

Veeduría ciudadana para el Apoyo Solidario e Integral para el Aborto Seguro en Tumaco -ASISTE



Narrative:

The mission of the ASISTE Oversight Committee (Apoyo Solidario e Integral para el Aborto Seguro en Tumaco - Solidarity and Comprehensive Support for Safe Abortion in Tumaco) is to supervise and evaluate access to voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP) services in the municipality of Tumaco, Nariño, in full compliance with reproductive rights and current rulings.

The creation and operation of this oversight committee is supported by Resolution 133, issued on August 26 of 2024 by the District Ombudsman of Tumaco, which grants it full legitimacy in its supervision and monitoring activities. The team that makes up this oversight committee is made up of four young women, between the ages of 22 and 25, all of them Afro-descendants and professionals in the fields of Education and Social and Community Work. Their multidisciplinary approach covers diverse perspectives, such as gender, social intervention, youth, among others, which allows them to comprehensively and effectively address the challenges related to reproductive rights in Tumaco.

ASISTE has supported other strategies such as:

- “Breaking the silence”, of the municipal administration in Tumaco during the year 2023
- “let's talk about abortion” which aims to break stereotypes and biases that revolve around VTP, in 2024.
- Other initiatives and training strategies on topics of Peace and school mediation, especially in promoting the denormalization of gender violence, in coordination with the House of Memory in Tumaco.

Understanding that the context in Tumaco, Nariño, does not differ significantly from other regions of Colombia, but it does make a crucial difference in terms of the high rate of gender violence, and the lack of knowledge and access to sexual and reproductive rights, much less access to Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy (VTP). In a territory where armed conflict still persists, women, people with diverse sexual orientations and pregnant people face considerable fear when making decisions regarding their sexuality and abortion, due to possible negative reactions from their partners or family members. In addition, there is misinformation, social stigmatization and pressure they face, as well as restrictions on access to health services and barriers imposed by both officials and society in general, circumstances that converge to hinder the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights.

Objectives:

In general, we are committed to designing a methodological guide with an ethnic and intersectional focus, which allows the approach of sexual and reproductive rights with young people and the implementation of the proposal with the formation and consolidation of three groups of young people from educational institutions and a youth group of population with diverse orientation, with whom sexual and reproductive rights will be addressed in a comprehensive manner, which includes subtopics such as:

- Gender-based violence.
- Sexual co-responsibility.
- Voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP).
- Prevention, care and follow-up routes for gender-based victims.

We also provide support to pregnant young people and adolescents to monitor the pregnancy process in a community setting. We systematize and support life experiences from a community perspective, thus creating spaces for meeting, training, dialogue, and listening. We support teacher counselors through a network of educators in implementing the methodological strategy and its adaptability to other grades and groups of students. In the special district of Tumaco, the monitoring group is currently supporting pregnant people who wish to access voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP) as a means of monitoring ruling C-055 of 2022 in Colombia for compliance with SRHR. Our beneficiaries are more than 200 young people from educational institutions in the urban and rural areas of Tumaco.

We also belong to the collectives that work in coordination with the Causa Justa Movement, a pioneering movement in the country that seeks the freedom and reproductive autonomy of all women over their bodies and their life projects. Causa Justa was created in 2017, as an initiative of the Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres and has led public debate on abortion in Colombia to advance the elimination of the crime of abortion from the Penal Code.

In summary, the ASISTE Oversight Committee has played a crucial role in Tumaco by supervising and promoting compliance with sentences related to IVE, establishing strategic alliances, collaborating with institutions and receiving technical support for the same. Empowering women and pregnant people to make informed decisions about their own bodies and health.