

Accompaniment to Women with Vulnerable Pregnancies: Fundación Chile Unido Experience

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For 20 years, the Chile United Foundation² (Fundación Chile Unido), with the purpose of contributing to a more humane country, through its various social initiatives and programs, focuses its efforts on welcoming and accompanying pregnant women in vulnerable situations, respecting, caring for and protecting the life of the unborn, strengthening the family as a fundamental nucleus of society and promoting, within organizations, both public and private, practices of Family Reconciliation, Work and Personal Life.

Accompaniment Program

About the program

The Integral Accompaniment Program for Women with vulnerable pregnancies welcomes and accompanies women with unwanted or unplanned pregnancies of different ages and socioeconomic strata, throughout the country, by means of an accompaniment that has no cost to them, which is systematic, continuous and personalized, because each case has its own history and needs particular support to resolve what makes you think about abortion.

The woman who is in this situation of adversity feels loneliness, pressure from her parents, from her partner, some of them are abandoned, they are thrown out of their homes and it is in those moments of maximum human fragility, that as a Foundation we went to their way and from that moment they are no longer alone.

When the woman is contacted through social networks or toll-free number 800 572 800, a trained and supervised volunteer, begins the accompaniment that continues until her child has one year of life, it is almost 20 months in which the volunteer stays with the woman, giving her a space of containment and support. Empathic listening allows the one who is accompanied to feel calmer, understood and never judged. Withing this scenario, spaces open up for reflection, and women find support networks or those offered by the

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² The Foundation website: <http://www.chileunido.cl/>

Program, which enable them to solve their conflicts and what led them to think about getting an abortion, and thus they discover other ways.

As time passes by, we can see how women overcome their initial confusion, are contained and informed with the Accompaniment Program, as they later on express that their child is not the problem, but the circumstances of adversity that made them think about abortion, and it is at that moment that she decides to continue her pregnancy.

Measurable Results

At the same time, thanks to a large multidisciplinary and collaborative Support Network throughout Chile, which joins this support chain, we can deliver a real solution to the problems they are experiencing, referring them to doctors, ultrasound doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, midwives, lawyers, social workers, pediatricians, foster homes, adoption institutions, health centres, palliative care programs, among others.

The profile of these accompanied women, as informed in the 2018 report of Fundación Chile Unido³ (United Chile Foundation) shows that 35.02% are young women between 20 and 24 years old and 28.32% between 25 and 29 years old. 49.43% of them have a level of secondary education, 73.45% of them are single, 42.48% of them work, 39.57% live with their parents, 48% of them have no previous children and use contraceptives. Regarding the father of the child who is about to be born, 46.52% corresponds to a stable couple and 35.02% is the couple.

Reasons Why Woman Attend the Program

The main reasons why women attend the Accompaniment Program are: 26.93% because of the need for psychological support, 16.94% because their life project is difficult, 11.76% due to partner pressure, 8.6% for having pre-pregnancy children and 6.95% for parental pressure. To a lesser extent they come because they want to give up for adoption (4.8%), for requiring medical, economic, legal and social support (3.29%), in case of rape (1.39%), domestic violence (2.02 %), due to fetal malformation (0.63%), among other reasons.

In relation to the migrant mothers who attend the Program, they have increased markedly from 13% in 2016, to 18% in 2017, reaching 34% in 2018. The six countries of origin of the women who most requested aid is from Peru (27.24%), Venezuela (26.87%), Bolivia (18.28%), Colombia (13.81%), Haiti (7.09%) and Ecuador (2.99%).

National and International Impact of the Program

On behalf of thousands of women with vulnerable pregnancies we have shown this experience to the service of the country, during more than three years (2015 - 2018) that the legislative debate lasted for the bill to decriminalize abortion in three cases. The

³ Accompaniment Program Report for Women 2018 - 26 03 19. Chile Kingdom Foundation. To see the full report, click here: <http://www.chileunido.cl/?p=8365>

Integral Accompaniment Program was presented before the Health and Finance Commission, both in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, in hearings with parliamentarians from different banks, as well as in the Constitutional Court.

This Program was also presented to the United Nations by Chilean epidemiologist Elard Koch of the Melissa Institute as a successful abortion prevention initiative with more years of experience in Chile⁴.

Projection of the Accompaniment Program

According to the last 2018 report of the Accompaniment Program for women with vulnerable pregnancies of Fundación Chile Unido⁵, 46% of the accompanied women come from the northern or southern regions and the rest are from the country's capital. Of that 46%, 21% corresponds to the south and 25% to the north.

It is for this reason that as of June 2019, Foundation professionals are traveling through different cities of the country with the aim of making the real and concrete help offered by the Accompaniment Program more widely known. They began their trip in Valdivia and Temuco, Copiapó and Vallenar, La Serena and Ovalle and Iquique. Soon they will be in Arica and Antofagasta, and then continue their journey through the south of the country.

With this welcome and integral accompaniment, women feel supported and find a fundamental pillar in which to sustain themselves, allowing them to stabilize their situation and giving them the space to continue their lives calm, hopeful and free from coercion.

Arriving with this social assistance to all women in the country is a permanent challenge for the Foundation so that tomorrow no woman says: "If I had known that there was someone who could have helped me, maybe today I would be with my son / daughter."

At the same time, we have considered the challenge of transferring internationally the experience developed over these 20 years to other countries in Latin America, starting with Argentina, Peru and Paraguay. Our purpose is to meet with people or institutions to share our functioning method, its results of effectiveness in preventing abortion, the number of children born to date, and other useful information and, in this way, feel motivated to implement in these countries an Accompaniment Program that takes care of the pregnant woman and protects the life of the being in gestation.

⁴ Koch, E. Epidemiology of abortion and its prevention in Chile, in Revista Chilena Obstetricia y Ginecología 2014; 79 (5)

⁵ Accompaniment Program Report for Women 2018 - 26 03 19. Chile Kingdom Foundation. To see the full report click here: <http://www.chileunido.cl/?p=8365>

⁵ Informe Programa de Acompañamiento a Mujeres 2018 – 26 03 19. Fundación Chile Unido. Para ver el informe completo click aquí: <http://www.chileunido.cl/?p=8365>