

ARTICLE 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

180Play /

Maria da Penha Institute

Non-profit raises awareness of domestic violence by highlighting examples of abuse in popular films and TV series



In 2006, Brazil introduced landmark legislation to bring in special courts and stricter punishments for domestic abusers, as well as 24-hour shelters for victims. The Maria da Penha Law, named after a Brazilian women's rights activist who was left paralysed by her violent husband, classified domestic violence as a violation of human rights for the first time.

Fourteen years on, the **Maria da Penha Institute (IMP)**, a non-profit organisation founded in 2016 to promote women's awareness of their rights and strengthen the Maria da Penha Law through education, found that women still struggle to identify acts of domestic violence.

To increase awareness and understanding of the different types of domestic violence – physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial and moral – the IMP worked with **F.biz**, São Paulo, to launch **180Play**. Designed to resemble a video streaming platform, 180Play features clips from well known films and TV series in which different types of domestic violence play out.



A scene from *Titanic*, for example, shows Kate Winslet's character being threatened and intimidated by her fiancé, while another clip from US series *Mad Men* sees a woman sexually assaulted by her partner. Alongside video content, visitors to the site can find written definitions and examples of each of the five types of domestic abuse. 180Play also invites people to submit new content to its catalogue by filling in a [short form](#) on the website.

The website can also be used to report abuse, by clicking on a link to dial 180 – Brazil's international helpline for women. Other links lead to pages on the IMP's website that offer information on how to [recognise the cycle of violence](#) and [how to seek help](#). The goal of the project, which has the support of UN Women, 'was to didactically present, through a selection of scenes from movies, series and soap operas, the many types of aggression against women and, therefore, warn everyone – especially the victims – about the importance of reporting the aggressors', said Fernand Alphen, co-CEO of F.biz.

The agency told Contagious that 180Play was advertised as a free, no-subscription-needed streaming service on banner ads and OOH, promoted on social media and by influencers, before UN Women revealed the project's real goal, which generated organic press. The strategy to use free streaming as 'bait' was to attract as many people as possible, the agency explained: 'We couldn't approach the audience through the domestic violence point of view, since few people pay attention to that subject.'

Contagious Insight /

Cast a wide net / Although this project's 'baiting' tactic wouldn't work for everyone (there must be a compelling reason to avoid negative reactions to being duped), it is effective here at attracting a wide audience to a cause. As the agency explained to Contagious, the campaign was designed to start a conversation among 'a wide audience, from different genders and social classes' but the target was mainly women, and specifically women who are suffering domestic violence. To reach this audience of victims who don't know they are victims, the IMP and F.biz needed to take a different tactic to previous domestic abuse awareness campaigns we've seen, such as [Maria's Message](#) and Carling Black Label's [#NoExcuse](#) initiative. To reach those who don't yet identify as victims or see domestic violence as an issue that is relevant to them, the element of surprise was essential.

Reframing device / 180Play looks like any streaming platform – most of the series and film titles will be familiar to the audience. Isolating clips from these well-known stories and depicting familiar characters perpetrating or suffering from different types of domestic abuse encourages the viewer to reflect and revise their definition of abuse and explicitly identify those characters as victims. By reframing familiar protagonists as victims, 180Play may help victims do the same for themselves, encouraging them to take a closer, more analytical look at their own situations. The accompanying information on how to spot the signs, what constitutes sexual, physical, moral, psychological or property violence, and the reminder that all 'are considered acts of human rights violations and must be reported' is there to dispel any

further doubts and empower victims to report their abusers and end the cycle of violence.

In the eyes of the law / At the crux of this campaign are the limitations of legislation when it comes to domestic violence. Launching 180Play on the 14th anniversary of the Maria da Penha Law is not a celebration of legislative progress, but a stark reminder of how laws can fall short when cultural awareness is low: what good is the legal framework for reporting abuse, if victims don't even know they are being abused? While TV and film series like *The Fall*, *The Killing* and *Game of Thrones* are often criticised for normalising violence against women, this campaign flips that narrative on its head and instead uses video content to call out such violence. Aligning fact (definitions of violence) with fiction (film and TV scenes) in this way helps to bridge the gap between laws and reality, reminding us that many forms of abuse, though illegal, go unnoticed, unchecked and unreported.