

# CUPONER

comics as eyewitness  
November 2020

Tonga

Transnistria/Moldova

Zimbabwe

Argentina

front line defenders



## cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is ‘a secret or disguised way of writing’. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: ‘an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.’ This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

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Cover art by Maria Sweeney

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## Cypher - Comics as Eyewitness // part one



maria san martin

The women who lent us their stories of power and persistence for this Cypher edition risk their lives to demand justice for victims of violent, gendered, and sexualized crimes. In their campaigns to visibilize the trauma inflicted on their communities, they carve out paths towards justice, and bold new formations of what justice actually looks like for some of the most marginalized, stigmatized, and victimized communities in the world.



erin kilbride

Their work terrifies patriarchal institutions and angers individuals. WHRDs incite rage exactly because they dare to public embody the power of womanhood, femininity, sexuality, motherhood, and sisterhood, in all their many forms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender violence crises and domestic abuse rates around the world. It has also made irreversibly apparent that WHRDs are very often the only actors bold enough to take direct, personal action against gendered, raced and classed violence.

COVID-19 has radically altered the risks faced by defenders, which now including contracting and dying of the disease. But WHRDs including queer, LGBTI and sex worker rights defenders have nonetheless filled gaps where government services failed their communities. They deliver food and medicine to neighborhoods ignored by the state. They turn their homes into shelters for survivors of domestic violence and homelessness, risking violent attacks from the police and public for providing transgender women a place to “shelter in place.” They run suicide prevention hotlines. They fight for medical care for people living with HIV as ARV shortages give way to a resurgence in HIV-related deaths. They accompany stigmatized communities through a brutal pandemic. They bury the dead.

The WHRDs profiled in this issue are doing this work with extremely limited resources and visibility. There is seldom public glory involved in investigating the violent murder of a sex worker in Argentina. The WHRDs of AMMAR (page 35) receive as much vitriol as they do praise. In the case of one recent murder, the family of the victim is privately accepting AMMAR’s financial support, donations of food and clothes, and emotional solidarity. But publicly, they refuse to acknowledge the sex worker activists, due to the stigma heaped on the community. This sort of shame and fear is persistent and predictable. And the women of AMMAR continue undeterred.

Many of the stories in this edition tell stories of WHRDs’ working for accountability for victims of violent sexualized crimes. As we read these stories and reflect on the power of their work, it is critical to name and honor the ways in which many WHRDs’ own experiences of sexual trauma are linked to those of the victims for whom they seek justice. In the story from Tonga (page 5), Lisi’s bold strategy to demand justice for her twin sister’s violent death successfully resulted in

systemic changes implemented by the Tonga Police Commissioner. But long before she had an audience with the highest public security office in the state, Lisi suffered years of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse alongside her sister.

This edition overflows with the power of WHRDs' resistance and love. They also, however, feature several sexually explicit and violent stories, using the words and phrases the WHRDs chose to express their truths. We encourage readers, particularly those who have experienced sexual trauma or vicarious trauma related to sexual assault, to enter this edition gently and to care for yourselves along the way.

These women's voices will resonate – we are certain of that – but remember to be kind to yourselves. We need sisters in struggle who are taking time to sleep, eat, breathe, and wake up ready to continue our daily resistance.

## Cypher - Comics as Eyewitness // part two



beldan sezen

It's been eight months since we here in New York have been living with the constraints of Covid-19. With the city being heavily affected economically, people are dealing with grief, loss and personal adjustments to insecure livelihoods and health.

The World Bank forecasts that the global economy will contract by 5.2%; vulnerable groups in our societies are facing more desperation and are vulnerable to exploitation. As well, the social dimensions of the pandemic are having devastating consequences.

"Domestic violence goes up whenever families spend more time together,"<sup>1</sup> a documented reality which should give pause and force us to think about the illusion of the heteronormative family concept promoted around the world, regardless of culture or religion. Gender-based violence, which was a pre-existing condition/pandemic long before COVID-19, is surging on the bodies of women and girls.

As far as I'm concerned, if you need to "blowoff steam" go work out, punch a sand bag, chop wood, try to outrun a running train, car, what ever, retreat and shout into your pillow. Do not take out your frustrations and feeling helpless by releasing hatred and anger against those who are stigmatized "inferior" in our societies.

November 2020

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>

# Tonga

Tonga has neither signed nor ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Tonga has no minimum age of sexual consent, so statutory rape is not a crime.

From January to June 2019, [95% of the total cases](#) received by the Women and Children Crisis Center (WCCC) were victims of domestic violence.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the WCCC has recorded a 54% increase in the number of cases.

'Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki is the Director of the Women & Children Crisis Center (WCCC), which she helped establish in 2009. In that capacity, she leads efforts to combat gender based violence and to work with survivors to pursue justice and accountability.

"When one chooses to work in the area of empowering women, you must be ready and willing to tell the women's' stories to others."

Artist:       Natasha Natarajan

Natasha Natarajan is a British-Indian Artist-Designer and Educator based in London. With a commitment to using creativity as a tool for individual empowerment, social change and to share our common humanity, she operates a freelance business under the name Chikaboo Designs. Her autobiographical comic strip, FML Comics, will be published in 2021.

[www.chikaboo-designs.com](http://www.chikaboo-designs.com)



# Dear Tita

By 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Gutkenbeil-Likiliki

I first met Lisi when she walked into my office in 2010. Although at that time I had worked in the area of violence against women and children for the last 7 years in Tonga, her story shocked me. As an Oceanic Feminist Storyteller and Women and Children's Rights Activist, this story has to be told. For too long there has been a culture of impunity, denial and neglect towards systematic abuse happening across my island. I see not only Tita's breathtaking determination to confront the law authorities as a chance to change this, but also the making of a story that could touch and reach the whole of Pacific society. I want this story to provoke debate, challenge those in power and like Tita, change the law. Abuse such as this is commonplace across the Pacific Islands – not only in Tonga. This is the first story to challenge this problem and the first of such stories to be openly shared by a young woman.

## 1999-2005

Twins, Lisi and Tita were born in Nuku'alofa in 1999. They have one brother. Their natural parents worked as a cook and a mechanic but in 2005 they separated and the little twin girls, Lisi and Titi, were eventually taken to live with their new step-mother and father. At first life continued as normal. The girls went to school and were like any other little girls in Tonga. They loved to play by the sea, and collect shells. They also loved devising small dances to their favorite local pop songs. They were inseparable. However, in 2006, the world of these two innocent twins changed forever...



## 2006-2013

The two six-year-old twins were first raped by their step-brother in 2006. On telling a trusted female teacher, they were severely beaten by their father who shaved off their hair and eyebrows and told them to return to the teacher and to tell her that they had made up a lie. They then began a life of being passed between their mother, father and step-mother, for constant beatings. Between the two small girls, there were an untold number of physical beatings and countless horrifying rapes – all by men known to them.

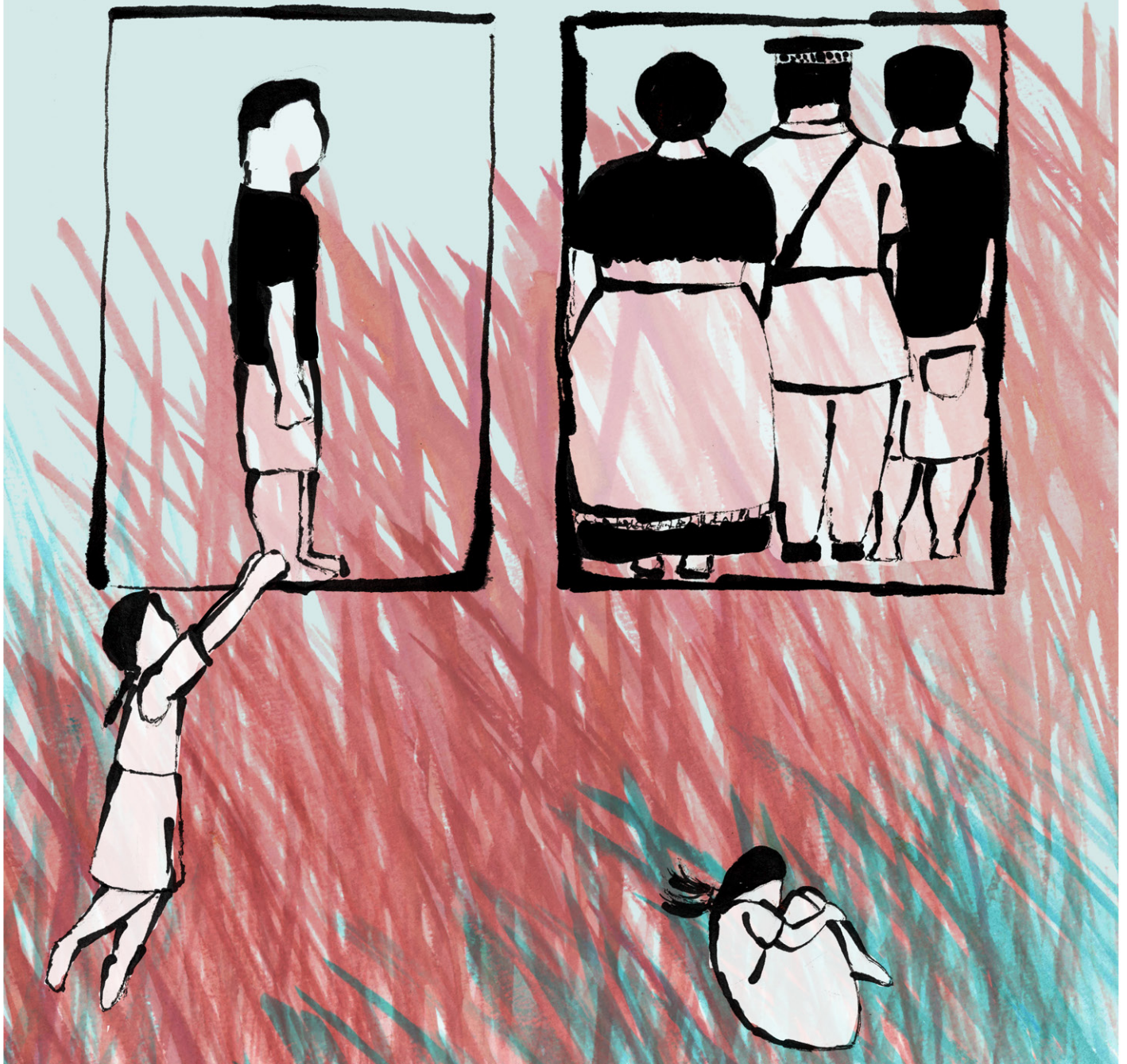
Over the years they were let down by their family, neighbours, community, school, church, support services and the police.





On August 10th 2013, Tita was severely beaten. First, with a stick by her natural mother who was assisted by her step-mother and encouraged and condoned by her father. And then later the same day by her maternal Uncle with a watering hose and hammer.

The last time Lisi saw her twin-sister was when her mother opened the car boot and she found a bloodied and battered Tita inside. Unable to talk properly, Tita whispered to her sister to make sure that she took good care of herself and to keep close to their only brother. Tita died two days later from her internal wounds. Only later would Lisi find out that her 14 year old sister had also been pregnant.



## 2014

In 2014, a year after her sister's death, Lisi approaches WCCC Director 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki. They strategise on how they do something so as not to leave Tita's death in vain.

On 25th November, a 15-year-old Lisi is about to walk into the office of the Tonga Commissioner of Police. She is collecting her courage and her emotions. She is going to narrate a terrible story that began 8 years ago. The head of the Tongan police is going to listen to every word she says, until she is finished. She will tell the Commissioner she wants the Police to change their way of doing things and for girls to never again suffer the way she and her little sister Tita did.

Dear Tita,

You're free now, you're so lucky. I'm still here, facing the world alone. I'm here at the Crisis Centre because I am trying to work with them to doing something, for you. I am planning to go to the police, with their help, to see the big bosses at the top to ask them to help put a stop to what had happened to us to any other little girl or boy. Because I know there must be other little children who are going through what we went through. I miss you every day, and there is not a day that goes by that I don't think about you. I know the police didn't do everything that they should have done and the men who hurt us are still out there. I am going to be brave for us, for you Tita. Do you know that I come and visit you almost everyday at your gravesite? I know no one else does. I am doing this, for you Tita..



The Tonga Police Commissioner responds by developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WCCC and the Tonga Police. This establishes a One-Stop Support Services model which places a Police Officer at the Women & Children Crisis Center (WCCC). This ensures a more survivor centred and rights-based approach to child abuse cases.

Dear Tita,

I did it! I did  
I hope you are  
There is now  
between the  
WCCC to  
with children  
been abused  
never go  
we had gone  
hope this  
happy. I love  
Lisi



this for you,  
proud of me.  
an agreement  
police and  
work closely  
who have  
like us to  
through what  
through. I  
makes you  
you so much,

## 2020

This story is a classic case of delayed access to justice. Lisi and Tita reported to the Police all the men who had raped them, including their step-brother. Till date nothing has been presented to the courts about their allegations. Even the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Women & Children Crisis Center (WCCC) and the Tonga Police, established as a result of Lisi's story, was short lived and stopped in 2016.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most ratified human rights convention across the Pacific, but there is still a long way to go. Across the Pacific there is a general reluctance of Police to investigate and charge suspected perpetrators of crimes that are based solely on the uncorroborated evidence of a child. This barrier alone results in many cases of child sexual assault and abuse being swept under the carpet – never making it to court. Positive changes such as the decision in *State v AV* the High Court of Fiji struck down the statutory rule that no one could be convicted on the uncorroborated evidence of a child who has testified without taking oath. We need to see more positive change.

We  
need  
to see  
more  
positive  
change



# Zimbabwe

As the director for ROOTS Africa, Beatrice Savadye works to advance women's rights in Zimbabwe, focusing on promoting dignified futures for young women and girls through advocacy, lobbying and capacity building of young women.

Beatrice grew up in a province where child marriages were more frequent than in other areas of her country. She witnessed several of her female high school classmates forced to drop out and marry before the age of 18.

Many had been pressured to engage in sexual activity by their partners and were too inexperienced and intimidated to insist on condom use. After the girls became pregnant, their families insisted on marriage. Others were forced to marry due to poverty. In addition to losing their chance at an education, the girls were at an increased risk for gender-based violence and HIV infections.

She campaigns to combat child marriages and against gender based violence.

Artist: Lometry Mhako  
[Behance](#)

As a young girl growing up in northern Zimbabwe's mining community of Mashonaland



Beatrice Savadye watched as her friends were forced into child marriages and early motherhood while many became sick with HIV.



Wanting a different life for herself and other girls, Savadye started the Zimbabwean women's movement Roots Africa seven years ago fighting for, among many things, legislation change to better protect women's rights in her region.







Under the lockdown, Savadye is one of a band of female activists in Africa pushing for stronger laws to protect women trapped indoors with abusers from a surge in violence, and also a spike in HIV infections. **“I don't like seeing injustice. We work to build resilience among young girls, to say that even if you are poor, you can have a better life,”** said Savadye, 33, while driving through Bindura, a town in Mashonaland.



While providing training, rescuing women from abusive homes in her own car, sheltering 30 women and their children and assisting them with antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to prevent full-blown AIDS, Savadye is also pushing for legal changes. **“It is painful to become an adult at a young age. Young girls need role models to look up to, safe spaces to run to, and laws to protect them,”** said Savadye.

## JUSTICE

In 2016 Roots Africa helped push for a constitutional court judgment that led to a ban of child marriage in Zimbabwe.



Savadye meets regularly with traditional leaders to make sure this legal protection translates into reality, particularly during the pandemic.

**“We have seen an increase in child marriages during the lockdown as economic meltdown is one of the key drivers of child marriage and exploitation,”** said Savadye.





She is now pushing for a review of the Zimbabwean Termination of Pregnancy Act to fully legalise abortion. Currently it is only legal if the mother or child's health is at risk or the mother can prove she was raped, said Savadye.

**“We are fighting against backstreet abortions,”** she said, adding that she also has to help women access ARV medication secretly so that controlling partners in denial of their status won't banish them from taking the pills.

Savadye often takes her 3-year-old son to her awareness workshops.

**"I want him to be an ally to women one day, in a society where men and women can thrive with dignity. Whatever work we do now contributes to that dream."**



# Transnistria/Moldova

The Center for Support and Development of Civic Initiatives "Resonance" is an independent non-governmental nonprofit organisation, founded in December 2005 as a joint initiative of 10 active Transnistrian NGOs. The Center's core principles are democratic participation and inclusiveness, transparency, mobility, high level of service provision through action, training and education, research and dissemination.

Since 2009, Resonance has operated a family center, and works to raise awareness about violence against women in the region.

According to reports, violence and sexual violence in Transnistria, as with Moldova more widely, is a commonplace experience for women, with some statistics indicating a prevalence rate of over 60%.

Artist: Maria Sweeney

Maria Sweeney is a Moldova-born, USA-based freelance illustrator & comic artist. She graduated magna cum laude from Moore College of Art and Design with a BFA in Illustration. She writes and self-publishes about her experiences living with a rare disability. When she's not sketching comics, she's snuggling her tiny dog, Bambi.

<https://mariasweeney.com>

# THE CENTER „RESONANCE“

## Providing Support for Victims of Domestic Violence



As COVID continues to spread and forces families into quarantine, reports show an alarming increase in domestic abuse cases. With shelters and health centers pivoting their resources to tackle the overflow from the pandemic, many women are not able to access the care they need.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that begins on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until December 10th, which is Human Rights Day.

Originated by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991, the campaign continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals, institutions and nonprofits around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women.



### Moldovan Law Limits Action

In Moldova specifically, the cases of domestic violence, sex trafficking, and abuse against women is especially high.

A law to prohibit domestic violence does not exist in the Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova. Local authorities do not classify domestic violence as a separate type of crime, and this affects the high level of abuse of women and girls in the region.

The Resonance Center seeks to not only define and validate the experiences of domestic abuse victims but also provide the resources needed to rehabilitate victims. The Resonance Center takes an individualistic approach, realizing that rehabilitation and healing is different for everyone.



It is important to conduct consistent work when we talk about domestic violence. This means preventive public awareness campaigns, systematic education for service providers and direct assistance to women victims of domestic violence.

Only with a joint approach toward the key target groups are we slowly moving to a situation where the problem of domestic violence comes out to a public debate.

*Juliana Abramova*

Former director of the Center „Resonance“ from 2005 till April 2020

The women being treated at the Resonance Center have access to a variety of services, ranging from counseling, drug addiction therapy, employment training, housing, food, and hygiene products.

Furthermore, the Resonance Center continues to provide assistance and monitoring to women who may need additional care during their transitions, instilling in them that everyone deserves support and kindness.







Anna - AGE 40

When Anna came to work again with bruises, her chief called the Center for Women's Support in Crisis Situation to seek out services and support.



After giving birth to her daughter, she left her first relationship, but quickly became involved with another man in a new city.



Anna had a son from her first marriage, where she was a victim of psychological abuse by her first partner.



She gave birth to a son during her second marriage and worked hard to provide for her two children.

Anna found out that her husband had been previously convicted of physical violence. He would abuse Anna during bouts of drinking, beating and threatening her.



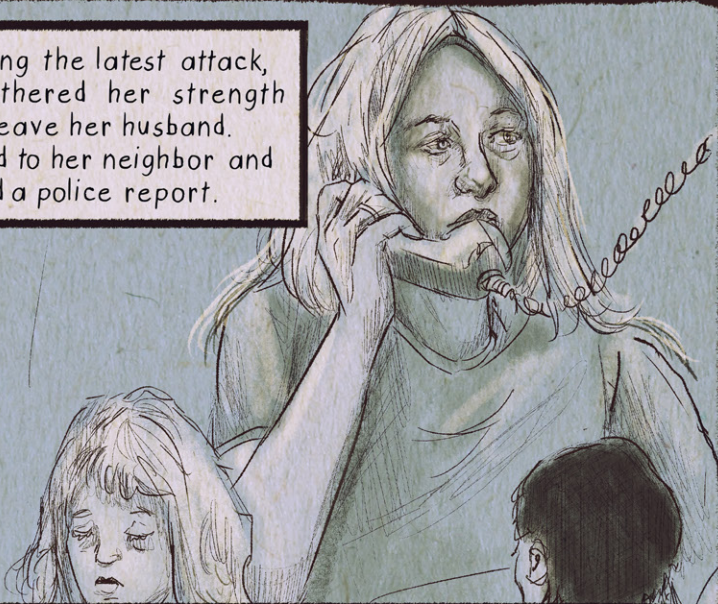
After another drinking bout, Anna's husband hit her in the face, pushed her down on the table and began to choke her, nearly killing her.

He would force her to drink with him and would beat her whenever she resisted.



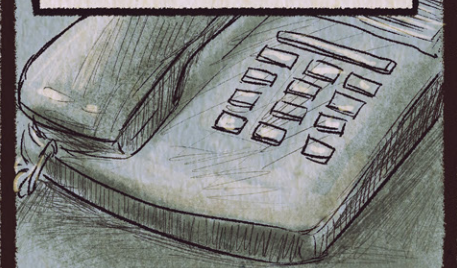
The abuse often occurred in the presence of her children.

Following the latest attack, Anna gathered her strength to leave her husband. She fled to her neighbor and filed a police report.



Anna was soon connected with the Resonance Center who worked hard to tackle Anna's layered problems and safety needs.

Despite being physically separated from her husband, his abuse would continue for some time.



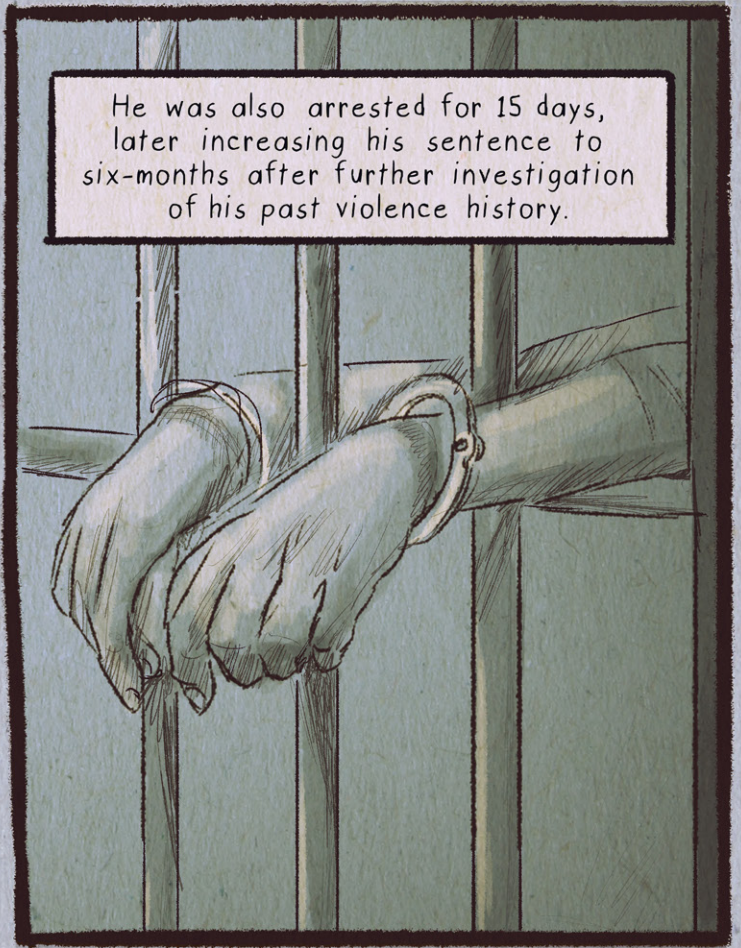
ANNA  
You are a liar  
and nothing!!  
Do not will!

He would call and write letters stating that Anna was insane and an unfit mother.

The Center „Resonance“ helped submit an application to law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Moldova about Anna's abuse and the Court of Moldova issued a restraining order against her husband.



He was also arrested for 15 days, later increasing his sentence to six-months after further investigation of his past violence history.



It was difficult to find a lawyer willing to take on Anna's case; many male lawyers passed on her case.

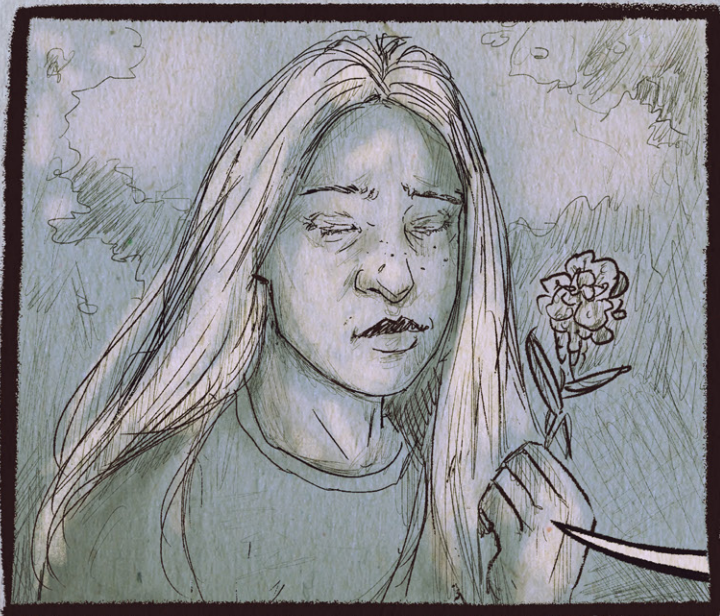
The Center's lawyer helped Anna file a claim for termination of the parental rights of her ex-spouse.

STATUS  
APPROVED

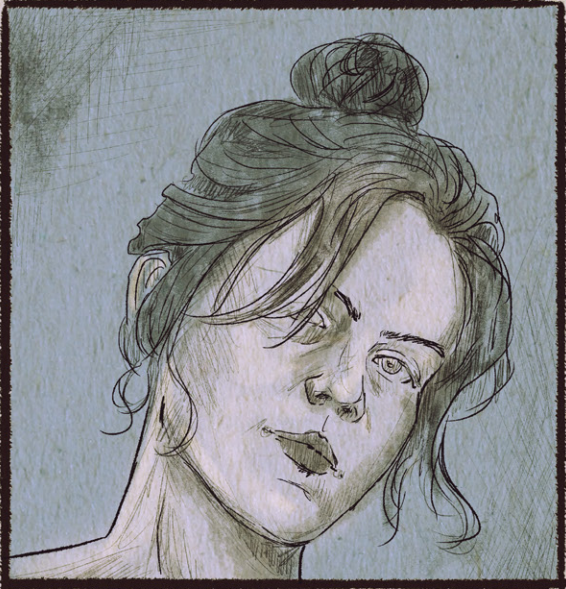
Eventually, a woman lawyer was selected and helped lead the way in sentencing her husband for his crimes.

In August 2020 the court of Transnistria decided to forbid the ex-spouse from contact with his children.

Throughout this time, Anna received assistance in the form of psychological consultations, food and hygiene products. As a result of working with a psychologist, Anna was able to work through her fear and trauma.



I did not believe that I could handle it, but thanks to your support, I got out of this circle of violence and was able to seek justice for myself and my family. Thank you for being by my side all this time and giving me strength and confidence.



Luidmilda - AGE 29

In June 2020, Luidmilda was undergoing free HIV-testing provided by the Alliance of Public health, when she whispered to one of the staff members that she was afraid of her husband seeing that she was being tested.



The colleagues at the Alliance of Public Health reached out to the Center „Resonance“, realizing that Luidmilda was a victim of domestic abuse.



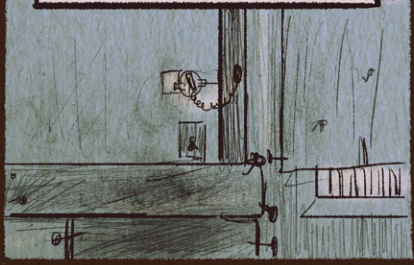
Luidmilda has four children -- two from a previous relationship and two children in her second marriage.

Luidmilda had been a victim of her husband's violence and sadistic abuse for seven years.



He had also served 15 years imprisonment for murder.

She was forcibly isolated in her home.

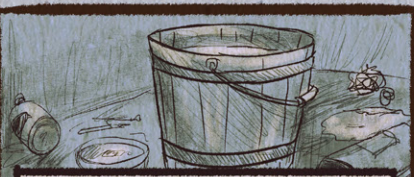


During these years, Luidmilda was forced to drink alcohol and use drugs.



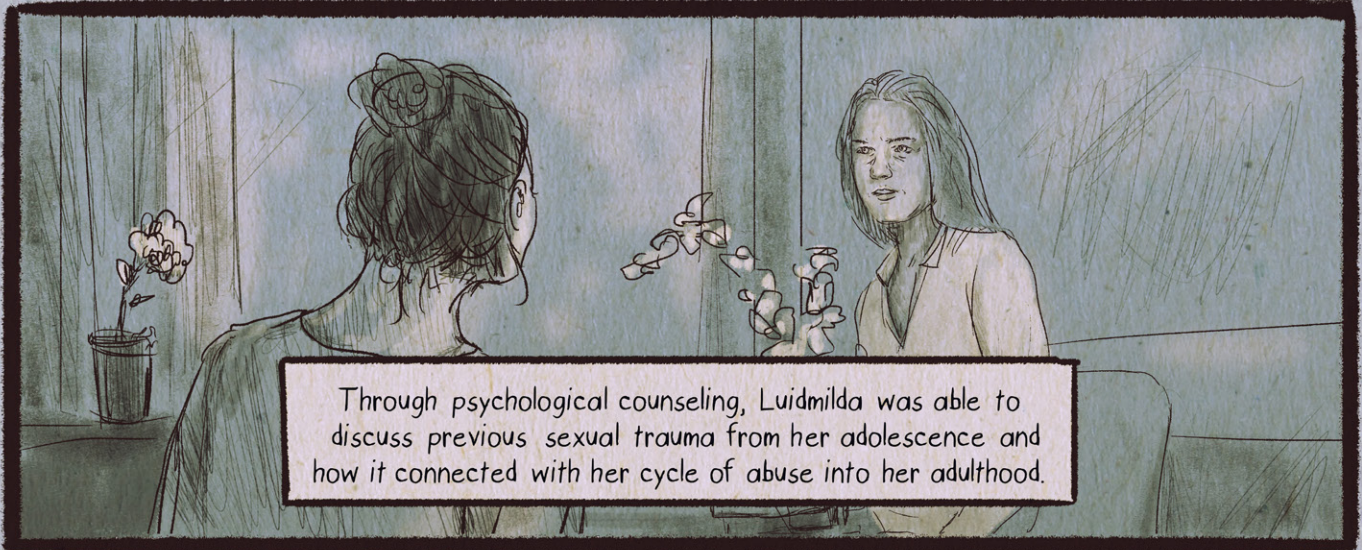
In 2019, Luidmilda was beaten so severely that she was hospitalized in the intensive care unit.

Both Luidmilda and her children were neglected access to nourishment & hygiene needs.



A beneficiary tried to file a statement to the Grigoriopol police but Luidmilda was forced by her husband to call and retract the statements.

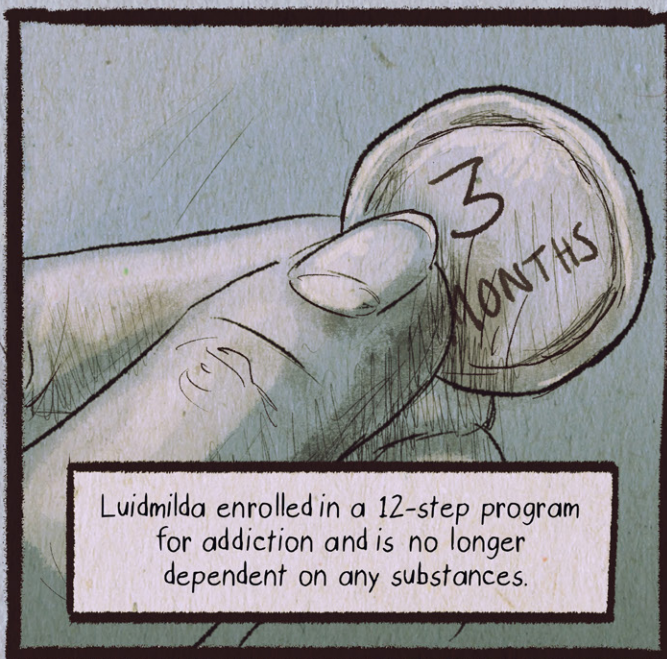
Luidmilda was transported to the Center „Resonance“ immediately for support and subsequent services in conjunction with representatives of the Police department and the Department of Family Rights Protection and Guardianship.



Through psychological counseling, Luidmilda was able to discuss previous sexual trauma from her adolescence and how it connected with her cycle of abuse into her adulthood.



She began to develop healthy ways of communicating and learned how to stand up for her and her children's interests.



Luidmilda enrolled in a 12-step program for addiction and is no longer dependent on any substances.

Luidmilda continued to receive life-saving support from the Center „Resonance“ team. She began to set goals for herself and for the first time, look forward to her future.

Luidmilda was determined to reconnect with her family and provide her children the support they needed.



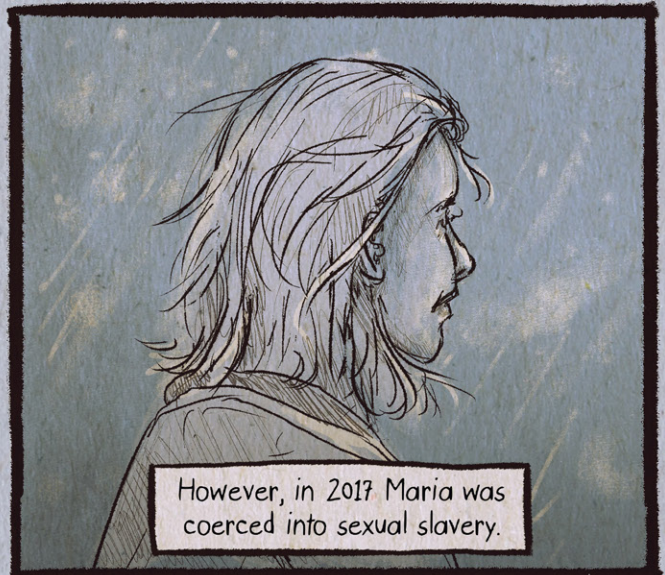
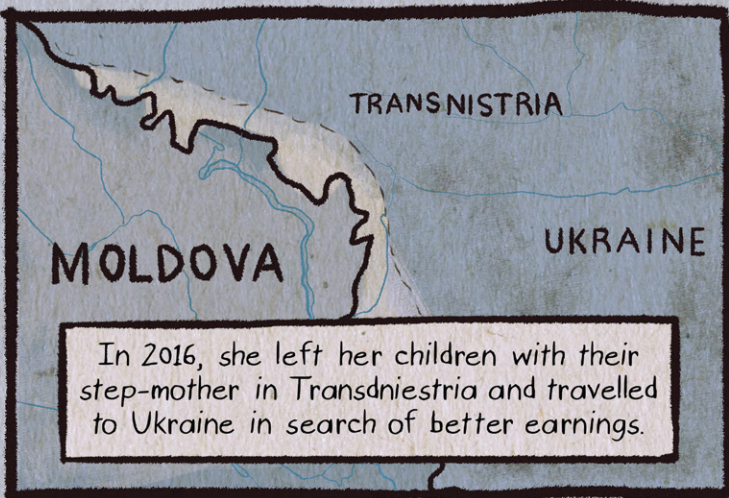
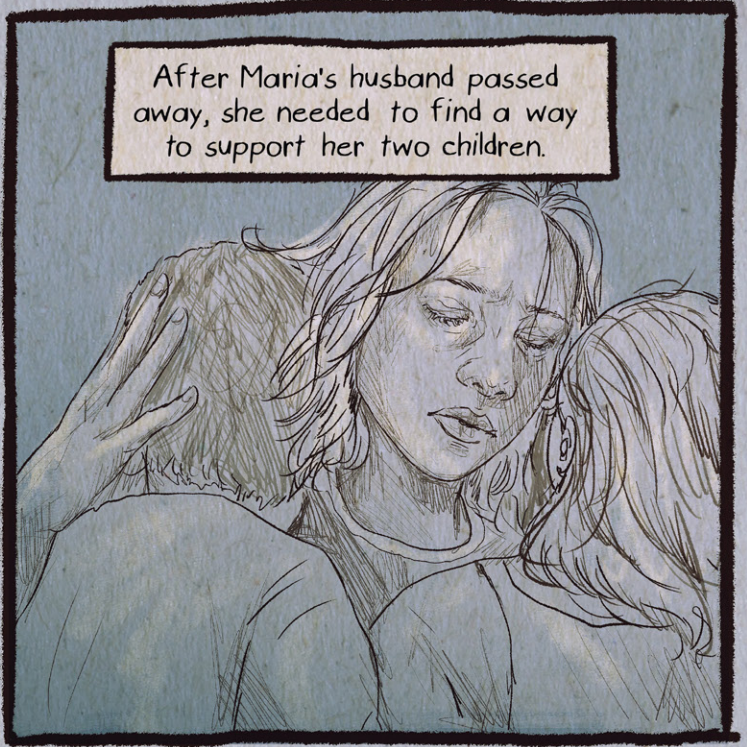
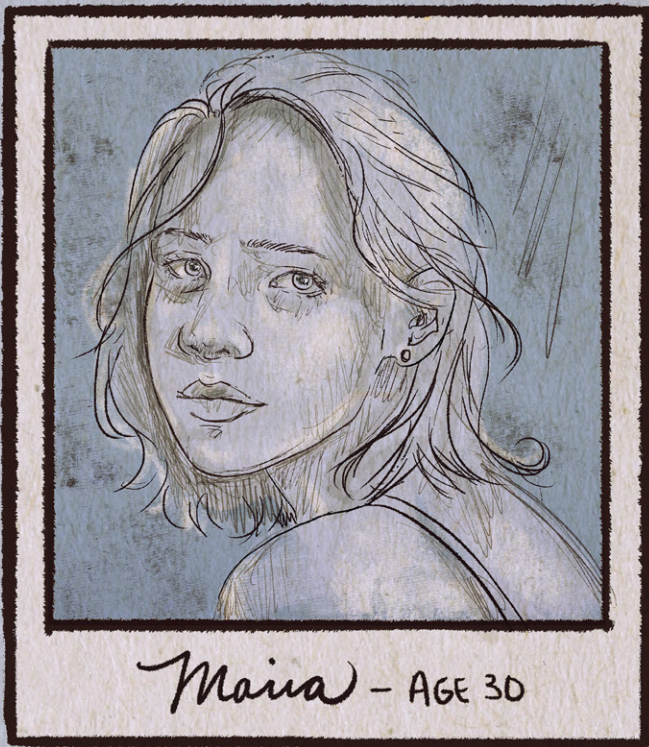
Through the coordinated work of all professionals at the Center, Luidmilda managed to change her life drastically and start a new life beyond violent relationship, drugs and alcohol.



Luidmilda now rents her own home, has sustainable employment, and has enrolled her children in school. She no longer is fearful of others.

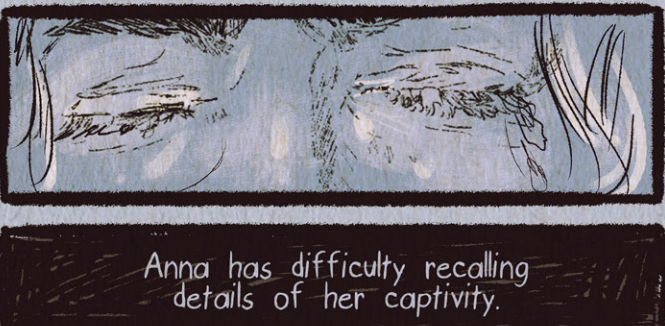


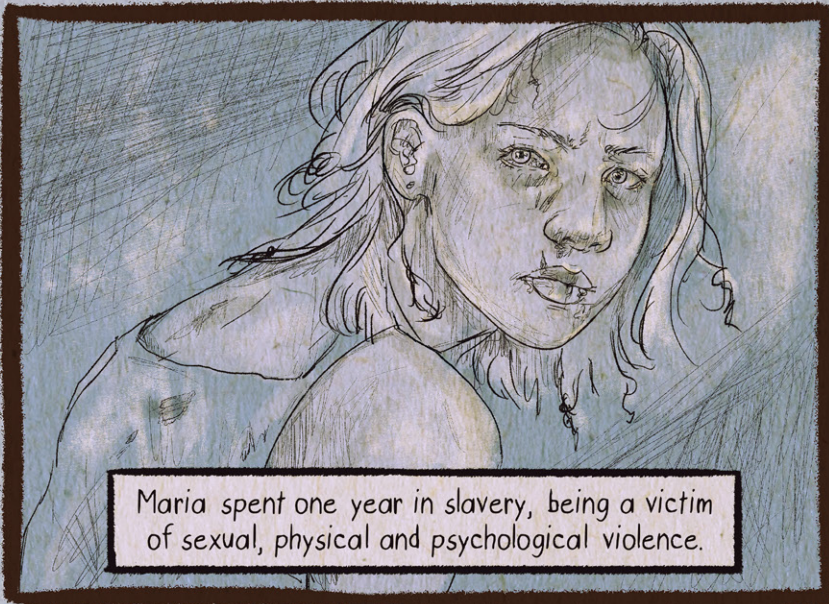
She looks forward continuing to build relationships with her children and maintaining a healthy view of herself.



She was drugged and beaten, causing her to suffer enormous mental trauma.

Many times she would pass out from the abuse.



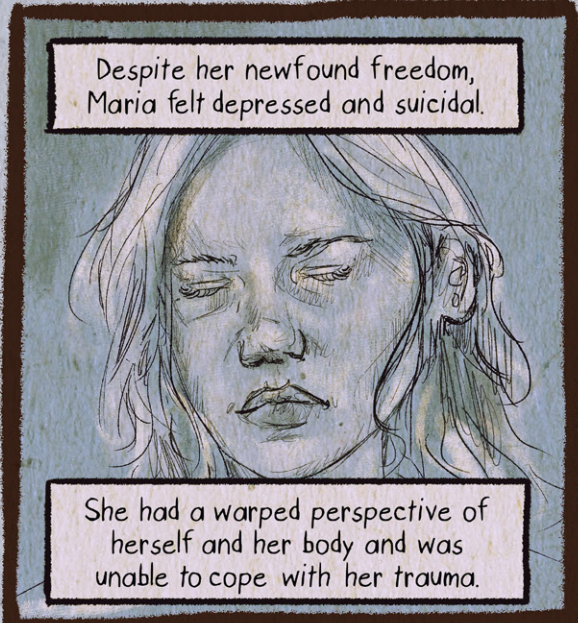


Maria spent one year in slavery, being a victim of sexual, physical and psychological violence.



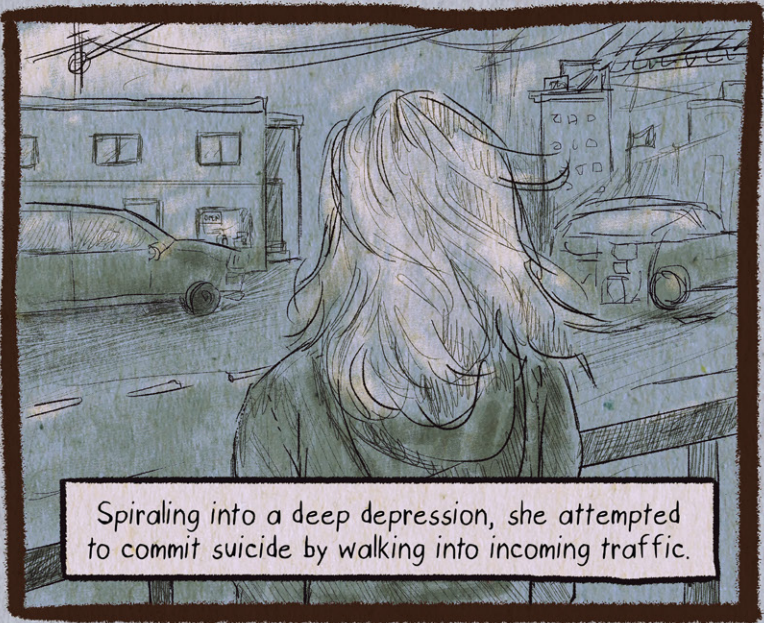
In June 2018, Maria managed to escape her captors.

She crossed the border illegally returning to her home in Transnistria, Tiraspol.

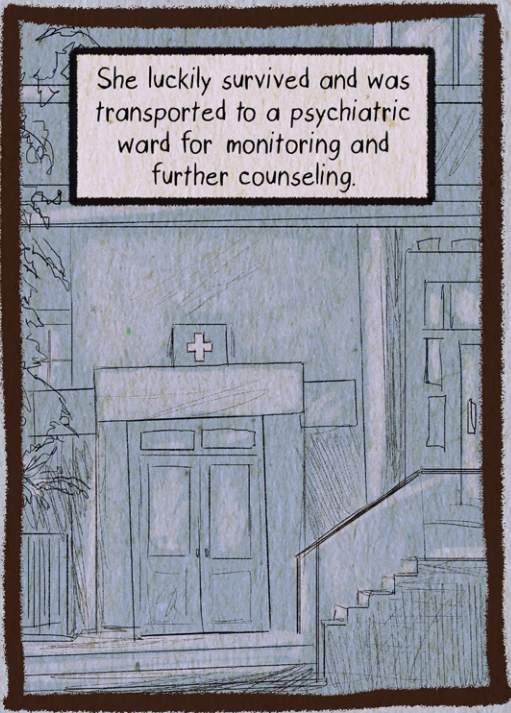


Despite her newfound freedom, Maria felt depressed and suicidal.

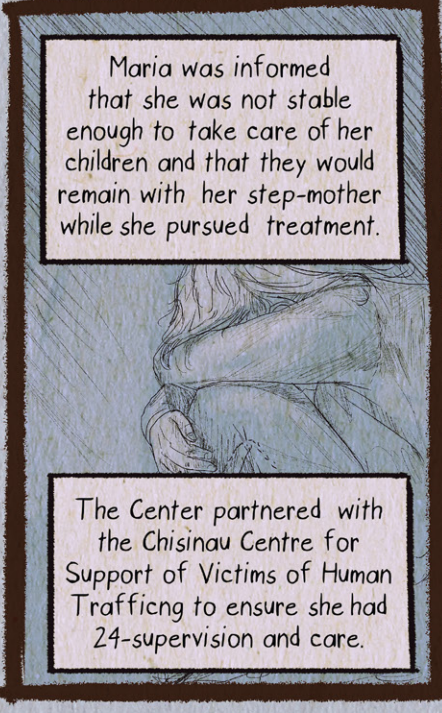
She had a warped perspective of herself and her body and was unable to cope with her trauma.



Spiraling into a deep depression, she attempted to commit suicide by walking into incoming traffic.

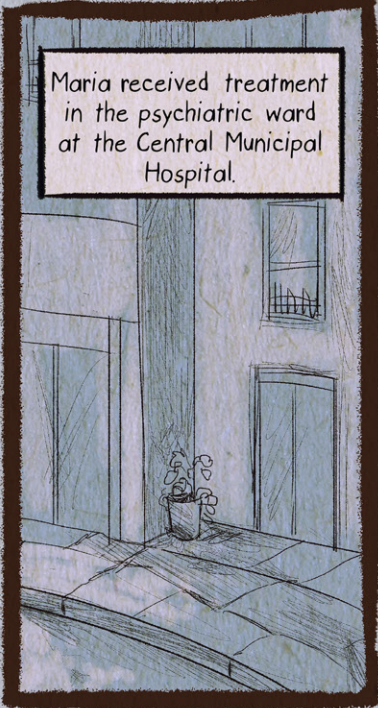


She luckily survived and was transported to a psychiatric ward for monitoring and further counseling.



Maria was informed that she was not stable enough to take care of her children and that they would remain with her step-mother while she pursued treatment.

The Center partnered with the Chisinau Centre for Support of Victims of Human Trafficking to ensure she had 24-supervision and care.



Maria received treatment in the psychiatric ward at the Central Municipal Hospital.

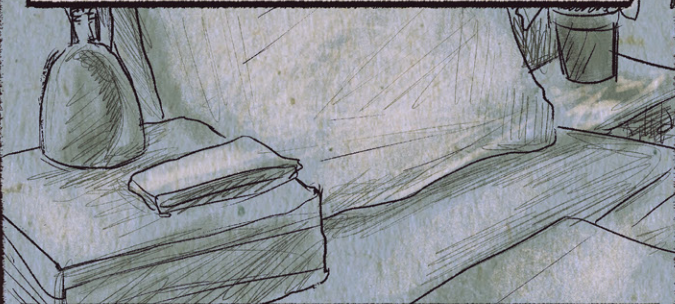


Maria returned to the Center „Resonance“, where she received comprehensive support for another year. Maria had become fearful of others and had difficulty speaking up for herself.



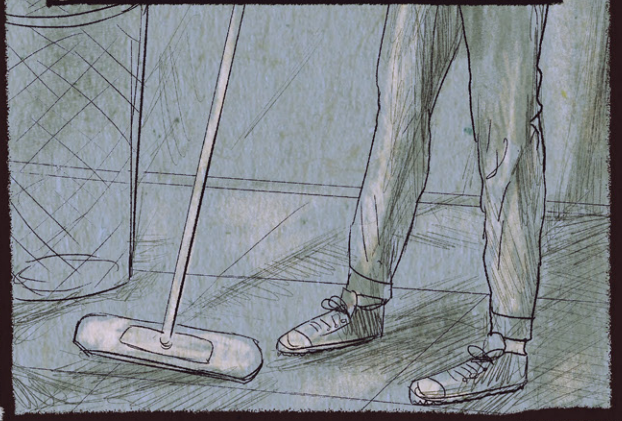
Through regular therapy and support from the center, she began to develop self-esteem and autonomy.

The Center „Resonance“ continued to support Maria with food and hygiene items, shelter and psychiatric counseling.

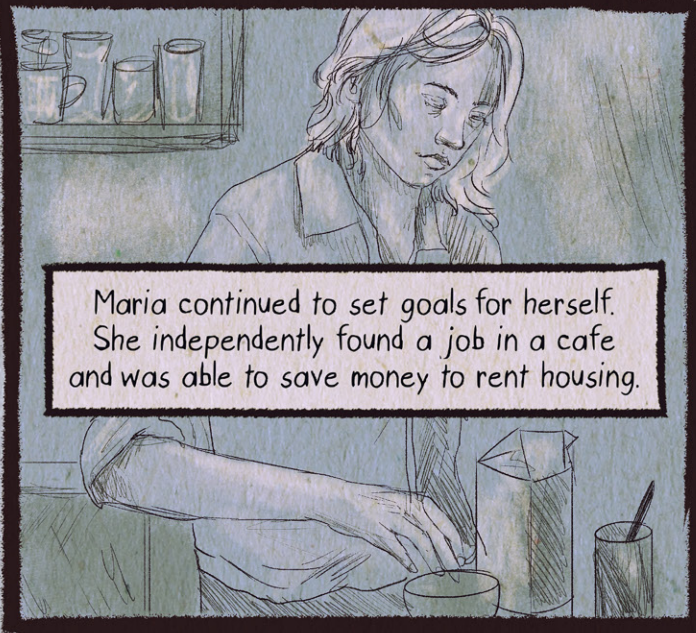


After 3 months of counseling, Maria began working and communicating with people more regularly.

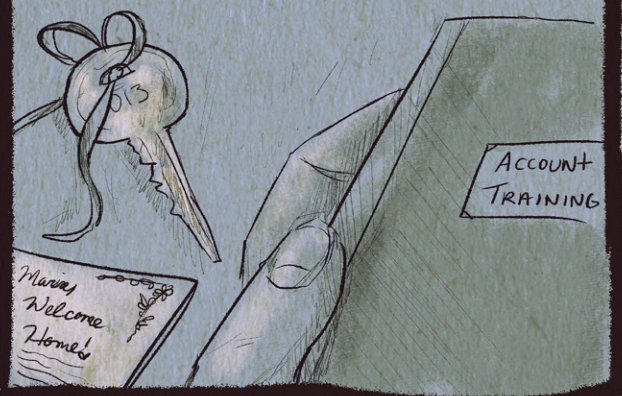
At first, Maria worked as a janitor for several hours a day and adapted to people around her.

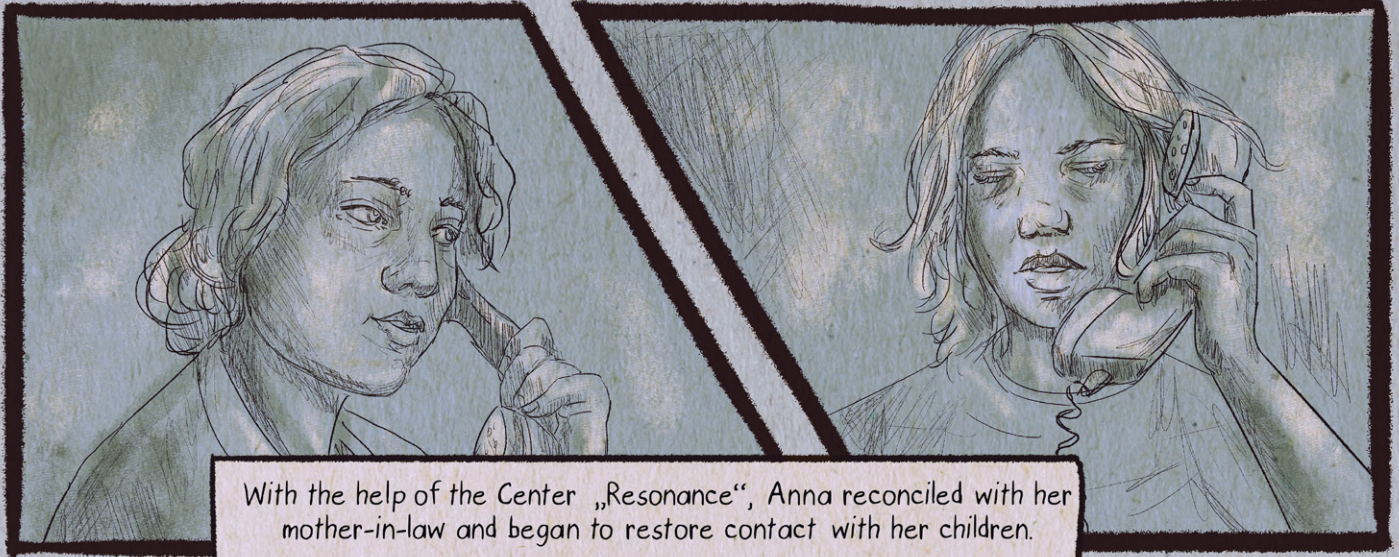


Maria continued to set goals for herself. She independently found a job in a cafe and was able to save money to rent housing.

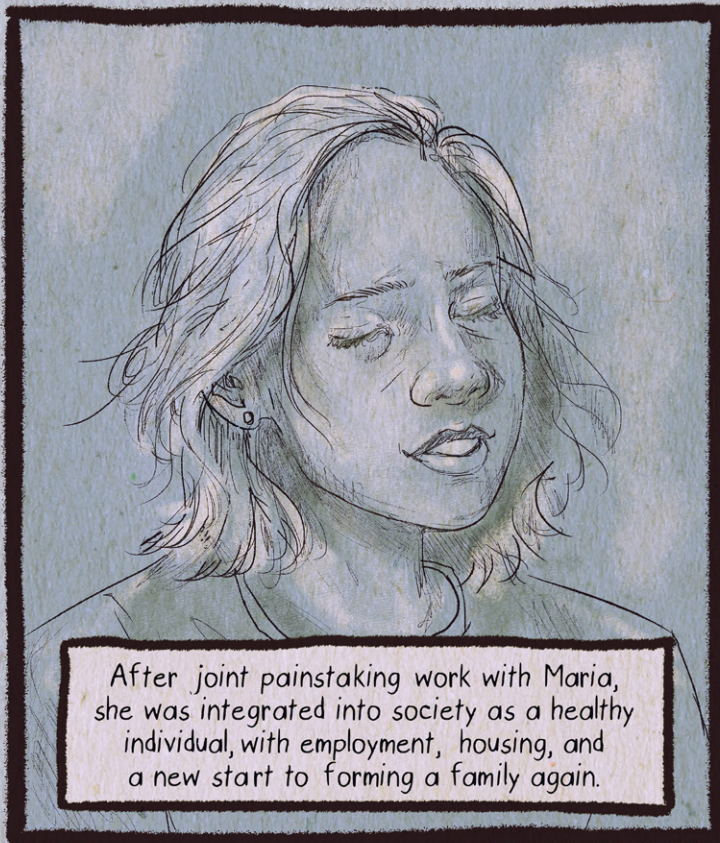
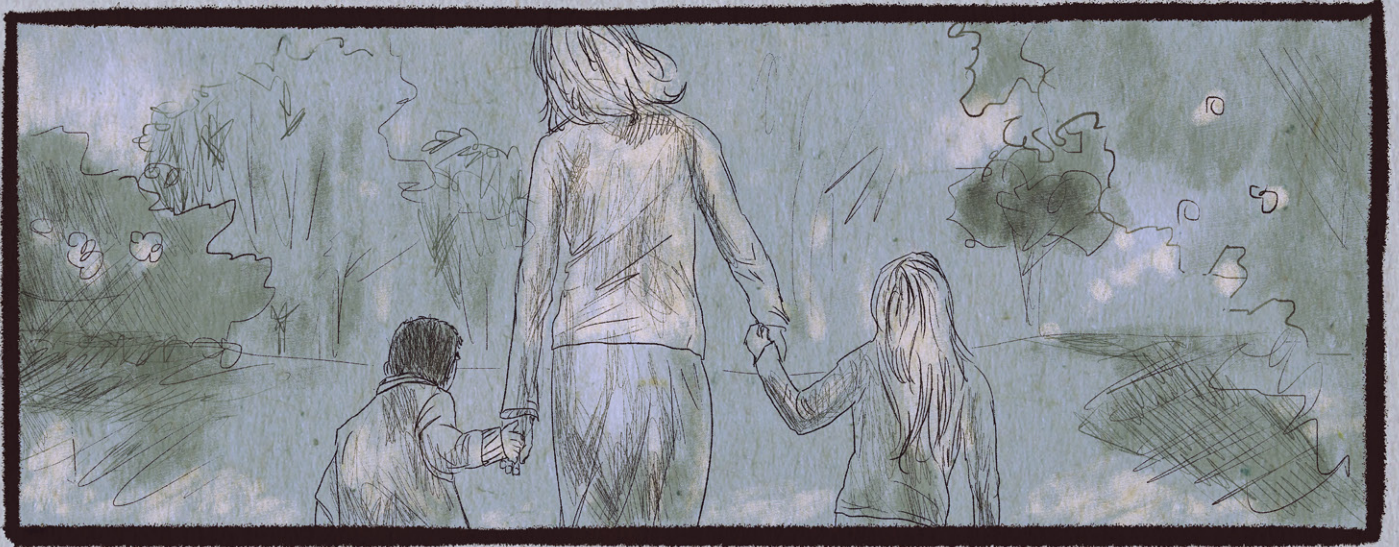


She also enrolled in free training employment courses to better prepare her to support her children, allowing her to get a higher-paying job as a saleswoman.

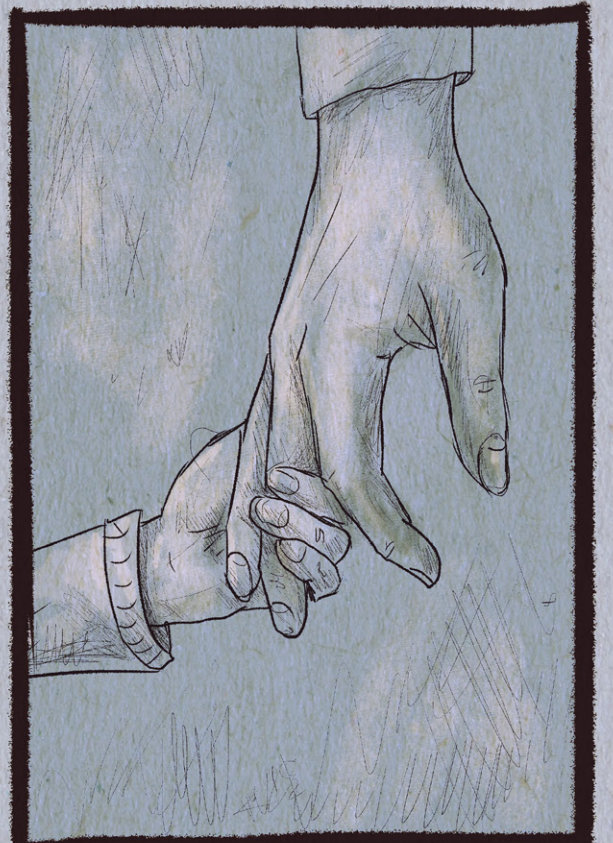




With the help of the Center „Resonance“, Anna reconciled with her mother-in-law and began to restore contact with her children.



After joint painstaking work with Maria, she was integrated into society as a healthy individual, with employment, housing, and a new start to forming a family again.



# Argentina

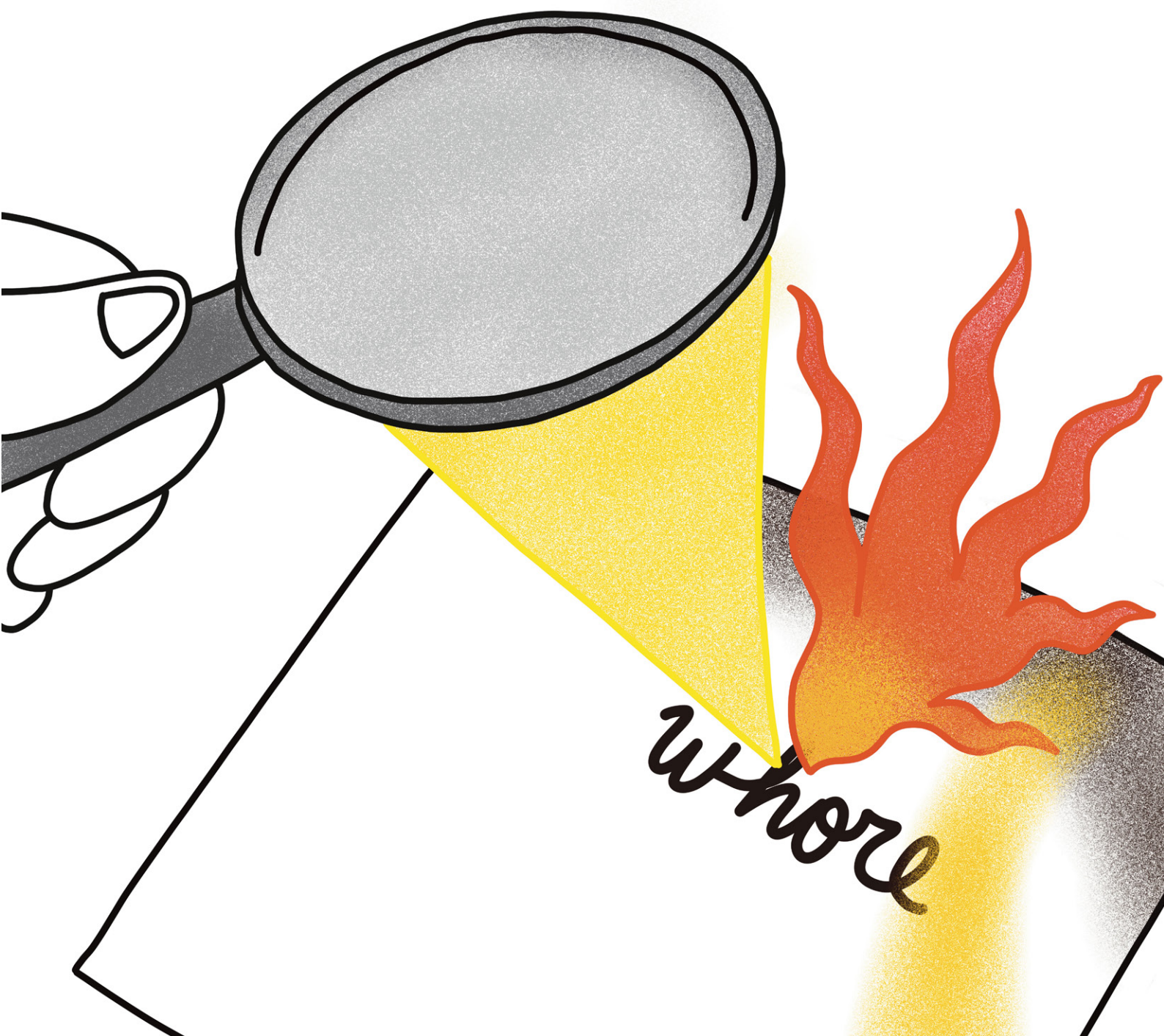
The Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices Argentinas (AMMAR) is one of the largest unions of sex workers in the world. The WHRDs leading AMMAR represents thousands of adult workers across Argentina. They're powerful human rights advocates for some of the world's most marginalized, stigmatized workers, whose network includes transgender, cisgender, and migrant sex workers. AMMAR became an officially recognized NGO in 2005, but the WHRDs leading the movement had began strategizing more than a decade prior on how to get the state to recognize sex work as legitimate work, which is critical to fighting abuse, exploitation and arrest.

Sex worker organising and advocacy is creative, responsive, life-affirming, and life-sustaining. The WHRDs of AMMAR persist in the face of killings, physical attacks, death threats, and persistent moralizing judgement from a wide range of religious, political, and social groups. In addition to providing health care, humanitarian assistance, education programs, and emergency medical response, the WHRDs of AMMAR also partner with legal teams to investigate and demand justice for the devastating number of sex workers murdered in Argentina each year.

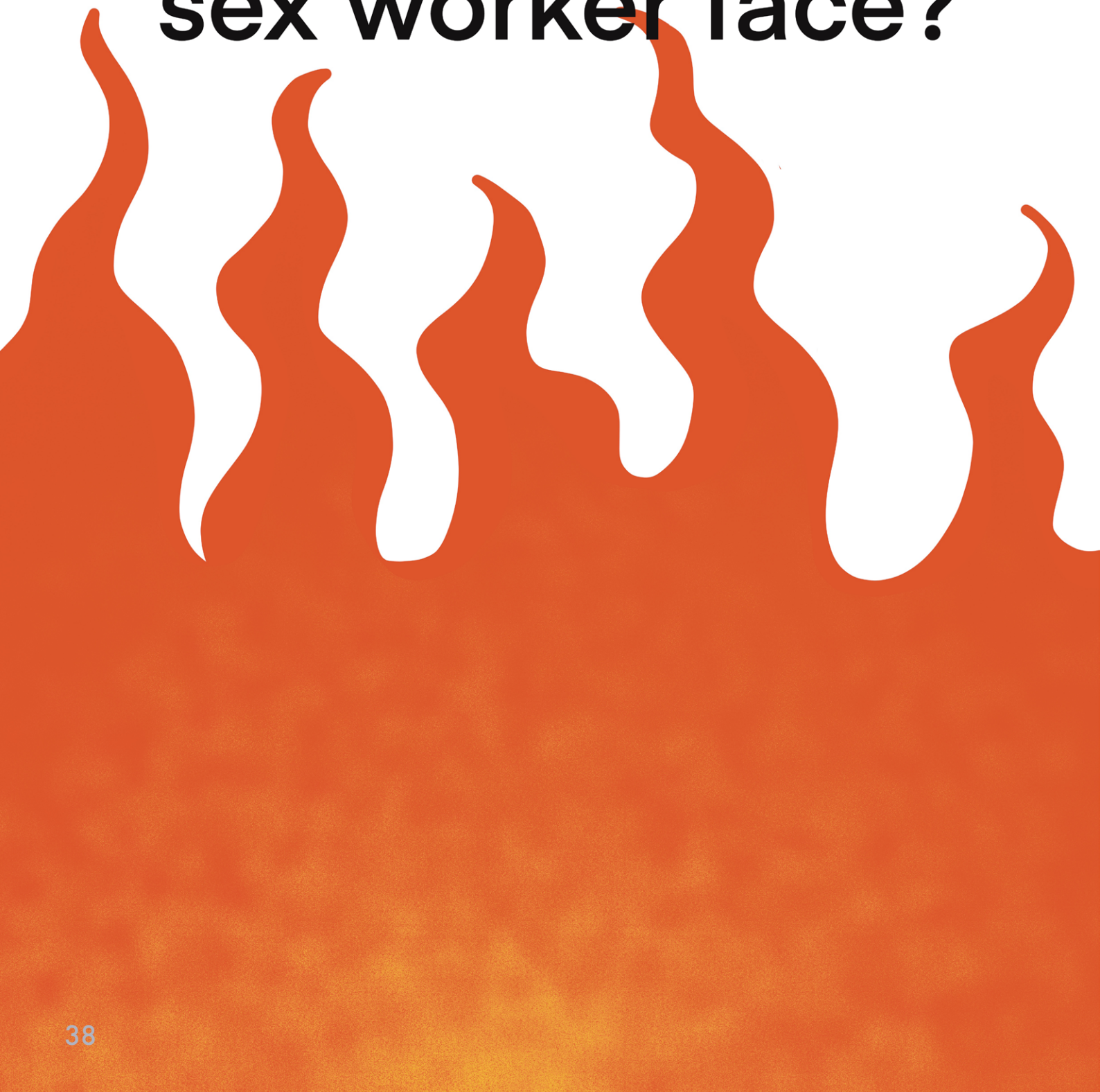
Artist : Lia Copello  
[Instagram](#)



How difficult is it  
to think of an  
activity more  
judged, debated  
and stigmatized  
than sex work



**How many  
levels of violence  
does a  
sex worker face?**





**Historically, those who belong to the group have been exposed to institutional violence, mainly due to the criminalization of sex work.**

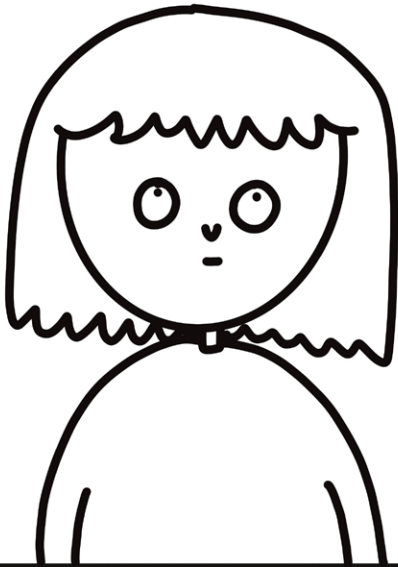
The pandemic evidenced the historical vulnerability in terms of home and health that the sexual workers have, delving further into trans and migrant people.

The evictions and lack of access into medical centers have been an every day problem, and in this context a food crisis developed, caused by the impossibility to work.

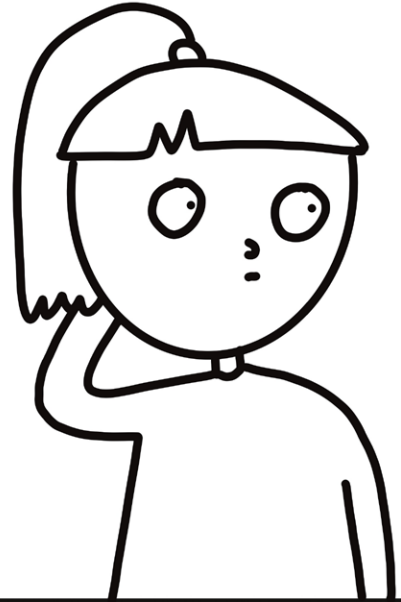




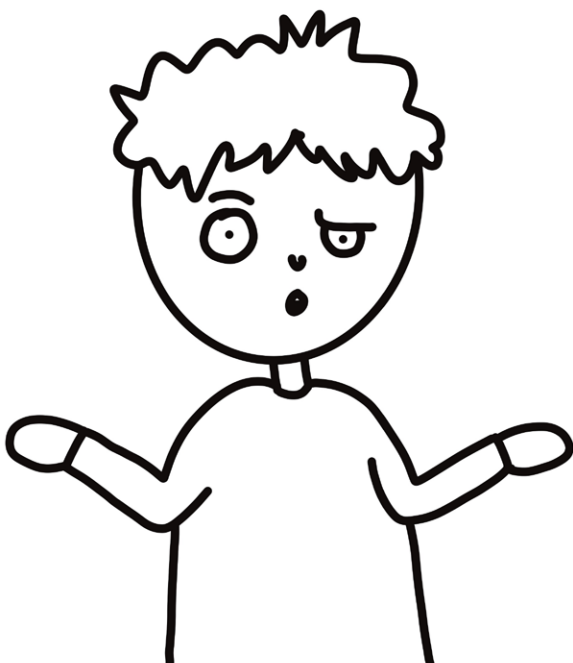
SUPERMARKET



PHARMACY

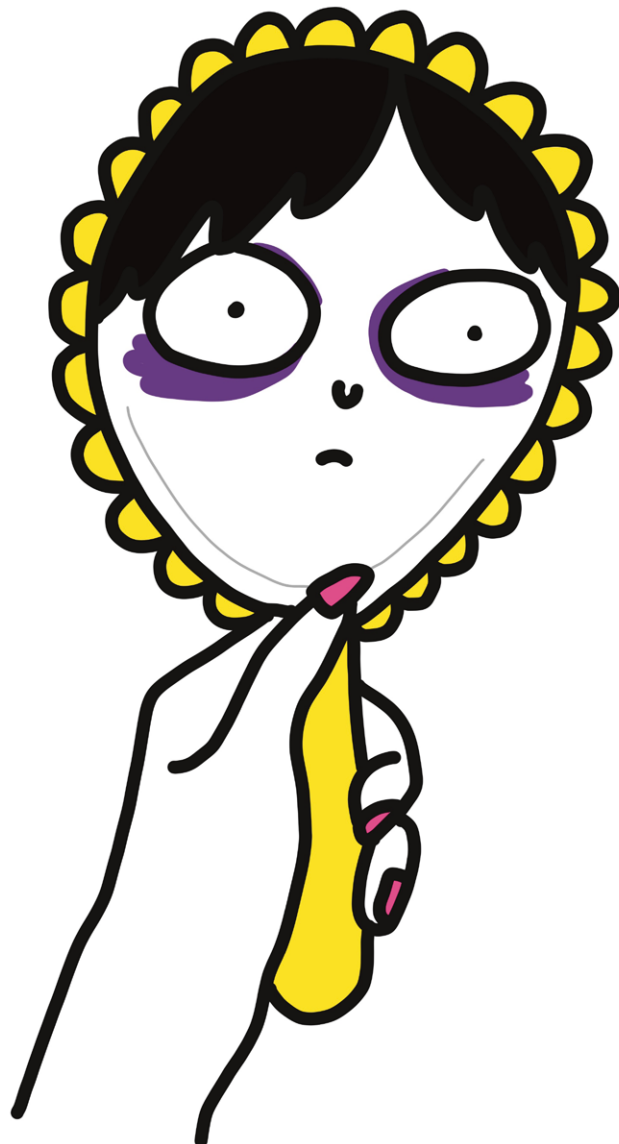


SOCIAL  
LUNCHROOM



The stigma follows them everywhere. The police harass them constantly, guided by prejudices.

**In addition to institutional violence, gender violence has a double impact.**





**During the quarantine, women and diverse identities have been more exposed to gender violence, and sex workers were no exception.**

**But, in their case, it is not easy to complain in your harasser's home, and in front of an historical invisibility.**

**It's important to acknowledge that the 96% of femicides against sex workers remain unpunished.**

**The “whore” stigma revictimizes sex workers, keeps them out of the reach of public policies, and reinforces the machismo in state institutions.**

**Against this background, the workers organized in AMMAR managed basic humanitarian assistance through self-management, establishing collaborative networks with other civil society organizations, and receiving support from national organizations and other institutions.**

**In the face of this complex context, AMMAR assisted more than 10.000 sex workers and formalized two new chapters.**



SEX WORK  
IS WORK



Find us online



[frontlinedefenders.org/cypher](https://frontlinedefenders.org/cypher)

