

Category: **Social Affairs**

Project: SocorroBot - A chatbot that guides you through the administrative process of reporting a missing person in Mexico



information on what to do when facing a disappearance: where to ask for help? how to report it? where and how to start the search? Organizations and collectives of victims' relatives point out that in practically all cases essential time for the search was lost due to lack of information, despite the fact that the immediate search is essential to locate people alive and constitutes an obligation of the authorities according to the General Law on Disappearances and the Guiding Principles for the Search for Persons of the Committee against Enforced Disappearances of the United Nations.

In recent years various organizations or institutions have developed written manuals as guides to deal with a disappearance. However, they are not widely known and may not always be the right tool for those who are in the process of searching for a family member.

Disappearances in Mexico, as determined by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances and various international organizations, are massive, systematic and unceasing.

What was the solution?

Facilitate access to essential information on the search and reporting process to relatives of missing persons through a WhatsApp chatbot.

SocorroBot offers a guide for those who need information on what to do when a person goes missing in Mexican territory, what resources they can count on for the search, what protocols the authority must follow, what their rights are as relatives and, even, what documentation will facilitate the report according to:

1. Age (if the person is a minor or of legal age)
2. Gender
3. The temporality of their disappearance (the first 24 hours or indefinite time)
4. The presumed perpetrators of the crime (in case of enforced disappearance)
5. The geographical place where it occurred
6. Migratory status
7. The geographical location of the person reporting

It includes recommendations for the search and contacts of social organizations or collectives of relatives in the region that can accompany you in the process.

To build the conversational flow, an interdisciplinary team with information designers, journalists, developers, product designers, data analysts and grassroots activists held sessions to design the information architecture, technology and digital infrastructure. The design prioritized:

- Providing accurate, timely and useful information according to the case
- Safeguarding the user's identity and personal data, since relatives of missing people in Mexico are usually subject to extortion and blackmail
- The sustainability of the project in the long term: WA chatbots can be very expensive, since the cost depends on the amount of messages sent and received

The design of the character Socorro (a common name for women in Mexico that also translates as "help") was essential for people to recognize and remember the project. The character represented the thousands of mothers that have gone through the process of looking for their loved ones. The graphic identity uses warm but serious colors.

We chose WhatsApp because it is used by 77 million people in Mexico and many

telephone companies offer plans with unlimited access to this application. Additionally, we built a web platform to expand the reach of the project.

It was very important to design a communication strategy that included the adoption of the tool by collectives of family members looking for their loved ones, so that they could recommend it themselves. We also planned and delivered workshops at a local level to get feedback on UX and present the project itself.

The slogan for the campaign was:

Save #SocorroBot's contact, we hope you never have to use it: +52 55 9225 2174

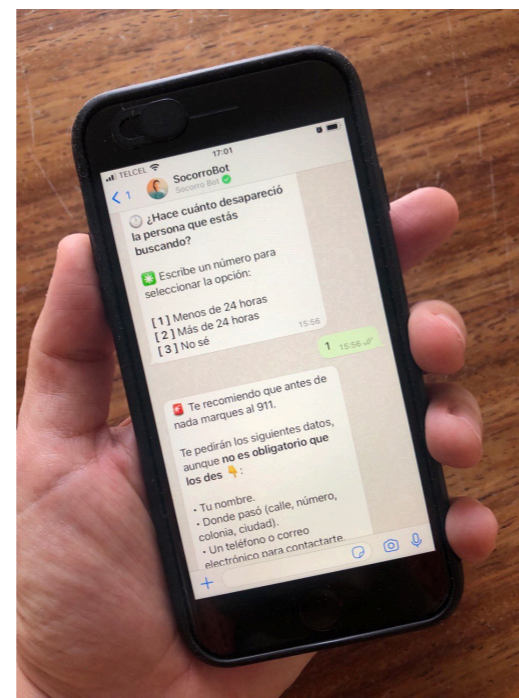
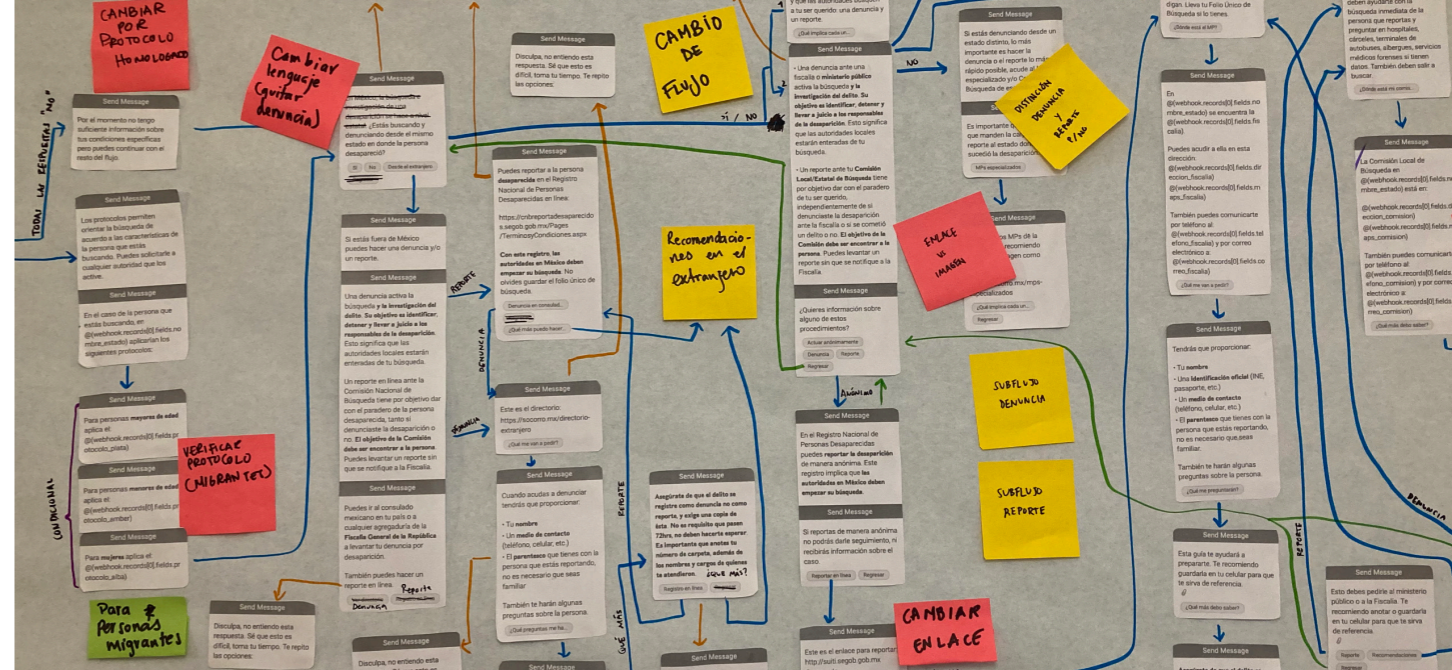
What was the effect?

The project was launched on September 29th, 2022. Since then, the chatbot has

had 1,315 users. This means that a daily average of 6.5 people uses the tool. Considering that in February 2023 an average of 16 people disappear a day, this represents 41% of potential cases. We cannot know particulars about each case because the tool was designed to prevent the collection of personal data both from the person who disappeared as well as the one who is reporting.

Our project was featured in over 100 media outlets (television, newspapers, radio and digital).

SocorroBot was developed on a voluntary basis throughout 2 years, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. After that, the project received the 2022-2023 Canada Fund for Local Initiatives in Mexico to help develop the local workshop and communication campaign.



SocorroBot team:

