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# Conscientious Commitment

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Expanding Provision to Safe Abortion  
by Empowering Local Activists

# What is Conscientious Commitment?

- ▶ *“Conscientious commitment, the reverse of conscientious objection, inspires healthcare providers to overcome barriers to delivery of reproductive services to protect and advance women's health.”*  
(Bernard Dickens and Rebecca Cook, 2011)
- ▶ The barriers can include: illegality, legal risk, stigma, refusals by other doctors, other obstacles.
- ▶ Not just healthcare providers, but community workers, counsellors, activists, and advocates – anyone involved in helping women access safe abortion, including self-managed abortion.

# Women Help Women



- An international group of activists, trained counselors, and non-profit organizations and foundations **conscientiously committed** to helping women exercise reproductive choice.
- We bridge the gap between reproductive rights **advocacy** efforts and **service provision**.
- We focus on activism, locally and globally – to reduce stigma, increase safety and availability of reproductive health choices, push back against restrictive laws, etc.
- We are collaborative, participatory, and feminist. We work with local orgs to advance access and knowledge, and to share resources.
- We equip activists and organizations to guide women through self-managed abortion (SMA) in countries where it's illegal.

# Changing the Paradigm

- Self-managed abortion can occur safely regardless of legal restrictions and availability of clinician or clinic
- It is **subversive** – challenging traditional assumptions about service delivery, definition of “provider”, and power dynamics around abortion care
- Task shifting – from doctors to community health workers, activists/advocates, and women themselves (they “provide” their own abortion)
- Community-based, decentralized, safe, effective, empowering abortion care
- Abortion done via helplines – Tele-health / M-health – or over email, with on-the-ground support from local NGOs



# MAMA Network

“Mobilizing  
Activists for  
Medical Abortion”

Operates in at least eight African countries to expand community access to information and provide reproductive health training about misoprostol use and SMA.



**Medical abortion workshop in Burundi, 2017**

- Collaboration of sub-Saharan NGOs and activist groups with WHW
- Strengthens grassroots leadership and builds capacity
- Facilitates networks of local and regional support to share learning and strategies
- Evaluates and improves ways to disseminate info on SMA



# African Hotlines



**Malawi and Kenya  
Aunty Jane hotline**

**Nigeria  
Ms Rosy hotline**

**Generation Initiative for Women and Youth Network**  
**LAUNCHING! LAUNCHING!! LAUNCHING!!!**

**MS ROSY HOTLINE**  
08097737600, 08097738001  
*Safe, Reliable, Scientific & Confidential Information*

**To SAVE WOMEN'S LIVES.**

for more information: [www.giwyn.org/ms\\_rosy](http://www.giwyn.org/ms_rosy) **JOIN US**

# Latin America

- ▶ WHW collaborates with activists throughout the region, with a focus on Central America, Brazil, and Chile. We:
  - ▶ Help local collectives launch and maintain new safe abortion hotlines
  - ▶ Train activists in counseling skills and medical abortion
  - ▶ Support access to safe abortion via campaigns and awareness actions led by local activists





# Chile

Simulated box of misoprostol that includes all info and protocols



- In Chile, the “**Misoprostol for All**” campaign (**miso pa'todas**) used radio spots and street actions to promote information about the local safe abortion hotline and misoprostol use.
- Colectivo de Lesbianas y Feministas Linea Aborto Libre:
  - “Together we have promoted the #Misopa'todas campaign to allow access to independent use and safe abortion with Misoprostol ... We are very happy to share our political and concrete actions... **based on rebellion and love among women.**”



# CINEFORO

COLECTIVA  
MATRIA  
2do  
CINEFORO



Palomitas  
GRATIS

## La Fuente de las Mujeres

Lugar: Café Paradiso  
Fecha: Domingo, 25 Septiembre de 2016  
Hora: 3:30 p.m.



## Honduras

In a highly restrictive and stigmatizing context, Honduran groups used creative strategies such as forums and artistic performances to open debate and fight stigma around abortion.





**Digital Security Training  
Workshop in Chile**

# Training Workshops: Medical & Security

- ▶ **Security trainings:** 154 activists attended multi-day security trainings in target countries.
- ▶ **Medical trainings:**
  - ▶ Venezuela – Over 50 new activists trained on contraception and medical abortion protocols
  - ▶ Honduras – 15 activists trained on medical abortion
  - ▶ Dominican Republic - 21 activists trained on medical abortion
  - ▶ Chile – More than 40 activists trained on medical abortion

# ABORTO NO BRASIL

UMA ABORDAGEM JURÍDICA  
E PRÁTICO-INFORMATIVA



Nem  
presa  
nem  
morta

## Juridical Guide for Brazil

Aims to help activists and  
community workers by:

- Developing and increasing security practices
- Implementing self-care protocols
- Providing medical, legal, and security trainings
- Supporting local activities and campaigns
- Sharing knowledge around self-managed abortion

# CURSO DE ESTRATEGIAS LEGALES

Para la Defensa de Acompañantes y Mujeres Criminalizadas por Abortos Auto-inducidos en América Latina y el Caribe



## Legal Strategies Project



**14** Encuentro Feminista y del Caribe

Conversatorio:

**¿Y las penalistas del aborto?**

**23 de noviembre**  
14:00 - 16:00 hrs. Espacio GG

Completa el formulario:  
<https://enredadas.xyz/las-penalistas-del-aborto/>

- To help women being criminalized for SMA or miscarriage.
- WHW, in collaboration with local organizations and activists, conducted 7 sessions of online training for 35 feminist lawyers from Latin America (2018).
- Goals:
  - Build network of lawyers to help women
  - Provide women with info, accompaniment, support
  - Decrease risk of prosecution

Búscanos en el Programa, anótanos en tu agenda.

# Conclusion



**Let's conscientiously commit  
to saving women's lives!**

- ▶ Self-managed abortion is safe and effective
- ▶ Let's:
  - ▶ De-medicalize abortion
  - ▶ Put pills in women's hands
  - ▶ Task shift to the community
  - ▶ Handle legal risks and defend criminalized women (and providers)