JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH
2026, VOL. 3
https://doi.org/10.36368/jcsh.v3i2.1347

CONVERSATIONS WITH

Accompanying life: Testimony of a *Kullaka*

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Received 26 January 2026; Accepted 25 February 2026; Published 8 March 2026

In one corner of life, where the shadows of machismo still weighed heavily, Gladys emerged as a light of hope. Founder of *Kullakas ILE*, a group of courageous women who came together around the truth that "every day women have abortions," her story is an ode to sisterhood and resilience. *Kullakas*, which in Aymara means "sisters," is not just a name. It is a refuge, a space where women come together to share their struggles and make decisions about their bodies without fear or shame. Drawing strength from her own experience, Gladys guides her companions in the search for reproductive autonomy, challenging the stigmas that so often silence their voices. In this group, every story is heard, every tear is shared, and every decision is validated. In this way, *Kullakas ILE* stands as a beacon in the darkness, a call to freedom where women can embrace their right to decide and build together a future in which they no longer have to face the reality of abortion alone.
This is her story.

I could not believe that someone could decide over your body

I began working on women's rights when I was around eighteen, just after finishing high s chool. My parents had limited financial resources, and once each son or daughter finished school, they had to "make their own way." At that time, U.S. cooperation, through USAID, provided food in exchange for work. So a friend suggested: "Why don't you teach women to read and write? They'll pay you with food."

No one wanted to go to El Alto. It was sparsely populated and lacked many basic resources. Even so, there were groups of women doing community work there. I went, and I began teaching literacy classes. In those first meetings with women, I started noticing many problems, such as violence and unwanted pregnancies. They would ask me things like: "How can I avoid getting pregnant so often?" Looking for information to guide them, I found CIES, an NGO that works on sexual and reproductive health in the country.

At CIES I met María del Rosario Calderón, an activist committed to sexual and reproductive health. She saw how young I was and asked me, "Who are you?" After I explained, she told me that I needed training as a family planning promoter and that I should teach classes on the subject. Marichuza, as we affectionately called her, became my teacher.

In the first classes, I spoke with the women about how the body works, what contraceptive methods are, what the egg cell is, how an IUD is inserted, how a condom is used, and other topics. They felt deeply embarrassed, covered their faces, laughed shyly, and told me: "Miss, how are you going to show us that?"

I was a volunteer, I did not have a salary, and I sold condoms or advised women on how to use contraceptive methods. Half of what I made went to me and the other half to the institution. I worked like that for two years, and during that time other forms of violence became visible: "he hits me," "he won't let me protect myself or use methods," "he forces me." In addition to my work, I had to talk to husbands, since they had to give "authorization" for their wives to use contraception. I could not believe that someone else could decide over their body. On three occasions, because of the fear and desperation of some women, I signed those authorizations myself. I remember those cases well: the wife of a miner, another woman who already had eight children, and a very young woman who already had six.

At that time, I also met other great fighters for sexual and reproductive rights, Bertha Pooley and Sandra Aliaga, who invited me to a talk on women's right to live free from violence. Of course, there were no Ombuds offices or SLIMs yet. I was very interested, and there I met several feminists. I loved it. I identified

deeply with their work, and I began finding answers to many of my questions, as well as thinking of ways to help women.

Then, in 1995, I got to know CIDEM. I was in my second year of law school and worked there for several years as a legal assistant. I learned a great deal about violence and its different forms, including sexual violence. Women were terribly afraid and ashamed to talk about their sexuality. They used contraceptive methods in secret, with fear, as if they were thieves or committing a sin.

Every day women have abortions

At home I did not talk about these issues. My father was a machista man. He did not know exactly what subjects I worked on, nor did he look at my training materials on sexual organs, contraceptive methods, and so on. He only said: "You spend too much time out on the street." One day he saw those materials, became very angry, and insulted me. He told my mother, who was submissive, to take me to the doctor, because surely I "already knew men."

At that time I was nineteen or twenty, and I felt frightened and humiliated. My mother took me to the doctor, and he told her that I had not yet had sexual intercourse, that I was still a virgin, and that as parents they should actually feel proud that I was raising awareness about contraceptive methods and about sexuality and reproduction without violence. I remember him saying to her: "How many children do you have, Doña Rosita?" "Eight." "And did you want to have eight children?" "No." "How many children did you want to have?" "Three." "Then you should be proud that your daugh-ter teaches other women not to fill themselves up with children, and that she works on these issues without that meaning she is prostituting herself. Knowing about contraceptive methods makes it less likely that she will go through a pregnancy she does not want."

I think I was the most rebellious person in my family, because if my father said no, I said yes. That rebelliousness led me to leave home early. I already had a job, and the first pay I received I gave in full to my mother. She could not believe it. She said: "They must have made a mistake, daughter." It was a good salary. They recognized all my work and commitment. On top of that, I was voluntarily training promoters in sexual and reproductive health.

Because my mother insisted, I went back to the accountant's office with the envelope still sealed. "There's been a mistake," I said. She answered: "You'll have this salary for three months, and then we're going to increase it." I could neither believe nor accept it, and neither could my mother. Marichuza taught me once again: "You have to value your work. How could it be too much? You've worked here for two years. You may love it very much, but you also have to value your work. And since you're at university, this is what is right."

I was so happy, and that gave me confidence and economic independence. I remember my older brother, the only son, when I decided to leave home, said to me: "I wish I had the balls you have, because out of the eight of us, you're the only one who does." Having a machista father and a very submissive mother, and then meeting another kind of people, was revealing. Before that, I thought there was something wrong with me, that I was crazy or mistaken, because what I heard from feminists resonated with what I thought, but I felt like a criminal and believed I had to hide what I was doing.

Arriving at CIDEM was a process of undoing and rebuilding myself. Even though I wanted change, I had no foundation to stand on. Finding other women who strengthened me and confirmed that I was not wrong, but simply late in understanding, was a great relief and a blessing. That was when I decided to take that opportunity and work in something I love. When I joined CIDEM, Sonia Montaño was no longer the director; Ximena Machicao was in charge. I became involved in groups and talks on women and education, culture, sexuality and the church, where experts trained me. I remember a talk about abortion where many women cried. Later, Ximena informed us that we would join the September 28 Campaign in Bolivia. Although it was a personal issue and not everyone agreed, those of us who wanted to join did so. Since then, I became part of the campaign, and we worked on very interesting actions that helped the initiative grow in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Tarija, and other departments.

After leaving CIDEM, I remained committed to this cause. It is a life commitment; it is not something you simply set aside. I also remained in close contact with the women I had worked with. Many kept looking for me, and with several of them we continued facing the daily reality of abortion and unwanted pregnancies. Every day women have abortions. Every day they face unwanted pregnancies.

Kullakas ILE, but also IVE

From my activism and my commitment to life, together with other women, we decided to form *Kullakas ILE* (*Kullaka* is an Aymara word meaning sister.) We are volunteers who accompany other women in legally ter-minating a pregnancy, using the framework of the Legal Interruption of Pregnancy (ILE in Spanish) established by Constitutional Sentence 0206/2014. But we are also *Kullakas IVE*, understanding the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy (IVE in Spanish) as a right.

I entered the Gregoria Apaza institution as a volunteer and began by giving a talk on self-esteem. At that moment they were forming the group of Community Promoters, who would be responsible for spreading women's rights and the struggle against violence in El Alto.

I found myself in an interesting situation. As I trained the promoters, I did not clearly see a feminist perspective, so I proposed some changes. They told me they were creating a Guide for the Training of Promoters, which had to be validated, and that I would have to work with

someone else. That was where I met Cecilia Terrazas, a Bolivian feminist. Together we worked on the Guide. It was an enriching process. I met many committed women whom I deeply respect.

We only needed twenty-five women for the courses, but seventy-five enrolled. We did not know what to do with so many participants, so we opened more shifts. Tania Sánchez, the director of Gregoria Apaza at the time, suggested that I stay. At first I hesitated, because my daughter Camila, the youngest of my three children, was four years old and needed care. But they told me I could take her to the institution's daycare while I worked, so I accepted.

Gregoria Apaza was not, strictly speaking, a feminist institution. They focused on gender, but not so much on feminism. I began to implement some suggestions and involved the institution in press conferences and talks. We organized private conversations where women could freely express their feelings and cry. We came to understand that silence also causes harm.

Later, invited by Lupe Pérez, director of Colectivo Rebeldía in Santa Cruz, I proposed forming rights promoters, because laws are often not complied with and women face rejection and legal problems. We decided it would be useful to train promoters so they could properly defend their rights. The idea arose when we noticed that there were women from all departments, but they were not grassroots women, only activists. At present, in El Alto there are thirty-two of us, and around twelve of us are active companions. We met to decide on our name, considering calling ourselves mothers or friends. We chose to call ourselves Las *Kullakas*, because we are like sisters and we identify ourselves that way in order to support those going through situations that were also hard for us to share.

Our *Kullakas* group is independent and does not belong to any institution. We receive support from the September 28 Campaign led by Colectivo Rebeldía in Santa Cruz. They provide us with materials and courses, as does ESAR DISAR, which contacted us to learn about our work and send us information on the Penal Code. They warned us about the risks and the possibility of facing legal proceedings because of the persecution that exists in this field.

For that reason, in the September 28 Campaign it was decided that we should create an accompaniment protocol, and we participated actively in that process. Moira Rimassa and Lupe Pérez from Colectivo Rebeldía led it, together with lawyers from the September 28 Campaign who outlined the protocol. I was part of that team, and together with the *Kullakas* we contributed to its development.

Our group meets regularly. Most of us are rights-defense promoters. Many are in health centers carrying out promotion and oversight work, some at the FELCV, and others at the Prosecutor's Office. Our accompaniment work is specific, but it includes many components. We provide information broadly, and we are always meeting women facing unwanted pregnancies.

Accompaniment: we confront our own tears and fears

We are a diverse group. There are grandmothers, young women, university students, and people of different ages and neighborhoods. El Alto has fourteen districts, and we are present in eight of them. Many cases are referred to us, but not everyone dares to do accompaniment work. Between eight and twelve of us do it, and we have seen astonishing cases.

If we see that a woman has been the victim of sexual violence and has filed a complaint, we go immediately to the hospital and demand compliance with Constitutional Sentence 0206/2014. If it is not complied with, we seek the support of an institution that will back us up. When it involves girls, the process is more complex, but with adult women we act immediately. For example, one day I received a call about a 12-year-old girl in Villa Adela, in El Alto, who was pregnant and whose parents did not know what to do. I contacted a compañera who lives in that area, and she offered to accompany the family to the Defensoría and to their home.

That is how we function, forming a support network. I remember the case of a woman who was arrested for having had an abortion. I learned about it through Patricia Brañez, a feminist compañera of great courage. They were taking her prisoner to the FELCC in El Alto. I went to look for her, and they told me she was in the judicial holding cells. When I arrived, I found her trembling and feverish, unable to speak with her husband, desperate. I entered with a promoter's credential and saw that the hearing had been scheduled very quickly. I spoke with the police, and they told me she had deceived her husband, who might also face legal charges. Supposedly, they had found twelve misoprostol tablets in her vagina, although she denied having used them. It was the doctor who reported her. In the end, Lupe Pérez contacted Adriana Salvatierra, who was a deputy at the time, and she, being aware of the case, sent a lawyer to help resolve it. I was desperate. In order for them to release this woman, I had to leave my house papers as a guarantee. I saw her in such bad condition that I took out my property deed and stood surety for her. That was how we managed to get her out. We immediately took her to CIES so that her health could be treated. She was in very bad shape.

Among us there is great fear around speaking about abortion. Sometimes we are afraid to guide other women because we face the disapproval of our own families. They say things like: "What are you doing? Be careful with those things." Violence is a subject that can be discussed, but abortion is not. Abortion seems to be the limit for the people around us.

Why do we get involved in these issues? Many times we share our experiences and realize that we all carry that same fear. When I proposed forming a group, some responded that it was fine to deal with violence, but not abortion. Yet over time, we began to talk and came to

understand that the right to decide over our own body is fundamental.

Not speaking about these issues is like staying on the surface. It is important that we are not beaten and not abused, but if we do not address the root of the problem, we are not getting to the bottom of it. It is like cleaning your room and hiding the trash under the rug: it looks clean, but in reality something is hidden there.

We have accompanied many women and we know how to support them, but when we ask one another whether we ourselves have had abortions, we come up against our own tears and fears. Of course we also feel shame or fear that other people might find out. Even though we trust that our stories will not leave our circle, we fear that our children, husbands, or partners might discover them. We are afraid of being detained, of being called murderers, of being excluded, or of our brothers labeling us abortionists. These fears reflect the reality of many women who live in silence.

Some compañeras say that it is important for us to speak about abortion, because if we do not, women will continue dying from clandestine, unsafe, and unhygienic abortions. They will go on paying doctors who, while the public insurance denies them help, charge them outrageous sums of money and grow rich from our situation: "the same doctor who works in public hospitals later charges Bs. 1,500 or 2,000. They get rich at our expense."

We put in the commitment and even the house

Being part of the *Kullakas* has not been easy for all of us. In our meetings, we share these fears and challenges. We worried, for example, that we might be reported and arrested. Before any decision is made, we always provide full counseling, explaining that the decision is completely theirs. We support them whether they decide to continue the pregnancy or interrupt it. We remind them that although abortion is legal in certain cases in Bolivia, it is also criminalized, so they must be careful with information. We communicate through WhatsApp, but we delete messages immediately to protect ourselves.

When I began doing accompaniment work, I only provided information and accompanied women to the doctor. But my first real accompaniment was different. A young woman who was six weeks pregnant came to me. The rule is that everyone must have an ultrasound before proceeding. I showed the ultrasound to a doctor in our group, who confirmed that we could continue. I explained the process: what to take 24 hours beforehand, when to begin the misoprostol, and where to stay. I offered my home, since she had nowhere else to go. However, she did not return the next day. I thought perhaps she had decided to continue the pregnancy.

Finally, she came back when she was close to twelve weeks. She arrived crying at ten at night and told me that she had decided to interrupt the pregnancy after speaking with her boyfriend, who at first wanted to have the baby, but later changed his mind after a party, saying perhaps it was not the right time or perhaps he was not even the father. I explained that there would be bleeding, some pain, and sometimes contractions, based on the information we received in our training. I stayed with her and placed a hot-water bottle on her. The pain began, and she told me: "It hurts a lot." I got frightened and called the doctor, who already knew about the case. "That's how this is. Tell her to breathe calmly," he said. A few hours passed. When she went to the bathroom, she expelled a very small fetus into her hand. Then the placenta came out. She cried and told me she wanted to take it and bury it.

I remember trying to convince her that it was not the best option. I turned to a compañera who had more experience in accompaniment. As I said, this was the first one I had done. She told me: "What you've told her is correct, it's fine; she cannot take it. Talk to her about the law, you have to confront it. Right now her emotions are overflowing, but if this is not resolved, she is at risk and so are you."

When she was calmer, we resumed the conversation and she gave up that last idea. That was when I realized how important psychological accompaniment is, because not all women experience abortion in the same way. For some, it means liberation, but for others it is harder to face that moment. Emotional containment in the face of crisis is fundamental; we must not underestimate it. So I contacted psychologist friends so they could care for women who needed it, whether by Zoom or WhatsApp.

So far, I have carried out about twenty accompaniments without problems. We always have the support of some gynecologists who are very accessible. In my case, I send them the ultrasounds through WhatsApp, and they are always willing to help with any questions.

It fills me with pride that my children admire my work

One of the greatest satisfactions I feel is seeing my children identify with me and with my work. Once, one of them asked me where I was going, and I told him I had an accompaniment. He offered to come with me, worried about my safety. Since then, he has accompanied me, together with his brother. Both are sons, one twenty-seven and the other a bit younger. It fills me with pride when they tell me they admire what I do. They say to me: "I admire everything you do." I do not know whether there are "*kullakos*"; I tell them no, that in Aymara the equivalent of sister is jilata. "You should form jilatas," they tell me, "because we can accompany you in these cases too." And that is when I break down with emotion, because it is not only about leaving a mark, but about making a better world for my daughter, for my granddaughters, and in that I have my sons as allies. I feel that I have done things well, that I am doing them well. Sometimes my sons identify cases and refer them to me. They are involved in the issue not because I insisted, but because they chose on their own to join in. That support shows me that I have not done things badly, that I have left a positive mark.

When the Constitutional Sentence came out, nobody knew about it, neither doctors nor police. It had to be socialized, and we had to ensure that health centers and hospitals had misoprostol available to carry out safe and non-invasive procedures. That was an obligation, not a favor. Yet in El Alto, the only hospital that does it is Hospital del Norte, because it has a doctor who supports abortion. The other hospitals refer cases there, claiming they do not have the necessary medications.

And precisely about misoprostol: before, women could not get the pills in pharmacies without a prescription. If they did manage, it was through a man, because men could buy them with or without a prescription. These things still happen. Women have to turn to the black market or search for them online. Prices vary greatly, but in the case of health centers, having the medication should be mandatory.

There are many invisible women behind the institutions

Within the September 28 Campaign, a project called Promotoras ILE was developed so that the promoters could carry out accompaniments and provide us with M&M, meaning mifepristone and misoprostol. This project was approved, and although there was uncertainty at first, they eventually confirmed that we would be able to carry out accompaniments and help women, especially those with limited economic resources who cannot access the medication in time, up to twelve weeks.

I received this information through another activist compañera from Sucre, who has led this project. We were informed that yes, we can do accompaniments and help women. However, many women who lack information still have to turn to the black market. What we do is that women reach us through the campaign, and in that way an important alliance is created. The *Kullakas* are backed, in some way, by institutions, though not fully.

Having M&M was also a collective demand of all of us who make up the Campaign, and although they facilitate the pills, we feel powerless that institutions do not support us adequately. I remember one case in which I accompanied a woman with an advanced pregnancy. They asked me for 1,500, but I managed to negotiate it down to 900. We do these things alone, assuming all the responsibility involved. It made me angry because I felt the institutions were not helping us, and the women did not have the necessary resources, which made the situation even harder. We do not receive a salary. We are defenders and volunteers. Women might think we keep part of the money, which is not true.

Regarding some institutions and the people who work there, I say: "You have a secure salary. These women don't. You're talking about assistance, right? So why should we work for free? Nobody will do it, because everyone has responsibilities." I can do it because I have a home and fortunately an income, and with that I can attend a meeting and pay my own bus fare. But I will not do it for an institution that has money. At the very least they should cover my fare. "I do not agree with the way they treat women."

If it were not for these women who truly have a life commitment, many institutions would not achieve their goals. Some women go to the course, receive their certificate, and disappear. But others see the need and continue forward. Many times institutions think that giving them a T-shirt, a bag, or a cap is enough. Many women are not seeking a salary, but rather visibility for their work. There are many invisible women behind institutions, like in a movie where you see the main actors but not those behind the camera.

Of course there are women leaders in institutions who think, create projects, and negotiate. There are specific activities, like training women to meet objectives, but what comes next? There are many highly trained women who can do much more. I remember my work at CIDEM; it was a very honest and ethical institution, very different. We need to focus on institutions and recognize the women who participate in our activities. Is the goal only to train? Are they actually putting what they learned into practice? There are many questions around that.

When I think of other collectives or organizations, I remember, for example, Violeta Tamayo, a young leader from the collective Pan y Rosas. Through a case, helping a teacher, I met Violeta. The teacher's husband was a lawyer and had beaten her, causing bleeding. Violeta referred the woman to me. I did the accompaniment and learned a lot from that experience.

My mother used to say that there are things one must do alone: "You have to be a thief alone. You have to be a whore alone." I say this because the teacher's eldest daughter, who was in pre-military service, heard everything we said about the interruption. The aggressor manipulated the girl by telling her he would give her everything if she turned against her mother, and he even threatened to file criminal charges because supposedly her mother had induced an abortion. The teacher called me frightened, worried because her daughter had turned her back on her. I advised her to deny everything: "I didn't put anything in, I didn't take anything." In the end, we managed to help her, and although the lawyer tried to intimidate her, he had no proof.

Through that experience I got to know Violeta and her group of young women. They have enormous energy and determination. In this case there was even a complaint for theft, which made the situation more complicated. But we managed to help the teacher with support from the Campaign and from other organizations. The September 28 Campaign also gives us resources and legal support. They have formed a group of women lawyers and are creating a team of psychologists, which has been a difficult but necessary process.

One of the greatest obstacles to advancing abortion rights is our own fears. It is crucial to overcome those fears in order to move forward. Institutions must go be-

yond planning and truly support women at every stage.

Fear and hypocrisy are our greatest obstacles

One of the greatest obstacles to moving forward on abortion is our own fears, but without a doubt the one I consider most important is hypocrisy. We live in an extremely hypocritical society. When I go to the Defensorías, the police, the Prosecutor's Office, or health centers, people say to you: "How is it possible that an abortion can be done?" But when it is their girlfriend or their partner, they force her to abort without hesitation. They even question me: "How is it possible that you are involved in this struggle?" I have been called a murderer, had a balloon of red paint thrown at me, and even been kicked.

For a while I attended talks with a group of Christian women who did Bible readings. There I met a pastor who forced his wife to have abortions, beat her, and even dunked her head in the toilet. It was terrible. In public, she claimed that her husband had never touched her. Later, by the twists of life, I ended up supporting her and recording her testimony. That made me reflect even more deeply on the hypocrisy of our society.

If we stopped being so hypocritical, perhaps abortion would already be decriminalized in Bolivia. But because we are not, those who have had abortions are often the first to condemn others. I remember a campaign with three questions that had a strong impact. The first was: "Do you agree with abortion?" Almost always the answer was an emphatic no. The second: "What if it were your daughter, your niece, your wife, or your sister?" There, people began to hesitate. The third: "Should that person go to prison for having an abortion?" That question prompted even more reflection.

Being empathetic does not just mean superficially putting yourself in someone else's place. It means truly understanding their situation, their age, their gender, and their problem. Empathy goes much farther than imagining yourself in someone else's shoes. I have been close to many Christian sisters who, after being mistreated, are forced to say that their husbands never beat them. Hypocrisy, at both the individual and social level, is one of the main obstacles. The other is lack of will. Many times people know the laws and the rulings, but there is no willingness to apply them. There are workers in the justice system and in health centers who simply do not want to do their job, not because they do not know, but because they just do not feel like it.

Men abort too: reflecting on strategies

One day, during a talk, my son made me see something very important: why is the whole focus on abortion placed solely on women? In the end, yes, the woman is the one who aborts, but we must not forget the role of men and of society in this situation. He told me: "Men abort too." And yes, it is true. Men are responsible for this problem: we get women pregnant and then do not take responsibility, or we even force them to have abortions. That is why I believe involving men in this issue is both a necessity and a strategy for moving forward. Male responsibility must be part of this struggle.

Beyond a service, it is a deep commitment

My son also told me something very important about maternal care. He asked me: "What if she keeps bleeding?" We were talking about a case that worried me a lot. He watched me and said: "Mom, I see you absorbed and worried by this. You should also have a support group." And who supports us? We accompany other women, but who accompanies us? In that sense, it would be good to have some kind of support.

I think of my mother-in-law, who used to sell food. She cooked such delicious fricasé that people came from Argentina to try it. Now, sick, she can no longer go out to sell. She told me she feels sad, not because of the illness, but because she misses talking to her friends and hearing travelers' stories. Those encounters made her feel alive and happy.

Thinking about us, I believe we also need spaces for relaxation and mutual support. Perhaps we do not have resources for big events, but small gestures, like sharing a Christmas bread or a dinner, can make a difference. It is essential to have those moments of disconnection, where we can talk and rest.

Institutions must recognize this need. We do not only accompany other women through their processes; we live with them through their pain and their risk of death. This goes beyond providing a service. It is a deep commitment. We need real support, not only for the women we accompany, but also for us, the companions. Ideally, psychologists and lawyers would get involved voluntarily, from a sense of social responsibility, offering free sessions to those who need them most. That would make a huge difference and give us the support we need to continue.

Today we do not have those spaces. We live in the day-to-day, in daily need, and on top of that we carry our life commitment. People say to us: "How wonderful that you do this work, how beautiful," but many times we feel alone, with no one to talk to. We need other spaces too. It is one thing to speak in discourse, and another to actually be there, accompanying women.

"What great work," a phrase that is not enough

What we do is not limited to handing out medication or teaching women how to use it. It means living through their pain and the risks they face. It is a real and undeniable risk, and being by their side goes beyond hearing "what great work."

I once spoke about this with a great ally. It is not only about interrupting a pregnancy; behind it there are many other things. Sometimes women call me with problems that have nothing to do with pregnancy, but they still need support. That is why I think it is crucial for institutions to offer psychological support. I am not a psychologist, although more than once I have thought of studying to become one. When I turn to a psychologist friend to help someone, the cost becomes an obstacle. Sometimes I tell her: "I'll pay for your first two sessions,

but after that she'll have to take it on herself." The integrated legal services are public, but they are not always a viable option for talking about personal matters.

That is why I think activist compañeras, professionals, psychologists, and lawyers must support our work, not only from within an NGO, but as a life commitment. It would be ideal if some sessions were free, as a form of social responsibility.

If I help now, I know someone will help my daughter or my granddaughter in the future

I do not want only my work to be made visible, but that of many women who, in our daily lives, in our neighborhoods, in the market, with our friends, with our *kullakas*, sustain this struggle. We understand that giving happiness and quality of life goes beyond one's immediate family. It is also about not wanting other women to repeat a hard and violent story. What I have gone through, may no one else have to go through. If I help now, I know that someone will help my daughter or my granddaughter in the future.

I have lived through hard moments in my relationship, but meeting wonderful women along the way has been profoundly enriching. I admire them, and they have always inspired me.

Sometimes I think about how far we have come. I remember a September 28 march where only a few of us wore green scarves, and we did so timidly. Today I see young women with songs and creative, strong slogans, and I feel that we have passed on the torch.

In one march, together with another activist, we walked through heavy rain. We were like drenched chickens. We were already older, but we kept going, shouting, encouraging one another, making that march our own. Seeing the younger women follow us was moving. At fifty-four, I feel that I still have much to contribute. It moves me deeply to see the interest of the new generations. Even though not everyone gets involved, each person does their part to change the world. It fills me with happiness to think that my daughter Camila will be there one day, fighting for a different world.