

*When doors close (cont)*

At the Women's Ministry I found a place where I could be myself.

In the *Healthy Relationships* course, I have acquired tools to improve my communication with others. I've learned how to say how I feel without hurting others. I've learned how to manage my anger. And I've improved my self-esteem because I've learned that seeing the beauty in myself is good – and now I do it fairly frequently. In the *Being a Woman is Marvelous* course, I discovered that if I accept all the forms of violence as the natural way, this acceptance causes irreparable damage in me. I've learned that self-denial is not always best. An excess of self-denial can be harmful not only for myself but also for those around me.

I have become a facilitator for the Tamar Project. The Tamar Project works with adolescent women to help them understand that all the types of violence that women suffer are not natural or inevitable, and the project works to put an end to sexual violence. This work has helped me to identify the types of violence that I myself have suffered, and it also has helped me to see my strengths as a leader. It has helped me recognize that being a woman does not make me less capable.

In my church, acceptance of my leadership has been difficult. I taught women their rights, and now the men have no longer given me the right to teach. They tried to silence me. But now I have many tools to use, and it doesn't matter how many doors the men shut on me. There are still windows! In 2019 I have become a leader of Sunday School, something which a woman had never done in my church. Now I am one of three women in leadership.

Little by little I have been earning the respect of men and women. It has been a challenge to raise my voice and fight for an equal share of privileges. I know that it will not be easy, but neither will it be impossible. Now, thanks to the Women's Ministry, I am empowered. I no longer fear my abilities, but rather I use them to their potential, and I use them in service to the children and of my sisters and brothers in my community.