

Abuse and sexual harassment in the university context, the ways of práxis

Acoso y hostigamiento sexual en el ámbito universitario, los caminos de la práxis

Abuso e assédio sexual no contexto universitário, os caminhos da práxis

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Abstract: Here I analyze the results of the implementation of a program designed to prevent and sanction abuse and sexual harassment at Universidad Veracruzana (UV), based on survey conducted among members of the University's community. I use a gender theory framework, emphasizing the implication of the author in a process conceived as a praxis where despite the difficulty of keeping an optimal distance from the phenomenon of gender violence, I argue that it is precisely the lived experience that has informed the initiatives to transform it. This, in the midst of the prevailing climate of violence in Mexico and in the State of Veracruz as heightened levels of gender violence and incidence of femicides have affected the lives of the entire population, including those of University's students and employees. The proposed approach is to facilitate the collective interaction of all different members of the University's community to make sense, through dialogue, of the phenomenon of violence, as well as, to dismantle current hierarchical, androcentric and dominant masculine structures.

Keywords: University. Abuse. Sexual harassment.

Resumen: En este trabajo se analiza la implementación de un programa de prevención, atención y sanción del acoso y el hostigamiento sexual en la Universidad Veracruzana (UV), a partir de indagatorias realizadas entre las y los integrantes de la comunidad universitaria y a la luz de las teorías de género. Se enfatiza en la implicación de la autora en este proceso concebido como una praxis donde, si bien ha sido difícil mantener una distancia óptima frente a la problemática de la violencia de género, es precisamente a partir de la experiencia vivida como han surgido las propuestas para transformarla, inmersa en un contexto tan hostil como lo es el México actual y especialmente el Estado de Veracruz, donde los índices de violencia contra las mujeres y las altas tasas de feminicidio afectan directamente la vida de toda la población, incluidas estudiantes y trabajadoras de esta casa de estudios. Se postula que frente a la violencia ha de imponerse, necesariamente, el diálogo y la palabra generadora de sentido y, por ende, las y los distintos actores de la comunidad universitaria han de interactuar de manera colectiva para desmontar las estructuras jerárquicas, androcéntricas y de dominación masculina vigentes.

Palabras clave: Universidad. Acoso. Hostigamiento sexual.

Resumo : O presente trabalho analisa a implementação de um programa de prevenção, atenção e punição ao assédio e assédio sexual na Universidad Veracruzana (UV), baseado em inquéritos realizados entre os membros da comunidade universitária à luz das teorias de gênero. Enfatiza-se a implicação da autora no processo, concebido como uma práxis em que, embora tenha sido difícil manter uma distância frente à problemática de violência de gênero, foi precisamente a partir da experiência vivida que propostas surgiram para transformá-la. Experiência esta imersa em um contexto tão hostil como é hoje o México e especialmente o Estado de Veracruz, no qual as taxas de violência contra as mulheres e as altas taxas de feminicidio afetam diretamente as vidas de toda a população, incluindo estudantes e trabalhadoras desta universidade. Supõem-se que, diante da violência, o diálogo e a palavra geradora de sentido devem necessariamente serem sustentados e os diferentes atores da comunidade universitária devem interagir coletivamente para desmontar a estrutura hierárquica, androcêntrica e de dominação masculina atual.

Palavras-chave: Universidade. Assédio. Assédio sexual.

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Figure 1. Installation for peace with students of the Faculty of Dance of the University of Veracruz, carried out by Fernán González



Source: Universo – UV News system¹: “Violence against women still persists”.

Being a woman in college

To be born a woman is to enter to this world at a disadvantage. Around the world and in the 21st century, girls are still less likely to be educated, fed, and even chosen to survive if the number of children allowed for each couple is limited. In addition, they are more likely to be violated, kidnapped, exploited at work and sexually, and even to be sold or exchanged for other goods. From the age of 10, girls start to become mothers and poverty is reproduced inter-generationally because of low schooling, high unemployment rates and greater job insecurity that affect the majority of the world's population and, to a greater extent, women, resulting in the poorest of the poor being invariably girls and, more specifically, indigenous girls.

In Mexico, although the right to education is universal, only 21 out of every 100 children who start primary school complete university, whether due to lack of economic resources to buy school supplies, payment for transportation or registration fees. Of these, less than half will be women (OCDE, 2018).

Going back to history, the admission of women to higher education formally, took 8 centuries longer than for men, if we consider that the oldest university in Europe was founded in Bologna, Italy, in the 12th century and women were not admitted until 1860 in Switzerland; around 1870 in England; in 1880 in France; and until 1900 in Germany. In Mexico, the first

woman to graduate from university was the doctor, Matilde Montoya, who graduated in 1887. In 1889, the first woman lawyer, María Asunción Sandoval, graduated (GARCÍA, 2018).

There is no doubt that in our days there are significant advances in the access of women to higher education since in the last century the incorporation of women to the University grew exponentially and the female population in classrooms worldwide went from a third of the total enrollment in 1960, to almost half in 1995, to reach 50 percent in 2000 and that this trend continues to grow rapidly since then (ONU, 2011). However, the growing representation of women in higher education has not yet impacted their substantive participation in scientific development, while gender gaps and violence against them persist in universities.

In addition to the economic difficulties in carrying out scientific activity in Mexico, gender gaps must be added, understood as the specific aspects in which inequalities are major limiting women's participation. The data on female participation in scientific activity show a significantly lower percentage than that of men, with a ratio of one woman for every three men (ONU, 2011) and this in a sector characterized by a lack of investment, which has been decreasing continuously in the last two decades to the detriment of scientific development, particularly in public sector universities with less budget and greater demand.

The androcentric models and gender prejudices and stereotypes that permeate our societies are a preponderant factor in the persistence of inequalities and affect horizontal and vertical segregation in universities. This translates into the fact that the majority presence of women in the university does not yet have an impact on their representative participation in positions of authority and decision-making (vertical segregation), nor on their equal distribution in the different spheres of knowledge (horizontal segregation). Moreover, the fact that intersectional inequalities continue to exist in universities, associated with conditions of ethnicity and social class, make it difficult for women to fully enjoy their rights, above all, between those who belong to different ethnic groups and to less favored sectors in our societyⁱⁱ.

Gender-based violence in the university and policies of prevention, attention and sanction of cases of harassment and sexual harassment: the case of the University of Veracruz

With regard to gender-based violence, the daily life of women in universities takes place, as in other spaces, in situations of sexual harassment and sexual abuse. In 2017, the Committee of the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination and Violence against Women (CEDAW) made a specific recommendation to the Mexican State to act against this scourge, given the high incidence of cases at the secondary and higher education levels, which corresponds to high school, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The report entitled “From violence to school coexistence in higher secondary education. An approach with a gender perspective”, cited in the CEDAW (2018) recommendation, reports that Mexican high school girls identify violent spaces in family (37%), followed by school (31%), exercised by teachers (19%) and class mates (13%), whereas male students say that school is more violent (51%), as well as the community (19%) exercised by teachers (14%).

Furthermore, the report indicates that the behaviors suffered by female students are those that ridicule or offend them (32%), intimidation and threats (17%), as well as hurtful jokes and disqualifications (17%). It also indicates that the main aggressors identified by the students are their schoolmates (26%), affecting them in a psycho-emotional way, and the teachers are also identified within the school as aggressors.

The recommendation to the Mexican State specifies that: the Ministry of Public Education of the country lacks protocols to address gender-based violence in schools and education and in general lacks an articulated and systematic policy on prevention, care, punishment and eradication of gender-based violence in educational institutions (CEDAW, 2018) This situation led the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) to call on all affiliated universities in the country to have protocols for action in these cases, a recommendation that has not yet been implemented in all cases.

In the case of the University of Veracruz, the Coordination of the Gender Unit was created in 2014 and, in parallel, that year a team of researchers began a research study that would be published in 2017 under the title: “Studies on Gender Violence in the University” (CASILLAS *et al.* 2017). This report analyzes gender violence in the university from different perspectives and includes inquiries to the students of our house of studies. One of the researches (CASILLAS *et al.* 2017), gathers the results of a survey applied to students through a quantitative study on social representations of gender violence, applied to a representative sample of 1931 students, men and women, from the different areas and regions of the UV. The results coincide with the CEDAW report already mentioned and show that both in the previous school and in the University, the respondents have experienced different forms of gender violence, emphasizing that the main aggressor were their own classmates, teachers and school authorities. The student body commented that they did not agree that teacher violence is something normal and natural (85.6%), and 8 out of 10 students indicated that this type of act is outrageous, that it angers them and at the same time they consider that it should be reported, even though only 29.0% have done so.

In another of the investigations included in the aforementioned work (JONGITUD ZAMORA, 2017) and also carried out with students, but this time of a qualitative nature, in-depth interviews were conducted randomly with 186 students, 47.7% were men and 54.3% were women. It was possible to identify that, from the students' point of view, “men are violent because they are stronger, because they obey the natural instinct”, “it is testosterone that makes this type of violent acts be done”. They attribute this to the “role that society gives us”, where it has been established that “women have to be calmer, submissive, calm and in the shade”, while men have to be “in the sun”. In addition, they were able to assess that teachers have certain "preferences towards women or towards men". It seems that women teachers prefer men because of their “handsome” characteristics.

Female students are the ones who consider that sexual violence comes from “perverted teachers, who are left looking at the students and shamelessly” and this generates anger and indignation. They recognize that when these teachers “catch”, then “they become the ones who didn't see anything”. As for sexual violence, students consider that it does exist in the university and that it is generated when there is “a beautiful girl”, and “the professor sees her with the

eyes that he wants to do obscene things to her”. Sexual violence can also be seen as a set of “derogatory or vulgar comments”, out-of-context denotations, involuntary touching of hair or body without consent. This type of sexual violence is also called “harassment”. As in the previous study, they stated that they did not seek help from official bodies and when they did, it was with their professors or with university authorities, but they considered that the impact of the attention was not significant.

Finally, in his contribution on care and prevention of sexual harassment, Guzmán Ibáñez (2017, p. 92), he states:

within universities, practices related to harassment of women by men are now endemic, the most frequent being that of teachers towards students, which simultaneously integrates the two spheres of domination: the hierarchization of power and that of gender, but it is also reproduced in peer spaces, in which classmates sexually harass female students.

The author affirms that it is evident that attacking this phenomenon implies acting from a varied amount of edges that merit deep investigations but emphasizing that:

silence on this type of practice is an essential element for its perpetuation, both the silence of the victims who are reluctant to denounce, but also that of the spectators, who prefer to hide in anonymity instead of supporting the victims. The victim is hesitant to speak up because in the event of denouncing the act, the pertinent sanctions are not granted, or in the worst of cases, the reprisals could affect their academic trajectory because of the same complicity that exists between authorities and teachers, which in some cases they will simply let pass (GUZMÁN IBÁÑEZ, 2017, p. 93).

In order to provide an institutional response to this unfortunate situation, in March 2014 the Coordination of the Gender Unit was created officially, ratified by the General University Council, the highest authority of the University of Veracruz. The university authorities proposed the author of this text as the first coordinator of this agency. I accepted the proposal and for 4 years, the period in which this assignment lasted, I designed and implemented institutional policies aimed at promoting a culture of gender equity in the University, including attention to cases of sexual harassment and non-discrimination against people with diverse gender identities.

In order to achieve the proposed objectives and with the support of a small work team, we focused, in the first instance, on generating an organizational structure that would guarantee a transversal acting from a small dependency, but closely linked to the diverse academic entities and administrative dependencies of the university, emphasizing decentralization and ensuring that the actions undertaken would be carried out in the five regions in which the university is composed and in the four headquarters of the Intercultural University of Veracruz (UVI) whose students are mostly of indigenous origin.

We form the Gender Equality Committee made up of representatives from these regions and the UVI's headquarters, and with this group we formulate the Institutional Plan for Gender Equality on an annual basis and, aligned with this program, but respecting regional diversity, the Regional Programs. The representatives carried out the activities with the support of liaisons in charge of promoting gender equality in all departments and academic entities. Finally, we created the Consultative Council for Gender Equality, a collegiate body of opinion,

consultation and resolution, responsible for addressing issues related to gender equality in the UV.

In order to generate a legal framework that would allow us to act in cases of sexual harassment, together with a team of experts we created the “Regulations for Gender Equality of the Universidad Veracruzana” (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015b) and the “Guide for dealing with cases of sexual harassment and harassment” (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015a). The Regulation was approved in December 2015 by the General University Council after a process of revision in different university instances and since then it constitutes an institutional guideline of obligatory and generalized observance, which establishes the normative dispositions that regulate and guarantee the principles of equality and non-discrimination for reasons of sex or gender in our University.

Chapter II of the UV Gender Equality Regulation, which deals with complaints relating to discrimination and violence on the basis of sex or gender, provides as follows:

Article 35. When any member of the university community considers that they have suffered some type of gender violence or discrimination due to their sexual and gender condition, under the strictest responsibility and through the presentation of evidence, they may lodge a written complaint with the corresponding authority, following the procedures established in the applicable university regulations and in the Guide for the Attention of Cases of Harassment and Sexual Harassment.

Article 36. It is prohibited to submit victims of violence or discrimination to any conciliation or mediation mechanism before or during the investigation and sanction processes.

Article 37. Unipersonal authorities who are aware of cases of discrimination based on sex or gender or the types of violence in their different forms must prevent the victimization of persons through appropriate actions implemented ex officio or at the request of the victim, which will be carried out in accordance with university regulations (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015b, p. 20).

Chapter III on the eradication of gender discrimination reads as follows:

Article 38. The unipersonal authorities, within the scope of their competencies and based on the investigation carried out in the attention of cases of discrimination by sex or gender or violence against women, shall impose the corresponding sanctions aimed at eradicating such practices.

Article 39. The victim of violence or discrimination can at any time go before the administrative or judicial channels to exercise their right to justice, without the presentation of complaints to the University constituting an alternative mechanism to exercise the corresponding rights (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015b, p. 20-21).

The first chapter contains the conceptual framework including a glossary of terms; the second indicates the elements that characterize this type of act according to current international, national, state and university regulations; and the third explains the procedure for dealing with those who have been victims of any of these situations.

In the guide's glossary of terms, sexual harassment is described as

behavior of a sexual nature in which there is no subordination because its action is horizontal, unwanted and offensive to the recipient, which may involve physical contact and insinuations, sexual observations, exhibition of pornography, sexual

demands, verbal or factual, which humiliate and affect the health and safety of the victim (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015a, p. 23).

On the other hand, sexual harassment is

the offensive, uncomfortable or humiliating behavior that develops in the face of the exercise of power in a relationship of subordination expressed through verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviors, related to sexuality with a lewd connotation and that denies people the dignity, respect and equality of treatment to which they are entitled (UNIVERSIDAD VERACRUZANA, 2015a, p. 24).

In this sense, legally, harassment and sexual harassment are different forms of gender-based violence and both inflict damage on victims associated with exclusion, subordination, discrimination and exploitation of women and are therefore considered as “behaviors consubstantial to gender oppression in all its forms, affecting their human rights” (MEXICO, 2018). The difference between one and the other is that while sexual harassment occurs vertically, that is, there is a context of authority-subordination either in the workplace, as in the case of authorities and personnel or, in an institution, in the case of authorities and teachers or between teachers and students; sexual harassment, on the other hand, although it occurs in a context of horizontal relations, being unwanted is also offensive to the recipient.

Thanks to these regulations, the Gender Unit Coordination was able to provide 43 legal advisory services between 2016 and 2017: 34 of them were within its competence and 9 outside it were channeled to other university agencies. It served 49 students, 4 academics, 5 administrative, technical and manual workers, 1 student and a group of students made up of men and women. Of these consultancies, 21 ended up in denunciation, 15 inside university, 6 in criminal proceedings and 13 without denunciation. The main reasons why they did not denounce coincide with the report of the investigations carried out at the university mentioned above, and had to do with fear and fear of reprisals and, to a lesser extent, physical or psychological health problems of the victims. Of the 15 complaints filed at the University, 12 were sanctioned, all of them against men: academics, students and temporary workers. The sanctions ranged from reprimand to temporary suspension and final rescission. In the remaining three cases, no sanction was imposed for lack of evidence.

It should be noted that these figures corresponded to the statistics generated in the region, in the country and in the studies carried out at the University, that is, to the fact that most gender-based violence has a woman as its victim and a man as the aggressor, who is not a stranger, but someone close to her, in this case, a teacher, co-worker or fellow student. Also, that the victims are afraid to denounce these facts because it can generate reprisals that can affect their work or student life but that, in the measure in which they feel accompanied and supported, they gain confidence in the institution and in the importance of carrying out the procedures of denunciation always attached to the university legislation.

Parallel to the actions of attention to gender violence in the university, in terms of prevention the campaign #elsilenciomarcatuvida was carried out, of permanent character and having as axes the diffusion and training of the sexual harassment and harassment between the members of the university community. Within this framework of action, during 2016 and 2017 all the officials and authorities of the academic entities in all the UV regions and UVI

headquarters were trained in order to make them aware of the Regulations for Gender Equality and also members of union committees of teachers and administrative personnel. The campaign was disseminated through the projection of videos, the distribution of banners, diptychs, social networks and various materials, with financial support from the Federal Secretariat of Public Education, through the program to Strengthen the Quality of Education for Gender Equality (PFCE).

Finally, it is important to mention that University of Veracruz was one of the first universities in the country to have legal tools and to act in favor of a life free of violence against women on its campuses and, therefore, the policies undertaken positioned it as a leading university in this area, largely thanks to the support of the woman President of the University, who for these years has been virtually the only female in charge of a public university in the country.

Discussion

#silence marks your life or the paths of praxis.

So far, I have described the reality that in the matter of harassment and sexual harassment insists and persists in Mexican universities and particularly what happens in the Veracruzana, my university of affiliation, likewise, the actions undertaken to eradicate this phenomenon. What I will present below is an analysis of this entire work process and its results, which I conceive as a path of personal, institutional and political reflection, inasmuch as it is a praxis that has actively involved me as a researcher, as a professor and as a woman.

Following Bourdieu (1980), research on violence necessarily leads to a “loss of objective distance”, a situation that appears to us, according to Cufre Marchetto (2017, p. 52):

like the two sides of a coin: one that expresses concern and empathy and the other in which there is usually a fear of being trapped where the person who occupies the role of researcher will have a function very similar to that of the witness, where both the researcher and the witness will permanently suffer the tensions of being too close or too far away and, above all, they will have to endure the feeling that they are always late.

And all this because “violence attacks the ability to think in the absence of ethical or political dispositions and also in the absence of thinking instruments such as problems, concepts, methods, techniques” (CUFRÉ MARCHETTO, 2017, p. 52).

I also return to the classic text entitled: “From anxiety to method in behavioral sciences” (DEVEREUX, 1994), because the methodology used for this work necessarily started from my own anxiety in front of the cases of sexual harassment and sexual abuse suffered by my co-workers, by students, by university workers, by that anguish experienced in a permanent way in front of these situations in a particularly violent context in my country and in the State of Veracruz. Events as difficult as kidnappings, disappearances and murders of members of the university community and their families that simultaneously filled me with indignation and

made me feel sometimes too close to the object of study motivating me to action, to come out of paralysis and to think of new forms of intervention in order not to place myself as a mere witness and, therefore, too far from it. I was walking blindly but following the good advice of Sigmund Freud, who used to say that when we have no light we have to learn to see better in the dark.

And because to investigate is certainly to unravel reality through processes of subjectivity on daily bases, the task now narrated starts from my own subjectivity as a praxis that has taken me from theory to practice and vice versa, with the hope of generating, in the best of cases, a virtuous spiral of transforming knowledge. In this sense, upon assuming the Coordination of the Gender Unit, I had just finished writing a book on women entitled: “Women and their enjoyment: from silence to fecund language”, which was published in 2015. I had come from a path of theorization, and now I was moving towards a path of daily practice in order to support the university women to walk, together with me, from the silence imposed on the emancipatory language, as I had described throughout my recently concluded work. And fortunately for feminism, as it is described by (FRASER, 2015) referring to the collective actions undertaken by women, the work I carried out in favor of gender equality and for an academic life free of violence, had the participation of many men and women of the university community joined together in the slogan “#elsilenciomarcatuvida”.

Can we eradicate violence against women?

When analyzing the women's movements of the 20th century, Touraine (1997), he asked himself whether at the end of the day men and women, equal and different from his perspective - although they can also be conceived as equal and/or different (LAURENT-ASSOUN, 1998), and even radically different (IRIGARAY, 1999), - could live together. The question starts from the fact that women's collective action, as he conceives it, has as its starting point the struggle for identity, that is, it starts from the analysis of the condition and position of women in the world conceived as equal in rights as men, but different in their possibilities of access to an equal and just world. This issue has become the greatest obstacle that gender policies have faced implying a constant struggle for their own legitimacy because they are perceived as actions that threaten the unity of the social collective. However, given that this is a false human collective that has been established from the generic universal “man”, this is what has motivated millions of women to exercise a collective action claiming their differences and evidencing the richness of social life in diversity.

They have placed the problem in asymmetrical power relations that turn differences into inequalities, the product of social structures anchored in the hegemonic power of male domination, perpetuated for centuries by privileged groups of men, including some women as well. The unanimous call has been towards emancipation and access to a life free of violence for all women and, particularly, for those who live in conditions of greater dispossession and unprotected in which conditions of poverty, ethnicity and class intersect.

The university has certainly been implicated by the impact of these social movements and I believe that all of this has led us academics today to move also in the shifting waters of

identity, that is, in that type of place from which we permanently question who we are, how to live together without becoming invisible and how to become subjects of our own desire. And from this place it is clear that the phenomenon of violence and identifying its causes is a very complex matter, and I agree in this regard with that violence is a product of human coexistence and therefore it is also possible to reverse it from human action, which implies that diverse social groups develop norms and collective agreements that foster the development of non-destructive human links. Since the human being is a being of possibilities, violence is not genetically determined but is developed in function of what is lived, of the conscience and the learning of the experience that is acquired throughout the existence about that which one can and wants to modify with respect to oneself.

Gender-based violence is the product of androcentric, patriarchal and masculine domination social structures that translate into living conditions, access to opportunities and inequitable and unequal human rights between men and women, and that is reproduced through naturalization, normalization and social normatization processes, imposed on women simply because they are women and is maintained and perpetuated thanks to the deployment of macro and micro forms of daily domination, surveillance, control and punishment mechanisms (FOUCAULT, 2015). However, capable of being dismantled through collective action through processes of seeking economic redistribution, social recognition and political representation (FRASER, 2015).

Eradicating gender-based violence in all spheres of human coexistence, and particularly in the university, calls us to undertake transformative and simultaneous actions at a global level, but in tune with local needs and in the different spaces where women act, seeking to be remunerated and participate in economic development on an equal footing with our male peers; To be well represented in all decision-making instances where the issues that concern and affect us are resolved and, to be recognized for our contributions to social and collective life, not only in terms of “meritocracy” for exercising individual or collective leaderships, but also for making visible the daily contributions to reproductive life and to the care of others. The university space is a privileged environment for change and the recognition of inequalities, insofar as it corresponds to the university to exercise the power of transformation and consciousness.

The bet on the word that generates meaning

In the face of the violent, destructive act that annuls the subject, the word that generates meaning is imposed, the one that restores to people their quality of actor subject, capable of building themselves and transforming their environment, generating consensus and agreements with others to live in a civilized way, that is to say, to live together governed by the common good. However, the social exchanges that prevail in our society are precisely the opposite, since the other is not conceived as a subject and this turns him into an object stripping him of his word capacity, which condemns him to silence. Placed without voice, in a position of subordination, violence is exerted on him or her, actions, languages, words are imposed on him or her through coercive, induced or forced mechanisms.

In addition to this, it must be stressed that our societies have been built on the basis of a monosubjective socioeconomic and cultural system that is governed by the masculine human model and, therefore, the language that functions as one of the main means of producing meaning and governs the codes of social relations, instead of being communicative in order to establish dialogue between two subjects, becomes imperative, functioning as a means of transmitting information to another that is not considered as such, which prevents the exchange between different beings that create new meanings together.

The bet on the word that generates meaning is therefore, the bet on the human dialogic subject, on the exchange between people in their diversity and is based on the recognition of the other as such in order to collectively build civilizing environments. Dialogical language is conceived as a human construction that regulates and generates social meaning. Social coexistence therefore requires that societies recognize the capacity of people to communicate and to generate the necessary regulatory processes that allow for fecund exchange. What allows to eliminate all forms of violence between people and social groups is then, following Bleichmar (2009) the potentiation of a process of re-composition of social fractures that allow to normalize the human coexistence of citizens who are subjects, agents of their own life and who communicate and relate among themselves under bonds of solidarity and shared work.

In this way, ending gender-based violence necessarily involves refunding the various human languages: legal language, grammatical language, artistic language, to name but a few. It implies placing at the center of debate and collective action the formulation of institutional legal instruments with a gender perspective, the incorporation of inclusive language in university work and the generation of innovative proposals for the exchange and transmission of knowledge with a gender perspective among university actors. And, of course, active listening and accompaniment to victims in order to remove them from the place of silence in which they have been placed so that they are capable of denouncing the violence they have suffered and initiate the corresponding processes of imparting justice.

In relation to the allegations of sexual harassment and harassment that have recently been made visible through movements such as #metoo, #balancetonpork, etc, there has been much debate about the veracity of such allegations. In this regard, authors such as Lamas (2018), a renowned Mexican feminist, have begun to question whether sexual harassment has become so popular that it has lent itself to victimizing acts rather than to real denunciations, the product of revanchist attitudes and a puritanical conception of sexuality. Undoubtedly, this question requires a broad analysis that goes beyond the limits of this work, but I would like to point out that erotic relationships between people cannot be placed only in the place of desire, although always present in our lives and even when it inevitably escapes our will. I consider, as I have been arguing, that all human interactions need to be regulated by cultural mechanisms that, although they generate discomfort (FREUD, 1929) are those that guarantee healthy social coexistence, because we know that what happens at the micro-social level, such as the sexual relationship between people, even when it appears as a consensual act, is also a social act that is reproducing inequality, hierarchies of power, and the annulment of the subject in the prevailing macro social alienation. For this reason, in our case, in the UV we attended to all the people who considered to have been the object of sexual abuse and harassment and we made

sure that they had the necessary institutional mechanisms to undertake a process of imparting justice and reparation of the damage if they chose to do so. When they decided to do so, we accompanied them in the denunciation processes, following the existing institutional mechanisms.

At the same time, we generated multiple spaces for dialogue between the various actors in university life through workshops, courses, seminars, production of videos, artistic works, messages sent by electronic media and social networks, among other multiple strategies implemented jointly for the fruitful exchange of ideas from where there emerged the actions undertaken for the prevention and eradication of gender violence in our university.

Finally, although it is true that we did not achieve everything we wanted, we were able to maintain ourselves in our place as subjects who recognize others as such and, therefore, in the place of researchers who investigate in order to unravel reality through processes of subjectivity of the everyday, that is, from a praxis that contributes to the civilizing process of creating a scientific language capable of constructing new realities.

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Notes

ⁱ Available in:

<https://www.uv.mx/prensa/general/violencia-contra-las-mujeres-aun-persiste/>. Access in: 20 Nov. 2018.

ⁱⁱ To delve into this subject, consult García Oramas (2018). “Substantive Equality in Higher Education Institutions”. Digital version at: <http://libros.uv.mx/index.php/UV/catalog/book/TU178>. Accessed on: 20 Nov. 2018.

