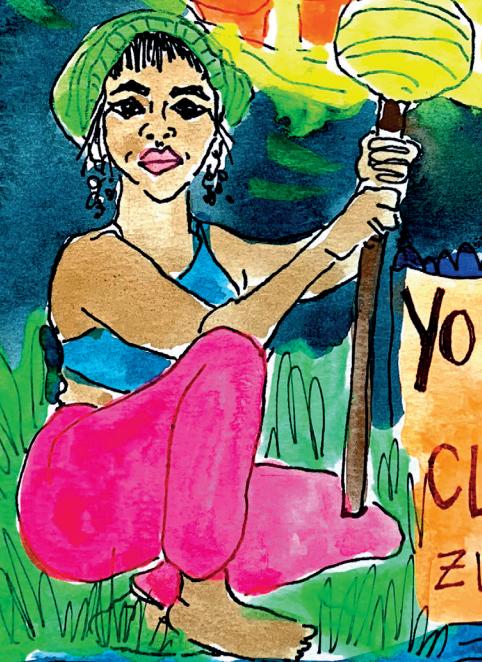
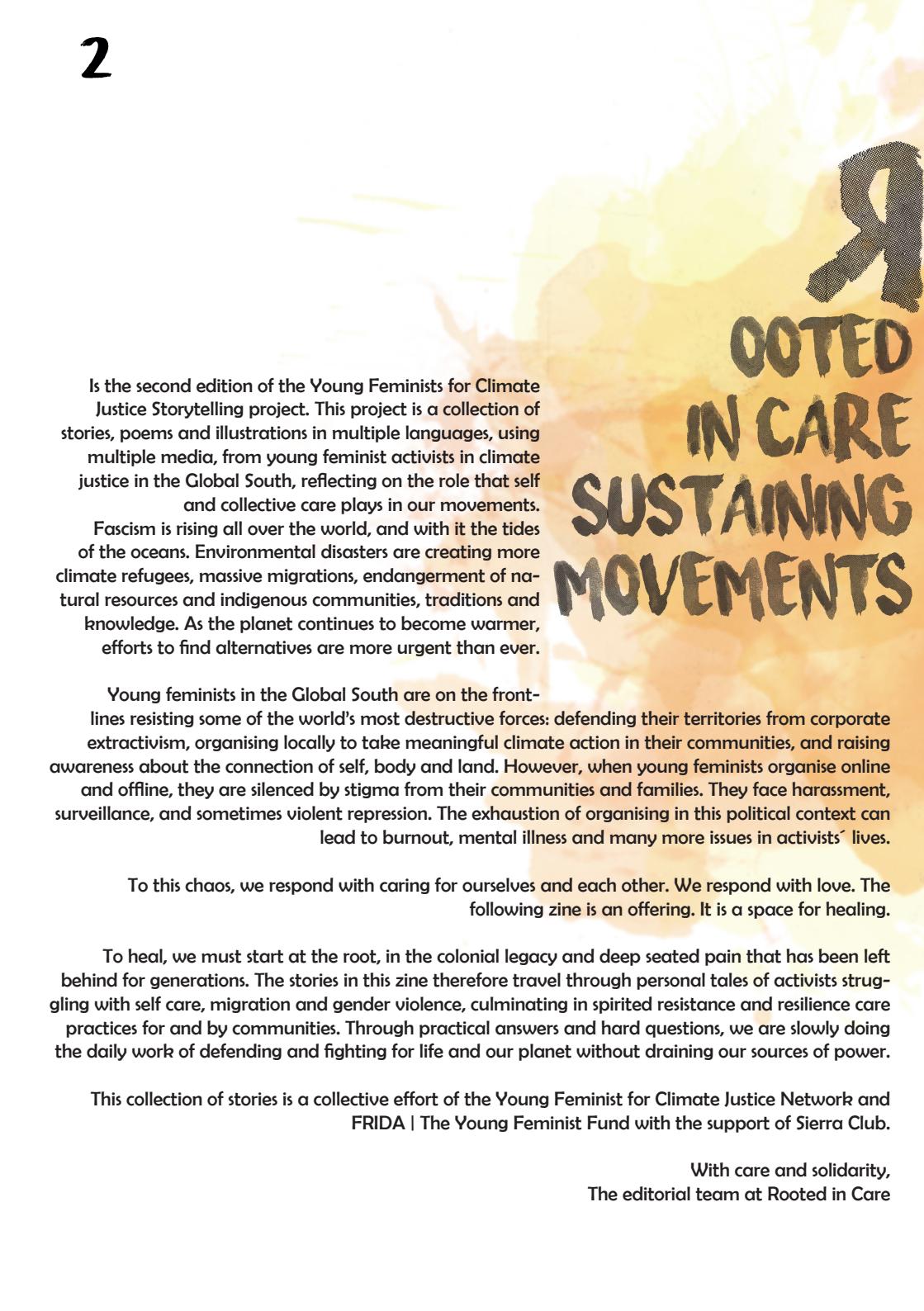


ROOTED IN CARE,  
SUSTAINING  
MOVEMENTS



YOUNG FEMINISTS  
FOR  
CLIMATE JUSTICE  
ZINE VOLUME Two

PERRIN



# ROOTED IN CARE SUSTAINING MOVEMENTS

Is the second edition of the Young Feminists for Climate Justice Storytelling project. This project is a collection of stories, poems and illustrations in multiple languages, using multiple media, from young feminist activists in climate justice in the Global South, reflecting on the role that self and collective care plays in our movements.

Fascism is rising all over the world, and with it the tides of the oceans. Environmental disasters are creating more climate refugees, massive migrations, endangerment of natural resources and indigenous communities, traditions and knowledge. As the planet continues to become warmer, efforts to find alternatives are more urgent than ever.

Young feminists in the Global South are on the front-lines resisting some of the world's most destructive forces: defending their territories from corporate extractivism, organising locally to take meaningful climate action in their communities, and raising awareness about the connection of self, body and land. However, when young feminists organise online and offline, they are silenced by stigma from their communities and families. They face harassment, surveillance, and sometimes violent repression. The exhaustion of organising in this political context can lead to burnout, mental illness and many more issues in activists' lives.

To this chaos, we respond with caring for ourselves and each other. We respond with love. The following zine is an offering. It is a space for healing.

To heal, we must start at the root, in the colonial legacy and deep seated pain that has been left behind for generations. The stories in this zine therefore travel through personal tales of activists struggling with self care, migration and gender violence, culminating in spirited resistance and resilience care practices for and by communities. Through practical answers and hard questions, we are slowly doing the daily work of defending and fighting for life and our planet without draining our sources of power.

This collection of stories is a collective effort of the Young Feminist for Climate Justice Network and FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund with the support of Sierra Club.

With care and solidarity,  
The editorial team at Rooted in Care

# E NRAIZADAS EN EL CUIDADO SOSTENIENDO MOVIMIENTOS

territorios del extractivismo, organizando esfuerzos locales para proteger sus recursos naturales y la concientización de la conexión entre el ser, la cuerpa y el territorio. Sin embargo, cuándo lxs feministas jóvenes se organizan por el clima, viven estigmatización de sus comunidades, acosos online, persecución y censura violenta. El agotamiento causado por la movilización política en este contexto político puede llegar a desgastarnos, afectar nuestra salud mental y muchos otros problemas en las vidas de activistas.

A todo este caos le respondemos cuidando de nosotrxs mismxs y de lxs unx y lxs otra. A todo este caos le respondemos con amor por nosotrxs mismxs y por lxs otrxs. El siguiente fanzine es una ofrenda. Es un espacio para sanarnos a nosotrxs mismxs, para responder preguntas prácticas y formular unas cuantas más sobre cómo continuamos el trabajo que estamos haciendo sin que nos quite nuestra vida.

Para curarnos debemos empezar en la raíz, en el legado colonial que dejó por generaciones. Empezamos las historias por ahí, continuamos a las luchas personales de activistas por cuidarse y terminamos con unas fórmulas de resistencia y de resiliencia por y para nuestra comunidad.

Esta colección de historias es un esfuerzo colectivo de la Red de Feministas Jóvenes por la Justicia Climática y FRIDA | El Fondo de Feministas Jóvenes, con el apoyo de Sierra Club.

Con mucha solidaridad y cuidado,  
El equipo editorial de Enraizadas en el Cuidado

Es la segunda edición del proyecto cuentero de las feministas jóvenes por la justicia climática. Este proyecto es una colección de historias, poemas e ilustraciones de feministas jóvenes en justicia climática en el Sur Global reflexionando sobre el rol que juega el cuidado en sus movimientos.

El fascismo crece y con él las mareas. De la misma forma, los desastres naturales crean refugiados climáticos, migraciones masivas y amenazas a territorios poniendo en riesgo recursos naturales y comunidades, tradiciones y conocimientos indígenas. Mientras el planeta se calienta, son urgentes los esfuerzos que debemos organizar para oponernos a todo lo que amenaza nuestra supervivencia.

Lxs feministas jóvenes en el Sur Global son quienes están en primera fila resistiendo algunas de las fuerzas más destructivas: defendiendo sus

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PERRIN

# BETWEEN THE DUNES

## BY SAMREEN KHAN

Amongst uneven sand dunes, picture a group of women balancing 3 to 4 water pots each on their heads and in their arms. This is usual activity for hundreds of women living in the Thar Desert, south-eastern Pakistan's Sindh province - a drought-prone region. Thar is an infertile land of harsh weather, erratic sand mounds, a scattered population, extreme temperatures, and feeble socio-economic conditions. Women are responsible for collecting water despite long distances, sometimes up to 10 kilometers. One woman in the group, named Rashma and 22 years old, is visibly tired as her pace slows down.

Rashma has been married for seven years, and is now in her sixth pregnancy after multiple miscarriages. She is hoping and praying that this time, her pregnancy will bring the joy of parenthood to her family. Maybe this time, her child will stay alive. However, her physical conditions are not good, not even satisfactory. She was married at the age of 16, then became pregnant immediately afterwards because her family, in-laws and community pressure newly married couples, asking them for the "Good News". This is custom in most eastern societies. Rashma has become used to getting pregnant almost every year now, despite extreme poverty and acute water shortages. Water for agriculture, livestock, or human needs are all insufficient. Extreme climate shift has caused long and uneven weather patterns in this already extremely dry region.

Rashma, like most Thari women, has began to travel even further away in search of water, as nearby ponds and wells are becoming dry. Covering miles every, this has had an impact on her health and pregnancy. She feels that the drought has had a greater impact on the life of women in her community. Their lives revolve around water - they establish huts and small settlements where water ponds are situated nearby and they migrate in search of water for their animals and themselves. Their health and wealth purely depends on water. Due to multiple deliveries, malnutrition, and poverty, Rashma looks around 10 years older than her actual age.

The quality of the available water is bad, bitter, muddy and inappropriate for human consumption. Rashma observes that two of her three children died due to the bitterness of water and malnutrition, in addition to being born prematurely. Women and children are suffering directly because of climate change, as the rising number of mortality rates, anemic girls and women, malnutrition, birth of underweight and stunted kids, anemic mothers have resulted in the high levels of mother and infant deaths—the highest under five years mortality rate in all of Pakistan.

Rashma still hopes that her life will improve once the drought is over. She prays and performs different rituals in order to appease the ultimate divine power of nature. She does not know that the climate can improve with actions, not just prayers.

# MUJERES UNIDAS CONTRA LA COLONIZACION MUCHOS OJOS UN SOLO CORAZON

MARGARITA RODRIGUEZ WEWELILUKANA —COL—  
& JUMA GITIRANA TAPUYA MARRU —BRA—

A nosotras, hijas de los pueblos originarios de América Latina, la colonización siempre está desde el pasado y sigue siendo nuestro presente. La colonización se ve en la ropa que usamos, en la comida envenenada, el aire tóxico que respiramos, el agua que consumimos de los ríos contaminados, el odio que sembraron en nuestros corazones, en las diferentes maneras de violaciones a las mujeres. ¡Resistimos pues! Estamos en el pasado, presente y estaremos en el futuro hasta el fin del mundo, sosteniendo la tierra y lo poco que nos resta y que es mucho que es nuestra resistencia y persistencia en mantener nuestra cultura, nuestros muchos ojos con un solo corazón y un solo pensamiento de proteger nuestras tierras y territorios.



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# REFLEXÃO

AUTORA AUTHOR NÚRIA MARIA TRINDADE

CONTADORA DE HISTÓRIA STORY COLLECTOR EVELYN MARIE ARAUJO

Eis que faço uma proposta bem direta a você

Que tal interagir sem destruir, sem perecer

Já é hora de parar pra refletir e perceber Destruição, Racismo, Feminicídio, não dá mais pra manter

Não consigo entender o quê ainda o leva a crer

Que o seu falo lhe faz forte, lhe agrega mais poder

Infelizmente ela e eu estamos juntas no sofrer Terra e Mulher seguem  
em luta unidas a prover

Meio Ambiente, Malala, Helem e Luana ou a ativista Marielle

Em suas entranhas, sangue, carne, ou em minha própria pele

Alvos certos da maldade que persiste em ocorrer

Resistir é estratégia pra quem quer sobreviver

Talvez se eu fosse pop como diz a propaganda  
Deixaria de dizer presente pelas manas  
Desmatando, queimando, ou seja, atirando  
E no emprego do gerúndio você segue nos matando

Sei que isso não lhe atinge e para tu pouco importa  
Se a trajetória do progresso segue por vias tortas  
O importante é o lucro que o Agro gera  
Ainda que isso custe até a exosfera

O princípio é o mesmo para amebas criaturas  
Explorada, violentada, mas mantenha a postura  
O silêncio é imposto, pois é grande aliado  
E assim beneficia o velho e bom patriarcado

E disse jeito o progresso segue firme violentando Ideais ambientais,  
feministas e dos povos africanos  
A palavra é Respeito, sim senhor é o nosso lema  
Não é utópico, é possível, e eu sei que vale a pena

Para que os filhos dos seus filhos consigam compreender  
Que a Natureza e os Desamparados tem o direito de permanecer.

# MUJER COMPLEJA

## DIANA CASTRO SIHYTA

A lo largo de la historia, la necesidad de comprender la relación -Ser humano-Naturaleza- ha adquirido un papel fundamental para encontrar soluciones que permitan retomar el equilibrio ambiental. Esta “relación” no ha sido simple de analizar ya que el dinamismo del “ambiente” lo convierte en un factor complejo de entender. Colombia por ejemplo, es un país megabiodiverso con hechos históricos trascendentales, somos el país con la mayor biodiversidad del mundo y con infinidad de culturas indígenas que aún prevalecen en nuestro territorio, además contamos con cicatrices de la guerra aún recientes, son por estas razones que la idea de implementar una la ley general para todos los territorios ha fracasado por completo (Carrizosa, 2003)

Adentrarse a estudiar los temas ambientales en Colombia no es nada fácil, la necesidad de tener cierto grado de sensibilidad para percibir las causas de conflicto y plantear soluciones acertadas resulta fundamental. Pero, al parecer esto no ha sido primordial para nuestros gobernantes, nada más falta dar un vistazo a la situación ambiental actual, donde la mayoría de políticas ambientales implementadas son copia pura del extranjero.

Tal como lo enuncian varios autores académicos el estudio de los sistemas complejos, requiere sujetos complejos, y pues bien la mujer representa una mente compleja, ya que una de las múltiples formas que se describe a la mujer es “compleja”, por años muchas de nosotras hemos

negado esta denotación porque se ha convertido en una característica que hace parte de nuestras “debilidades”. Pero qué pasaría, ¿si no la negáramos? ¿Y si la llegáramos a aceptar como una capacidad indispensable para entrar al mundo del pensamiento complejo, la cual nos permita entender los conflictos ambientales de nuestro territorio y tomar decisiones certeras que ayuden a la madre tierra? ¿Y si al aceptar nuestra complejidad nos conectará.

Ahora bien, existen muchas analogías de la mujer con la madre tierra y nuestro trabajo territorial como organización nos ha demostrado que efectivamente las mujeres poseemos ese grado de sensibilidad, poseemos esa sutileza y un amor especial por el cuidar de la tierra, tal como lo define el ecofeminismo, somos las llamadas a ser cuidadoras de la tierra y enfrentar la lucha contra el patriarcado capitalista que tanto daño le ha hecho al planeta (Shiva, 1993)

Lastimosamente, la mayoría de los teóricos que se adentran a este campo de estudio son hombres, realmente son pocas las mujeres que se atreven a incursionar en este tipo de investigaciones, de por sí, las mujeres tienen cierto sesgo con el estudio de la “ciencia”, una investigación realizada por el instituto estadístico de la UNESCO reveló que sólo el 28% de los puestos científicos de investigadores son ocupados por mujeres. (Unesco, 2017)

Si bien, la brechas para que las mujeres puedan acceder a la ciencia han disminuido en un gran porcentaje, aún prevalece el miedo de la mujer de incursionar en este campo cientos de años de discriminación y violencia han provocado una ola de baja autoestima que imposibilita la capacidad de reconocer nuestro verdadero poder.

Este escrito no niega la oportunidad a los hombres de entrar en el área ambiental, es más un elogio a la mujer compleja, es una extensa invitación a que se sumerjan en el estudio de la complejidad ambiental, invita, a que sean conscientes que somos mentes únicas y que con nuestras grandes capacidades aún inimaginables podemos contribuir al desarrollo de nuevas disciplinas para la administración ambiental de nuestros territorios que tanto lo necesitan, es un llamado de SOS de madre tierra.

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Heith





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# MÜNIVER NECLA UND OVULA NACH ALEMANYA GERMANY LIVIANA BATH

Dein Körper ist deine beste Freu-  
ndin

ich erschöpfe mich nicht mehr  
das gute Leben zu jeder Zeit

Ich kann nicht dafür einstehen  
den Wandel körperlich zu ers-  
püren

ohne es selber zu leben.

Ich bin über diesen Punkt hinaus,  
dass ich zurück konnte.

Ich weiß jetzt was auf der ande-  
ren Seite ist.

Ich habe mir die Treue geschwo-  
ren,  
ich kann nicht mehr zurüc

Your body is your best friend

I am not exhausting myself any-  
more

the good life is all the time

I can't vouch for that anymore  
to feel the change in my body  
without living it by myself

I overcame the point,  
that I can go back  
Now I know what is on the other  
side.

I swore loyalty to myself.  
Now I can't go back anymore.



# RECUPERANDO LA SIMBIOSIS CON LA MADRE TIERRA

## MERCEDES ESCOBEDO MESTIZA MAYA AGROECOFEMINISTA

La vida en la tierra ha sido una historia de interminables interacciones entre seres vivos y su ambiente. Cada componente cumple su función y con ello logra beneficiar a otros, como a sí mismo. A estas interacciones complejas y complementarias se les conoce como simbiosis. Un ejemplo de una relación simbiótica sería la que existe entre los zompopos\* y los bosques. Los zompopos son considerados los podadores naturales pues recortan las copas frondosas de árboles y arbustos, permitiendo que otras plantas reciban luz y puedan desarrollarse; así mismo, las especies podadas retoñan con el tiempo, renovado sus hojas y estimuladas por ese mismo corte, mejoran su crecimiento.

Con la materia verde recolectada, los zompopos realizan el cultivo de hongos que les sirve como alimento. Finalmente estos grandes jardines subterráneos se convierten en aboneras que proporcionan a las plantas de la superficie los nutrientes necesarios para desarrollarse. La relación simbiótica en este caso se da en el momento que el zompopo al buscar su beneficio (alimento), ayuda al bosque a desarrollarse y crecer. Muchas de estas relaciones simbióticas son indispensables para dar continuidad a la vida, infinitud de plantas y animales han coexistido durante siglos sin alterar significativamente su ambiente y beneficiándose unas con otras.

Sin embargo una especie logró interrumpir este equilibrio, la huma-

na. A lo largo de la historia la humanidad ha logrado vivir en la tierra adaptándose a su entorno y beneficiándose de él sin causar mayor impacto, hasta que en los últimos siglos y más aún en los últimos 25 años, desarrolló la capacidad de modificar el ambiente a su conveniencia, utilizando la alimentación como una de las principales excusas. La agricultura es y debe ser una relación simbiótica entre plantas, animales y los elementos básicos de la vida, donde -mediante diferentes técnicas- se realice la siembra y cosecha de alimentos. Dejando este concepto de lado, la humanidad pasó de una agricultura natural para la vida y la alimentación, a una agricultura intensiva-extensiva monocultivista para el mercado y la generación de ingresos, olvidando el papel simbiótico de la humanidad con la naturaleza.

¿Cómo logramos recuperar esa relación simbiótica con la naturaleza?

Inicialmente se hace necesario reconocer que la humanidad ha creado distintos sistemas de opresión con los que somete no sólo a su especie, si no que a la naturaleza entera. Entendiendo lo anterior, se debe de trabajar para lograr emancipar los cuerpos humanos (principalmente de las mujeres y de los pueblos) en conjunto con el de la Madre Tierra, al igual como lo harían los sistemas naturales. Por ejemplo: en la naturaleza un suelo erosionado (violentado por la agricultura intensiva o condiciones climáticas), necesita de cinco a diez años en promedio para recuperar su vida. Esto puede lograrse mediante la incorporación de materia orgánica y de otros elementos (minerales, agua, etc.), este proceso puede darse de forma natural pues las plantas y animales (como en el ejemplo de los zompopos) pueden encargarse de la incorporación de la materia orgánica al suelo, devolviéndole la vida. La emancipación humana y de las mujeres, al igual que en los sistemas naturales, se logra con la recuperación de las relaciones simbióticas de la humanidad con la humanidad y de la humanidad con la naturaleza.

Se hace necesaria la creación de colectividades para sanar nuestros cuerpos y conformar redes de cuidado, diversas y armoniosas, donde se realice la simbiosis natural que corresponde, coexistiendo y recuperando la relación con la naturaleza, esa es la propuesta Agroecofeminista. A lo largo de seis años he tenido la oportunidad de conocer territorios donde las mujeres están trabajando para emancipar sus cuerpos y con los suyos, el de la Madre Tierra. Mujeres en Sayaxché, Petén; Raxuhá, Alta Verapaz; Sololá; Chuarancho, Guatemala; Sacatepéquez; Chiapas, México y recientemente en la Zona Reina, Quiché, donde en una relación simbiótica, hemos recordado y creado técnicas para la siembra de alimentos en huertos orgánicos que garanticen la alimentación de las familias sin dañar el ambiente; la crianza de animales (gallinas, vacas, patos, cabras, etc.) cuidando y procurando su vida digna

(simbiosis de la alimentación). Y con mucha dificultad y obstáculos, día con día, se pretende mejorar las relaciones familiares, principalmente entre mujeres y hombres, donde el trabajo de cuidado se realice de forma colectiva y no recaiga en una sola persona. Esta es quizás la simbiosis más difícil de recuperar, pero no imposible.

La propuesta Agroecofeminista no tiene receta ni guía, es una forma de emancipación en construcción que retoma el papel natural de la humanidad, recordando la simbiosis que se hacía con la naturaleza.

\*Zompopos: pertenecientes al género Atta de hormigas americanas de la subfamilia Myrmicinae. Se caracterizan por ser de gran tamaño y vivir en grandes colonias de hasta un millón de individuos, son conocidas como hormigas cortadoras pues recorren grandes distancias para cortar y cargar hojas hasta sus nidales. En Territorio Mesoamericano se les conoce como Zompopos, Chicatana, Nocú y sus nidales conocidos como Zompoperas.

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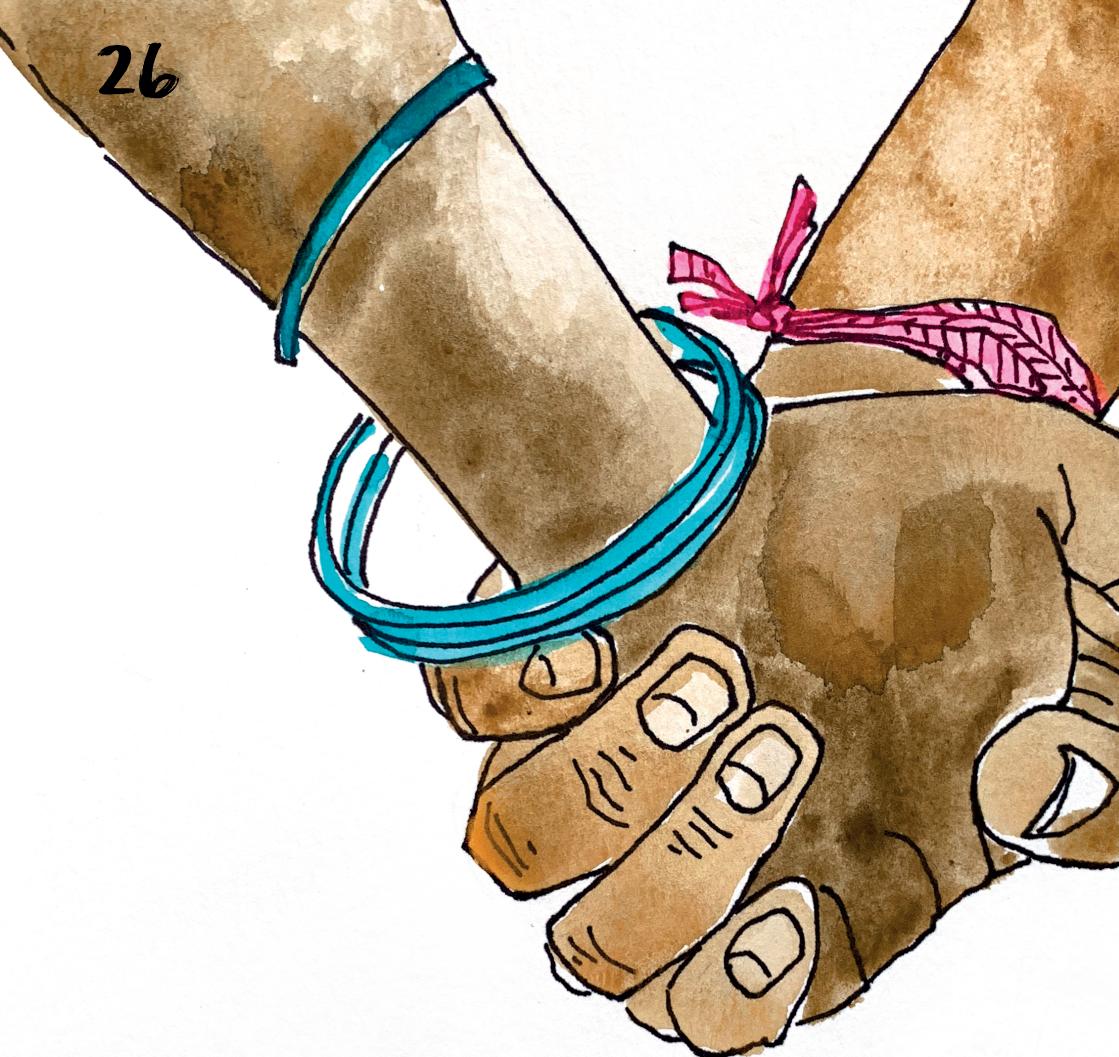
Mercedes es miembro de:

**Colectivo Rochoch Tz'unun (Casa Colibrí)** una granja agroecológica feminista en Sacatepéquez, Guatemala.

**AFEDES (Asociación femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez)** - asociación de mujeres indígenas del Departamento de Sacatepéquez en Guatemala, que trabaja para la soberanía alimentaria, derechos de las mujeres y la dignidad de las mujeres tejedoras, que resisten, sembrando sus alimentos y tejiendo su propia ropa para combatir los efectos del cambio climático y conservar las culturas. AFEDES inició un proceso de resguardo de los tejidos mayas en Guatemala frente a las empresas de moda que se apropiaron de sus diseños y tejidos.

Activista del **Colectivo Ecologista Madreselva** que trabaja con comunidades del departamento del Quiché y de otras comunidades, construyendo alternativas principalmente la energética con hidroeléctricas comunitarias frente al modelo extractivista que se ha impuesto en Guatemala, también como alternativa de soberanía para las comunidades como para combatir los efectos del cambio climático. Enlaces: <http://madreselva.org.gt/>

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# CULTIVATING STRONG ROOTS

## MY JOURNEY UNDERSTANDING CARE BELLE WILLIAMS

I have never had a healthy relationship with self care. My discomfort with self care has affected various aspects of my life; I have always felt a disconnect from my surrounding spaces and even my own body. I felt--and, at times, still feel--guilt for taking care of myself, even in the most rudimentary ways.

This sense of guilt that I have around self care has come from what feels like every aspect of my life. Having grown up in a conservative Protestant environment, I was fed lesson after lesson--both directly and indirectly--that feminine self care is a selfish and conceited indulgence. "Your body is a temple," they would say. With girls and women, this Christian principle never talked about the connection with one's own body, respect and care for one's physical, emotional, and spiritual self; or expectations that we should have for others' treatment of our bodies. Instead, this idea of body-as-a-temple was used to elicit guilt, fear, and remorse because it taught principles of sexual preservation and physical modesty.

As I grew older and became more involved in advocacy work and social justice, I made a conscious effort to untrain my mind to think about myself, my body, and other women in this rigid and oppressive way. However, something convinced me that basic self care was an unearned indulgence. Without realizing, I let a new source of guilt in taking care of myself creep into my thought pattern. I felt guilty taking any amount of time for myself. Over and over

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again, I would think to myself; “Who is [insert showering, sleeping, eating a full meal] going to help long-term?” and “If I had all the time in the world, I still wouldn’t be able to tackle half of the injustices that I need to. How can I know that and waste this precious time by serving no one other than myself?” I became overwhelmed with all of the injustices I saw around the world and in my local communities. I convinced myself that there was no time to take care of myself or do things just for my own enjoyment. I not only stopped fulfilling the needs of my physical self, I also stopped all of the things that enriched the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual spheres of my person; I quit making art, writing, reading, and spending time with the natural world around me.

These are two of the major pressures that have obscured my path toward leading a healthy mental and physical existence. Without these pressures, though, I would not associate such rich meaning with the idea of holistic self care.

Today, I am try to use both of these seemingly negative forces of guilt and self-denial to explore the depth of meaning embedded in the term “self care.” I am redefining the deeply-seated belief that my body is a temple in a way that does not instill fear, but rather empowers me by realizing the vast complexity and power that my body contains and creates. Additionally, instead of letting guilt convince me that I am wasting the world’s time by taking care of myself, I now see self care as a form of activism. A quotation by Mary Mellor has helped me reach this realization; she states that there is “a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women.” By denying myself care for my physical, emotional, and mental self, I violate my own basic rights and the natural world that is so intimately intertwined with my own person. I now view self and community care as ways of cultivating strong roots for future generations of young feminist activists seeking to protect their own bodies and the natural sanctuary around them.

# CUIDARNOS

## ALBA CRESPO RUBIO

A nosotras, a las otras. Tenernos en cuenta, tenernos en cuidado. Saber quiénes somos y dónde, saber qué y porqué hacemos, y saber cuándo pedir ayuda, apoyo, amor. Sobretodo saber ofrecer y dar, a montones. Cuando podamos y cuando queramos.

Vivir y ser consciente de ello es complicado. Es más fácil que todo pase por nuestro lado, veloz, y que miremos cómo pasa, se para y se va (o no). Lo que cuesta es agarrarte a eso y analizarlo, decepcionarte, enfadarte, indignarte, querer cambiarlo. Transformar la realidad. Ilusionarte, emocionarte, querer formar parte de ello. Porque cuando te implicas intensamente, los golpes son más intensos, las heridas más profundas, pero las alegrías, las sonrisas, también.

Necesitamos un lugar donde aterrizar. Un suelo suave y acogedor bajo nuestros pies, que nos recoja al final del día, al final de la lucha (o entre lucha y lucha cotidianas). Y este está hecho de brazos y manos, de vientres, de sexos, de orejas de oídos, de labios. No hace falta que sean muchas, sino cercanas. Necesitamos cuidarnos, mucho, las unas a las otras, para seguir.

**Represión.** El amigo, la compañera, que un día detuvieron en una marcha donde gritábamos para que no desalojaran un espacio okupado en el barrio, un espacio de convivencia, de resistencia. Todas corríamos delante de policías militarizados hasta los dientes, que nos perseguían, creyéndonos (gritándonos) criminales. Cuando nuestras armas no eran más que la conciencia, el saberlos libres, y la firme decisión de no dejar que nos tomaran todo eso que habíamos construido juntas. Nos atacaban, nos golpeaban, como animales. Eran ellos los ejecutores del sistema criminal.

El amigo detenido, en riesgo de expulsión del país porque no tenía papeles: las compañeras que no dormimos buscando documentos, escribiendo y firmando declaraciones de “buena conducta”, que fuimos al día siguiente a la ciudad de la justicia, y estuvimos allá de pie juntamente con otras compañeras que también tenían alguien ahí dentro, que lloramos cuando salió, mientras nos abrazábamos. Y digo compañeras, porque había compañeros, pero la mayoría éramos compañeras.

**La militancia.** Asambleas, reuniones, encuentros para “tomar un café”, debates fuera de horas. Salir frustrada, triste. Sintiendo que no llegasteis a ninguna parte, o al menos, no allá donde decíais que nos llevaba la organización. Parece que me afecta más que a él, todo esto. ¿Por qué llega un punto en que no puedo más? ¿Por qué aguento hasta entonces para buscar los brazos de alguien entre los cuales deshacerme? Miro a mi alrededor, y él resta imposible. Frío, duro, parece que sabe qué hacer y cómo hacerlo. Yo dudo, me desespero para encontrar otras vías, soluciones, alternativas. Busco aprobación, consensos, puntos para hacerlo cómodo para todas. Muchas veces choco con paredes con pene que siempre tienen una idea mejor. Querer decir lo que piensas y hacerte pequeña. Hacerte grande, y decirlo, pero que todo sean gritos, y se te ponga en duda. No saber cómo hacerlo. Y lo haces, lo hacéis, y sale bien. Pequeñas victorias que hace falta celebrar. Pero que nos han costado la piel, y las fuerzas. La necesaria cerveza (o cervezas) de después, que cura y hace estrechos los lazos va bien para continuar caminando al día siguiente. A veces, pero, hace falta más. Hace falta una reconstrucción total del tejido epitelial que nos prepare para afrontar juntas la siguiente batalla.

**El amor mal entendido.** Nadie nos había enseñado esto, que el amor no era lo que nos habían contado. Me encuentro desamparada ante cosas que no esperaba. Busco entre lo que creo que sé y no encuentro cómo salir de ahí: ¿qué hago si sé que no puedo, ni me gusta, retener a alguien a mi lado, si lo que creímos las dos es que nos queríramos para siempre? No quiero ahogarme, prefiero descubrir que amar no es sufrir, no es esconder, no es huir de la capacidad de sentir amor por más de una persona, con más de una persona, y de maneras distintas. Aunque cueste romper muros, sobre todo los que yo misma he ido construyendo. Seremos nosotras las que tendremos que rehacer el camino del amor, abriendo puertas y ensanchando los ojos y los corazones. Dándonos cuenta dónde nos sentimos inseguras, y poner parches que con el tiempo y la práctica serán parte de nosotras. Huir de roles, de dominios, de pertenencias y hacernos unas relaciones a medida, de las que podamos decidir en todo momento el rumbo y la tripulación.

Hemos sentido siempre que lo personal era privado, nos lo teníamos que comer solas. ¿A quién le interesa lo que sientes? ¿Qué te importa la vida de las demás? Nunca más tiene que ser así. No es nuestra culpa, no son temas íntimos: tienen que ver con aquello que nos rodea, cómo nos relacionamos con ello, cómo se nos impone la cotidianidad, un uso del tiempo para que no podamos compartirlo, hacerlo común, para evitar que socialicemos nuestras particularidades.

Cuidarnos es aquello que nos mantiene vivas y fuertes, que nos hace más fácil salir y devorar la calle, la ciudad, el mundo; sobrevivir, a veces; superar derrotas, duelos, contradicciones, convertirlas en experiencias de resiliencia. Luchar y transformar. Somos personas, por mucho que a menudo lo escondan, nos lo escondan, lo escondemos. Y como somos reales, frágiles, tenemos que hacer de los cuidados la base y el centro de todo. Querernos a nosotras mismas, querer, dejarnos querer. Y claro está, no querer a quien nos hace daño, expulsar aquello que nos destruye o nos impide construir, combatir a quién se oponga a que sigamos pensando que esta manera de caminar es posible.

**Ser felices o intentarlo con todas nuestras fuerzas.**

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# TEACHING CARE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

## THOKOZANI AMANDA CHIMASULA MALAWI

She wants to be different in her approach. She understands that hatred, discrimination and abuse for women stems from childhood. She knows girls have been made to believe that they are subjects to their male counterparts at such a tender age, and so they are incompetent to do what boys can do. She has come to realize that of the so many consequences of climate change, girls are more susceptible to vulnerabilities, and their society regulates what's good for them divergent from what they would want.

Being a young woman in a similar situation, Guiness Muliya feels that targeting the very young girls is important, as many interventions on climate justice have focused more on the larger group of people. Living in that community where these girls are, she is among the few that made her way to the university where she studied a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Extension. She is determined to prepare the young girl at that age so that she is empowered enough to know her rights and what she can do to attain climate justice. She loathes seeing girls climbing hills and mountains in search of firewood, while boys are at home waiting for the very same girl to come back home, fix their breakfast and then go to school.

Her clock analysis of what a girl child has to go through every day

in her life, informs her that the girl is so subjected to different abuses and violations from day break through dusk. She detests this so much, that she decided to work with school girls so that they no more jump classes just to access firewood, a responsibility that has been placed on them just for being female.

Because firewood is the only dependable source of energy for many communities in Malawi, many women and girls have been made punching bags to carry this responsibility amidst many challenges. Guiness wants to help rewrite the stories of the innocent girls who she foresees their dreams are soon going to be curtailed because society is demanding that they stay at home. Looking at the many situations in most rural areas, she works with primary schools in Mitundu to mentor and motivate the girls in climate justice work. Currently she has empowered girls and engaged communities to plant fruit trees in schools for the benefit of the school girls. With many girls not focused on their studies, the idea is that with the fruit trees, they can be able to pick the dropped firewood pieces for a day as they go back home and that this will no longer be the duty of a girl child but a boy child too.

With the same notion, she believes that the more fruit trees to be planted, the more the girls will have access to nutritious fruits that will sustain them in times of need and hunger. As she also mobilizes mothers to elect their fruit tree homesteads, she believes that the fruits can be sold to generate income for their households that will enable the girls to be well-fed and taken care of. The idea is to generate a social-enterprise for the girls' needs to be sustained in the face of climate change.

She thinks the bottom line to counter the effects of climate change lies on the strength of both self and collective care. She says: "I first had the desire to act on addressing climate change issues for the benefit of that poor and vulnerable rural Malawian school girl. That was my drive and I am wholeheartedly sustaining it. But I realized I could not make this work had I not involved other willing young feminists. I had to join my efforts with those of other willing individuals so that together we can positively and largely impact on climate change. I had to involve the young girls themselves so that we collectively care for the

environment".

However in collective care Guiness has encountered challenges where it has been difficult for her to mobilize other people to join her great efforts especially where incentives are not provided. As is a tendency, people usually expect to get refreshments or lunch allowances. Again, it was hard for people to believe in her efforts the first instance. **This is because most people in her community have grown up to believe that solutions have to come from outside and not from among themselves.** And being a young woman made it worse; coming from that patriarchal society.

She has thoughts to include digital care in her work. With her colleagues, they are developing content to be uploaded on their website that is yet to be developed. She is eager to have this up and running because she desires to have her initiative known across the world so that it is appreciated and where possible replicated in other countries as a way of sustaining it towards addressing climate change. That, she hopes will also be a learning platform for her to refine her strategy so that it is sustainable enough. The challenge however is that, it is not easy to mobilize her own resources for her initiative, but she is trying her best and eventually will get there.



# WHEN I THINK OF THE EARTH

ELENA HIGHT

When I think of the earth, I think of my body. Its curves, its peaks, its soft wet soil, its hard parched surface. My stomach, which still holds the refuse from my dinner. Artichokes from Italy, sun-dried tomatoes from California, avocados from Mexico. I used to think that only a dozen or so hands had touched the undulating surface of my abdomen, but the trace of a million hands can be found on every inch of my skin. Hands calloused and cracking from years of working with the dirt. Hands that are nimble and aching from threading a sewing machine. Hands that package or pick or heal. Hands without which I would be unable to stand. Hands that support me, constantly.

But hands are also weapons. They build and make and steal and hit and push. They dig into tired mountains who safely hid their goods for millennia but gave way to clawing machines and well-laid plans. Now parts of Appalachia look like my stomach too--carved, raw, and scarred. I look at the mountain, now missing its face, and I whisper, "They did that to me too."

When I was young, only 15, hands of destruction, white hands, the hands of a Christian man, also picked out goods from my insides that weren't theirs to take. They destroyed you in order to produce energy; they destroyed me in order to take all my energy away. I, maybe like you, threatened them.



My exterior hid the secrets of my body. The XY chromosomes. The internal testes. The vaginal canal that was too short for them to penetrate. My unwitting deception scared them. Like you, I had a deep source of power that could be used to build or destroy, and they, those hands, wanted to keep that power for themselves. I'm so so sorry. That power was never theirs to take.

But even as I type this, I doubt my words. I am working on a computer produced by a company that has poisoned water and workers. Whose brightly lit screen draws from the energy of your dark insides. Even as I type this, I wonder if my anger is justified at what those doctors did to me, without my consent. Did they think what they were doing was right? If they had not carved me up, would I be who I am today? I don't know.

But I remind myself that, that is the binary talking. Both can be true as can neither. The answer may be, like my body, like yours too, riddled with beautiful and horrifying crevices and contradictions. Contradictions and crevices into which we can pour our love. Our love. Earth, I promise I will remember how similar our bodies are, and I will remember how much violence my hands are capable of.

# TAKING CARE OF OTHERS BY TAKING CARE OF MY SELF

## LESLIE ARREAZA

"Look who that is!" the man said to me. I stared, confused, because I had no idea who he was talking about. "Papi!" my older brother exclaimed, and I realized who the man was pointing at.

I was three years old when my father left Guatemala, and four years old when my mother left. Years later when I was told I would see my parents again, I was confused; my grandparents were all I could remember. All I knew about my parents was what my older brother said about them, but I didn't even know what they looked like. Coming to the United States was his dream, but mine was to stay where I was - with my family.

Migrating to the United States was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. Learning English, the culture, making new friends, being away from my family - it was too much for me to handle. Yet the hardest part was having to reinvent who I was as a daughter, a sister, a friend and a girl. Learning to navigate a new society where I was not welcome and live in a land away from everyone I knew changed me.

I grew up knowing that if I made the smallest of mistakes, I could be deported. I had to keep everything to myself because I was told to trust no one. My identity revolved completely around seeming like the perfect American girl. I was not allowed to talk about my family or my home in Guatemala. I was not allowed to talk about what I loved to do, or who I wanted to

become. I had to get straight A's and be the best at everything I did so that Americans would not hate me.

I began to advocate for immigrant rights out of anger and fear. At first, it was easy to stay engaged and motivated because the injustice of being a "good immigrant" was still fresh in my mind. That wore out fast. I began to go on a downhill spiral and it happened so fast that I didn't even realize. I let all the comments on media and attitudes towards what I was doing get to me.

I wasn't taking care of myself and I crashed.

When I felt tired, I told myself, y friends and family couldn't take a break from being mistreated so why should I take a break from fighting for them? It was so bad that my professors and colleagues noticed. My manager sat me down and he reminded me that I couldn't take care of anyone else if I didn't take care of myself first. At the time, I thought about how silly that sounded. I didn't need care, I needed results. But one day, after breaking down in front of my roommates, I finally realized how bad I had let things get.

It has been months since I have been making time for myself. I began writing, running, and dancing again. I take time to shut down, and sometimes I even skip out on rallies and advocacy events. It was hard not to feel guilty about this at first, but self-care is important in advocacy work. As I begin to feel better emotionally,

I have noticed how my energy impacts those around me, and I now understand how much taking care of myself impacts taking care of others. I can help my community in many ways, but if I am not emotionally present and ready to fight, there is not much I can do.

# REBELARNOS A LA TECNOLOGÍA

## ANAMHOO Y BRUJA MIGRANTE COLECTIVO ADA

Existen muchas formas de pensar en la seguridad digital dentro de nuestras resistencias que se ligan al cuidado. Pensamos que la práctica de la seguridad digital nos permite protegernos en comunidad. Sin embargo, creemos que es importante contextualizarla en un ámbito más amplio que tiene que ver con pensar su función en un sistema capitalista patriarcal. Nuestra convicción es que hay espacios digitales que son territorios en disputa. Si reducimos la seguridad digital al ámbito de la protección de la información, corremos el riesgo de caer en el discurso que el sistema mismo nos impone. Cada mañana solemos despertar contentas y buscar la luz por las noches muchas veces antes de dormir, pasa por nuestra mente que lo más complicado en este sistema no es mantener la esperanza, sino la cordura.

Pensamos así porque llevamos 13 años trabajando con la colectiva ADA, pero también por la experiencia al compartir mi hacer con la tecnología en otras colectivididades, especialmente en Seguridad Digital. Hemos podido conocer gente, comunidades y procesos que no solo permiten sentir la resistencia que existe ante lo que Mira Navarro llama “múltiples despojos”, sino que además nos muestra la solidaridad, la convicción por defender este entra-

mado que es la vida y la construcción cotidiana de otras formas que logran no someterse al capitalismo patriarcal.

Así que he tenido la fortuna de ver la esperanza en muchos lugares y formas, pero mantener la cordura es a veces complicado porque una de las formas que adopta este sistema es el de un absolutismo en el que piensas que nada de eso que has visto es real. Comienzas a sentir una mente esquizofrénica. Por otra parte siembra la semilla de horror con tanta violencia y entonces comienzas a vivir en la desconfianza permanente, en la alerta del peligro, en solitario.

Entre estos dos procesos contradictorios, el del capital que fragmenta, despoja, subsume a los seres vivos a ciclos de explotación, y el opuesto, en el que se defiende la vida en las múltiples dimensiones y considerando su interdependencia, vemos batallas en territorios específicos, uno de ellos en las tecnologías de información y comunicación (TIC). Sin tener aún planteamientos claros desde la defensa personal feminista (o autodefensa feminista como decimos por México) queremos compartir algunas ideas generales para pensar la tecnología, en especial las TIC:

- 1) Necesitamos re pensar la tecnología, reconocerla en nuestros procesos evolutivos y reclamarla desde nuestros conocimientos ancestrales y necesidades y decidir construirla desde nosotras. En el camino de construir tecnologías liberadas basadas en otros principios como el de la reciprocidad, la libertad, el respeto de ecosistemas, al usar las tecnologías comerciales búsquemos hacerlo de otros modos (<https://is.gd/c6ZOrx>).
- 2) Reconocer que en la tecnología actual, en particular las TIC, hay dos procesos que fácilmente reconocemos como parte de la explotación, el de la naturaleza y el de los seres humanos que la producen.
- 3) Reconocer un elemento de explotación que no siempre es tangible, la “explotación de los/las usuarias”. En los servicios comerciales las personas hemos

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quedado relegadas a ser usuarias con muy pocas posibilidades creativas, nos venden productos y servicios y aprovechan de nuestros datos vendiéndolos y manipulándonos.

4) Ser conscientes de la posibilidad de vigilancia y censura que hay al usar la mayoría de los servicios comerciales de las TIC. Por ejemplo bloqueo de sitios web, interceptación de mensajes, corta disponibilidad. La comunicación siempre es con otros y otras así que introducir la seguridad digital es en el fondo una forma recíproca de cuidado.

5) Determinar el grado de pérdida de autonomía sobre nuestra información al usarlas <https://donestech.net/noticia/donestech-y-amigxs-presentan-redes-sociales-en-perspectiva-de-genero-guia-para-conocer-y>.

6) Recordar que las TIC en el sistema capitalista patriarcal están hechas para enajenar, entonces ser consciente de cómo influyen en nuestro autocuidado, si están generando dependencia, si nos alterna por su immediatez, si nos hacen perder perspectiva al encerrarnos en círculos de personas pre-determinados, si nos exponen a la violencia. (<https://www.ritimo.org/IMG/pdf/sobtech2-es-with-covers-web-150dpi-2018-01-13-v2.pdf> pág 55 y <https://is.gd/QOjJPf>, )

Es importante repensarnos desde Abya Yala lo que significa la seguridad digital y leerla desde nuestras propias claves. Creemos que desde nuestros múltiples feminismos tenemos que pensar cómo queremos habitar ese centro comercial que actualmente es el internet para no ser golpeadas por su violencia y lograr comunicarnos de forma confidencial. Tenemos que pensar en cómo logramos autonomía en las TIC como parte de este defender nuestras vidas.

Solidaridad, reciprocidad, autogestión.

# EN NOSOTRAS

## MAYTIK AVIRAMA

Tanta belleza y tanto dolor  
Tanto amor y tanto cuidado  
Tanta cicatriz en tanta historia  
Tanto por decir y tanto silencio  
Tanto ruido y tanto silencio

Tanto por entender  
por aprender  
por honrar

Tanto duelo pendiente  
Tantos nacimientos  
Tanta alegría en tanto miedo  
Tanto y tan rápido

Tanta vida,

tanta vida,

tanta vida.

He llegado al cuidado por una sensación que creía imposible. Es paradójica, entendible y a la vez intrigante: por momentos me aterra la vida. Soy activista ambiental, ecóloga humana, aprendiz de partera, y aprendiz de medicina tradicional china. Amo el agua, las plantas, los niños, las mujeres. Gran parte de lo que hago en mi día a día está relacionado con un servicio hacia la vida, con ideales de lucha contra un sistema que nos asesina y desangra. Y aún así, hay momentos en que tanta destrucción y tanto caos me sobrepasa. Hay momentos en que tanta muerte afuera se siente adentro, momentos en los que todo lo que hago me parece como direccionar una gota de agua lluvia al mar, momentos de desilusión y duda.

He llegado al cuidado porque afirma la vida de una manera que a veces la lucha y la racionalidad no alcanzan. Porque logra tejer la resistencia con la creación, el dolor con el goce, la experiencia con el saber. Porque por pensar en lo global abandoné lo local, porque pensando en la tierra me olvidé que soy parte de ella. Porque necesitaba recordar y recordarme, recordar el sentido de mi hacer.

Al recordarme he entendido que soy parte de la red de la vida y que mi salud y bienestar son tan importantes como las de todas las otras formas de vida que admiro y valoro. También he entendido que la tierra herida es la humanidad herida y que tengo que honrar ese dolor colectivo, ese dolor que también es mío y que también es nuestro. He empezado a hacer el duelo por las luchas antiguas, por tanto sufrimiento que carga la historia que nos sucede. He empezado a

liberarme de tantos deberes auto-impuestos y culpas heredadas. He empezado a celebrar mis vínculos. Y lo más importante de todo este proceso: me he recordado mujer.

Empecé reconociendo mis ciclos, entendiendo las diferentes facetas de la luna y cómo se conectan con mis propias facetas hormonales. Resignificar mi menstruación y mi capacidad de limpiarme y procesar la vida a través de mis ciclos me ha fortalecido para reconectarme con mi cuerpo y emanciparme en mis ritmos. Seguí por la historia familiar, recogiendo las historias de mi mamá y mis abuelas, mis tíos y primas, celebrándolas y aprendiendo a comprenderlas sin juicios, sin dolores. Poco a poco he ido extendiendo mi interés de lo personal a lo colectivo. Haciendo círculos de mujeres donde nos reconocemos espejo y nos acompañamos en nuestros procesos, haciendo menjurjes\* con plantas medicinales para el cuidado del cuerpo y llevándolos a espacios auto-gestionados por mujeres, aprendiendo partería para celebrar y acompañar nuestra capacidad de traer vida al mundo. Es en estos ámbitos que la cultura del cuidado hace una diferencia fundamental en la construcción de cambio social: tejiéndonos desde la celebración de los vínculos y el goce amoroso de la vida (propia y colectiva) logramos recrearnos fuertes y unidos en un planeta que es en esencia femenino porque crea la vida, la nutre y la sostiene.

\*Menjurjes: una preparación, pócima, cocción. Puede ser de plantas, sustancias, emociones, pensamientos.

### **TierrActiva Colombia**

<https://www.facebook.com/tierraactivacolombia> - colectivo y red de jóvenes trabajando por un cambio sistémico, no climático en Colombia por medio de metodologías alternativas de construcción de paz territorial.

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# KAISO WOMENS SHELTER

## MMABATHO MOTSAMAI

On the eastern shores of Lake Albert in the heart of Africa lies Kaiso, a small village in Uganda's oil hub, Hoima District. In this village, some people work tirelessly to advance the autonomy of young women. This is the Kaiso young women's group. Boasting sixty members, forty women and twenty men, the group works to advance the rights of young women amidst challenges related to the oil industrial development. The group primarily focuses on increasing knowledge on diverse environmental and gender issues in and beyond its community.

Since 2012, the group has contributed towards the improvement of income for young women in Kaiso through resource mobilization, sensitization, and training. There are certainly challenges in Kaiso, however. Speaking to Sylvia Kemigisha, the main coordinator of Kaiso women's shelter, she shared that young married women who want to become part of the movement face the challenge of their husbands refusing them to attend group meetings. Additionally, there is a high level of illiteracy among women in the community, as well as apathy. The group further finds government engagement a rocky process, as bureaucratic processes constantly require permission from the government to carry out tasks.

However, Kemigisha shared that these are hurdles that the group has been able to mitigate. The inclusion of men in the space has allowed more understanding and empathy towards young women has created easier ways of working for the group. While external challenges remain a challenge, there is strong consideration for self-care within the group. Kemigisha believes in the ideology of good feeding. "Being a fishing community, we encourage our members not to sell all the fish so that we preserve our source of food," she says, further adding that the women in the group are also engaged in growing nutritious vitamins

Kaiso women's group also hosts music and drama performances to help the community relax their minds after stressful days. "Through our work, we want all our homes to be food and energy self-sufficient. We want women's efforts to be recognised and supported. This is already beginning to happen in our community." Kaiso women's group proves that the nurturing of the body through good nutrition and supporting the arts contributes to self-healing and self-care – benefiting the community at large.





# CLOWN ME IN ACTIVISM AND SELF CARE IN A RED NOSE!

## SALLY SOURAYA

To start a conversation about self-care with a group of clowns is an easy pie. Neither an introduction to the topic nor prompting questions are needed. The conversation emerges naturally from what they do in their daily practice and interweaves between self-care and activism. The story of 'Clown Me In' group flows from one red nose to another in a very well-articulated narrative of activism and humour. Where environment and social justice are at the heart of what this group does in Lebanon, all of 'Clown Me In' activism roads seem to lead to a wide definition of what self-care is. Self-care is an inspiration that supports their activism to get to the right cause in the right way. While 'laughing' might be a short 'cliché' answer to the daily life of these clowns, a more in-depth interpretations of these themes is explored with four women from the group: Sabine, Dima, Sara, and Layal.

### **When there is a protest, there are clowns**

Over the last years, 'Clown Me In' has been constantly brainstorming holding an urgency to act. From ideas to actions, their key word is "Let's do it!". As clown activists, their energy has no limits and their sense of responsibility to act is never held back from responding over again to what is "happening", or more precisely "not happening", regarding the irresponsible disposal of garbage in Lebanon. Facing an ongoing battle against the trash crisis, 'Clown Me In' joined forces with other movements to call for solutions to social and environmental injustices. With humour being their weapon, they

created video series and organised several ‘Clown Attacks’ as street interventions. They were present in all the protests against the crisis. When there is a protest, there are clowns. This became an equivalent of ‘when there is a will, there’s way’. Clowning was the way to tell the truth with a good dose of humour, transforming the energy of protests from drama to laughter and positive support.

### **Everyone wins!**

For clowning to take such direction, there is a recipe of both activism and self-care that the clowns follow. It is not only about getting their laughter out, but also their anger. Sabine shares the experience of the group and how anger has been the main ingredient that led them to raise awareness on environment: “We got really really angry about what is happening in the garbage crisis, especially with the loss of people’s interest in actually doing something about it. We instantly started coming up with ideas to clown around it. That’s our tool and it’s a fun one, meaning everyone wins! We win because we do something fun and turn disastrous situations into something funny. We see them from a different angle, we take our anger to a more fun and positive path. Whoever is watching us would then get the message easier. Laughter is the best tool to get the message across”. The ‘fun-win equation’ is not the only privilege clowns get. Being a clown gives them also freedom and protection, Sabine explains: “We also definitely get away with so many things others don’t! When we go to demonstrations we are the only ones who can approach anyone and everyone and say whatever we like to say! Standing for ourselves or approaching police men as a clown is definitely easier because they think “Hey she’s a clown. It’s ok! There is no harm!”.

### **Real blessings:**

In counting her blessings, Dima always sees clowning on top of the list: “It is one of the things in my life that I am most grateful for”. Dima considers clowning as a way of living as well as a support system for clowns themselves and the community. The feeling of being supported and supportive is what made a difference for Dima. As a Syrian woman living in Lebanon, sometimes Dima faces rejection, not directly against her as a person but as part of the whole racist narrative used in Lebanon against Syrians and refugees in particular. Belonging to ‘Clown Me In’ made her feel more connected and integrated in the Lebanese community, Dima describes that feeling: “While in the eyes of some people I might be seen as an intruder, clowning made me feel that I am part of the community, I am part of this cause and I am

here, no matter what nationality I have, standing with Lebanese people asking for a change that matters to everyone". Taking part in the protests as a clown helped Dima to feel safer around the police. This felt like a complete change in Dima's experience and perspective on security, especially for a person who has been through accumulated trauma, fear, and insecurities associated with the war in Syria.

With a lot of transparency, Dima elaborates on how her journey with clowning has been all about self-care, which she believes it is about being able to deal with her weaknesses in a fun and constructive way: "I used to not feel very comfortable around people. I was insecure and victimizing myself. Clowning made me learn how to look into myself more and understand what I feel. I started to look at how I can show my weakness through my clown character and make fun of it myself as well as also making other people laugh about it. I learned to get rid of the sad feelings that put me down and learnt how to react to and deal with my issues in a better way". Dima continues with a strong determined voice: "I want to be a better person. By clowning, I can achieve that. Being a clown helped me already to overcome a lot of issues, which I would not have been able to overcome otherwise".

### **Two birds in one stone**

Sara's definition of self-care is rooted in what seems to be the basics: "Self-care is about enjoying what I am doing". Indeed, what is better than clowning to enjoy! Sara's simple statement is not about stating the obvious, it is actually an important call to abandon sophistication when it comes to self-care and to concentrate on what a person does and simply enjoy it. Sara enjoys what she does as a clown with the confidence and satisfaction she gets out of that. This is where clowning played a bigger role in her life: "Clowning helped me deal with my shyness and low self-confidence. Being able to learn how to laugh at myself has been great therapy. Clowning taught me to embrace who I am, with all the things I had considered to be flaws in the past I see them now as gifts! Now, I see them as characteristics that make me stand out amongst the crowd. I am more myself now. I am more comfortable and happier with being who I am and loving myself along the way. Akhh! I can talk about this forever!!!". While Sara has definitely a lot more to say on self-care, she summarises her clowning experience as being both a lesson and a gift. Sara sees clowning as two birds in one stone: "I have always believed in using art as a tool for social and political change. Being able to do both art and activism at the same time through clowning is

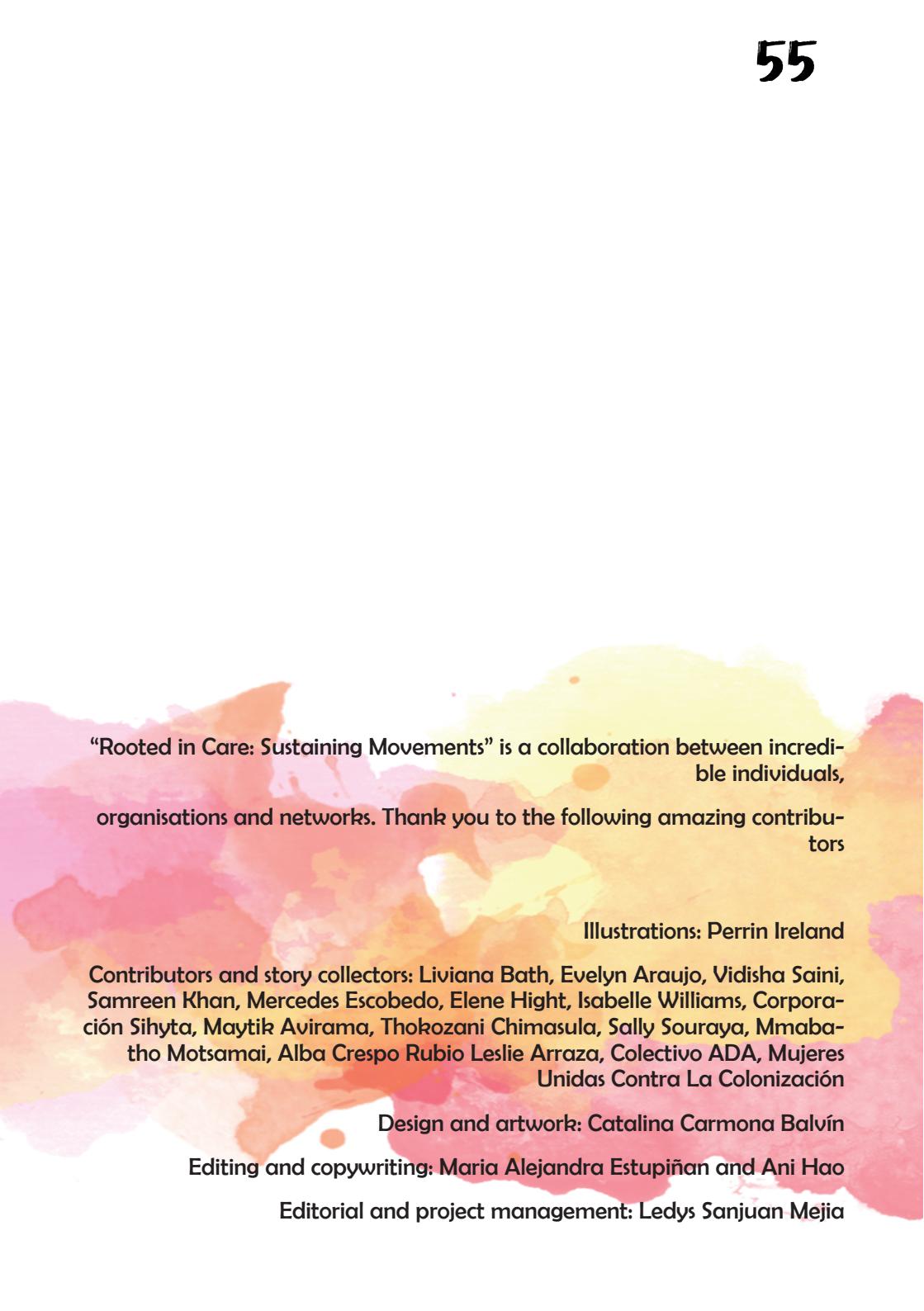
indeed two birds in one stone". "This is what I have always dreamt of", Sara expresses how proud she feels. She describes how she lives such a responsibility with joy, love and confidence: "People believe in us and what we do. We also believe in ourselves and we love what we do".

### **To see opportunity where others see chaos**

With deep reflections, Layal speaks about self-care as a promise she made to herself. It is what connects the dots in her journey as a person and as a clown: "The child in us is aching...I promised myself never to dismiss my inner child without hearing carefully its requests and try to always find a middle ground between its needs and the way I see things socially and philosophically". Layal considers that the definition of self-care as a physical, psychological, social, and spiritual practice should expand to a very important layer, which is about seeing oneself as part of the whole world, nature and the environment: "Taking good care of ones' home and self with a filthy street would not help much in not letting filth come in". Layal continues to explain her view and how it is reflected in her life: "This is exactly the same dialogue I used to deal with myself, which also led me to clowning. That is how my clown copes. She sees no difference between me and the others... As if no 'self' barrier has ever existed". Layal's thoughts on clowning and self-care are not just poetic but also grounded in her experience in environmental justice. With a firm opinion, she says: "What you call activism, I would like to call common sense". For Layal, the 'common-sense' starts at home: "Protesting against human failure to be responsible towards nature has led me to start first with my family as they reflect clearly the whole country, if not to say the whole world". She thinks: "People are lazy. We have to find the real motivation that can push them forward". For most people who would question if what they do as individuals will even matter or make any difference, Layal's answer is: "The whole world is waiting for you to change in order to follow your lead. The more we are, the more visible our work is! It always takes a few to start the change .... So how about you be of the pioneers and see opportunity where others see chaos".

If the positive energy of Sabine, Dima, Sara, Layal and the rest of 'Clown Me In' could be transcribed, this story would speak even louder than the words featured here. This summary of their thoughts tells how clowning is a self-care process that transcends the barriers and obstacles that environmental activism faceS. It proves that making a change is possible and that the 'self' is at the best place to start and sustain it with fun and humour.





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