened the knowledge and skills of 111 legal and human resources professionals to: Recognize and address situations of violence, harassment, and workplace mistreatment, guide workers and facilitate access to legal support.

Looking Ahead

This experience demonstrates the value of investing in local capacity, strengthening partnerships, and developing practical solutions to transform workplace culture. Opportunities remain to expand this work to new sectors, geographic areas, and stakeholders across the labor ecosystem. AIR looks forward to continuing to work with current and future partners to develop initiatives that extend and consolidate this progress in Honduras.