



"RESILIENT SELF-HELP
COMMUNITIES IN THE
FACE OF VIOLENCE."

María Mercedes Vargas Apaza

CONTEXT

In Bolivia, 40 cases of femicide and more than 20,456 thousand cases of violence against women, adolescents and children have been registered by 2023.

According to an official report from the Attorney General's Office, between January 1 and June 1, the Public Prosecutor's Office registered some 20,456 cases related to some type of violence against women, adolescents, girls and boys throughout the country.

Domestic violence 15.615;
Sexual abuse 1,456
Rape of women 1,160;
Rape of minors 1,031
Other violence 1,194


As of June 12, this institution quantified 40 fatalities due to male violence so far this year and 7 infanticides, while the number of cases of violence against women has increased.



Living with dignity

The background features a light grey base with large, overlapping organic shapes in muted green and brown. On the left, there are stylized, layered patterns of foliage in shades of grey and brown. A thin white line curves across the bottom right of the page.

SELF-HELP COMMUNITIES



Self-help communities are spaces for their members to cope with difficult, stressful or sick situations. These communities are united by the same suffering or problem and the desire to support and be supported.

They are supportive communities of healing and empowerment through the strengthening of self-esteem and self-worth.

WHY CREATE SELF-HELP COMMUNITIES



Gender violence manifests itself in multiple spheres of our lives and the difficulties that invade women to make the decision to denounce violence are multiple.

First, the main factor is the victim's fear of her aggressor. The thought of her partner's reaction to her having filed a complaint or when she wants to leave the relationship, are fears of further aggression and that the mistreatment will increase. This situation of fear and uncertainty is added to the concern for the children in common, the fear of abandonment and loneliness in the absence of resources.

Secondly, the act of denouncing is much more than just highlighting the violence you are suffering, it is recognizing that you are being a victim of an aggressor who is your partner, the father of your children and the person with whom you have built a life.

Third, the ineffectiveness and deficiency of justice.

Fourth, women victims without any quality and warm support.

Importance of Self-Help communities

It plays a key role in the comprehensive approach to the needs and human rights of people, particularly women who experience traumatic, stressful, painful circumstances and risk to their integrity.

The communities provide support and encourage the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills, autonomy and empowerment of women.

Women find a space where they feel safe to talk about their problems and have someone to listen to them.

WHO MAKE UP THE SELF-HELP COMMUNITIES

The communities are made up of women who have suffered violence and acquire resilient, supportive, supportive and empathetic capacities among themselves, as a positive experience for the prevention and therapy of gender-based violence.

This process of accompanying women survivors of violence strengthens their self-esteem, overcomes their fears and empowers them to break the cycle of violence.

(Work with women from the city of El Alto de La Paz and the municipality of Ayata in the department of La Paz).

REQUIREMENTS

Emotional climate of the group

- Generation of a warm atmosphere that facilitates communication and the expression of feelings in relation to one's own experiences.
- Valuing mutual help as an important aspect of the group.
- Respect for individual differences. This allows the creation of a climate of fellowship and group feeling.

Group identification

- Commitment of the members.
- Perception and encouragement to project and achieve collective aspirations.

Goals and objectives (planning capacity)

- Focusing group needs and orienting actions towards a common goal.
- Recognition and valuation of the group's achievements.

"When a woman shares her story of violence, she is taking the first step in breaking the cycle of abuse. We must guarantee her the safe space she needs to speak and be heard."

ACCOMPANIMENT PROCESS

First:

In the development of the emotional climate, appropriate conditions were created for emotional support, where group members developed the ability to listen to, accept and support each other, reducing their feelings of shame and isolation in the face of situations of violence.

The exchange of experiences allowed a process of group reflection, discovery of common characteristics and experiences to generate resilience actions.



ACCOMPANIMENT PROCESS

Second:

- Promote feelings of control, self-confidence and improvement of self-esteem through participatory dynamic activities (I am, circles, walk in the forest, etc.).
- Identification and awareness of individual group strengths and weaknesses.
- Emotional support through a session structure that enables expression, listening and the possibility of giving and receiving feedback to all group participants.



ACCOMPANIMENT PROCESS

THIRD:

- Development of individual and collective preparation actions for women with information on their rights, norms, policies and strategies to achieve women's autonomy.
- Collaborative work with other women (replicators)



ACCOMPANIMENT PROCESS



FOURTH:

- Autonomy of self-help communities to be able to function on their own.
- Become a self-help group for other women.
- Provide security in the community environment through specific actions to prevent the spread of violence.

WORK STRATEGY



THE BODY

That each one has, places us in the world and in the social relationships that the world has built before we get there.

SPACE

A vital field for the body to develop. Space is where life moves and is promoted.

WEATHER

It is a condition for life, because life for people is not timeless.
Return and recover women's time

MEMORY

Throughout life, strategies, feelings, attitudes and values are created, which allow us to face personal and family situations, such as self-control, confidence and autonomy.

MOVEMENT

It allows us to build a social body, a common body that struggles to live and to live well. If something has life it moves, if something moves it has life.

RESULTS

Self-help communities established as a way or alternative to develop resilience capacities in women victims of violence.

We have confident, empowered women who are decision-makers.

Women have left the cycle of violence and achieved personal autonomy.





Thank You

vargasdea.mercedes@gmail.com