**Transcription of Interview with Pilar**

Place: Pilar’s house

Date and time: 30 November, 2022. Starting at 10 hrs.

Duration: 1:49:56

Additional observation notes: Pilar was a person I recruited in collaboration with Waldo, who told me where she lived and took me to her house. He was the one who knocked on her door and asked for her contact and permission to be involved in the interview. He told me that it was necessary for me to talk to her and that it was important for her to be part of the activity as well. At that point she gave me her contact and I made arrangements with her for the interview. When we arrived for the interview she invited me into her house, which she told me was like a palace to her. We go up a couple of floors and enter a room on the top floor where we will have the interview. During the conversation, she allows me to take pictures of various objects, such as the wedge and hammer they used to open the stones and the streets. She also shows me legal documents, news, and records of the things she was telling me about, related to the history of Santo Domingo. She also shows me, as I leave her house, that there is a cave in her basement. This type of cave is common in the basements or first floors of many buildings in the neighbourhood, as it is built on stony ground.

Participants: Interviewer [A] ; Pilar [P]

TRANSCRIPTION

A: To begin with, I would like to ask you if you could tell me your name again so that it is on the record.

P: I am Mrs. Pilar, at your service. I am not a parachutist, I was the founder of the neighbourhood and we were people who came here because unfortunately we didn't have a place to live that was ours. We were always living with a neighbour, with a friend, with people. So I lived with a brother-in-law, but I felt very bad because I said: "my children will never have a little piece of land where they can say this is mine, here I shout, here I run, because it's mine". That's why when in the last year of President Luis Echeverría Álvarez, in his last report, he said: "we are going to expropriate the land next to CU (university city) for people who have nowhere to live, but who are not hoarders". Because there were many who were hoarders, as they were called, from the same people who had their land in Ajusco, in Ruiz Cortines, in Huayamilpas, in the neighbourhood Hidalgo, in other places. People who came and grabbed land just to do business. But since I didn't have anywhere to live, and I was in the neighbourhood, well, I was interested.

So I paid a lot of attention and he said: " those lands bordering CU will be donated". And I asked, "Where are they?" and my sister-in-law said, "Do you know where they are?" and I said, "No, no, no, I have no idea. Well, she said "where we go to cut the nopales and gather the chinicuiles" Because let me tell you that in your house we ate nopalitos, beans. And her husband and my husband ate a lot of chinicuiles, which are little red worms that grow on the maguey. So I said to my sister-in-law, "Hey, could you please take me?" And she said "Why not? Let's go". And we brought a little bucket that was where we gathered the nopal cactus and we came, we went in through the part that is now Sol Street, because it was the only part that was a little straight sidewalk, here in the centre of the neighbourhood, which is now the neighbourhood, but before that it was the pedregal, the caves.

We went in, we looked around and I saw and I told him, "I'd like to have a house, but it had to be a cave".

And she said to me, "Oh, you're crazy, how can you believe that?" And I said "no, look, you know why? if I were to have my house in a cave, that would be my first house, why? because there I would be protected from many things, and more than anything from the police".

Because at that time the grenadiers were very aggressive and beat everyone up. They almost left people half dead. Because I had two of those events, when the lady who was the leader of the Diaz Ordaz wanted to sell us some land there in Huayamilpas, but the grenadiers came and took us away, I had already given her almost half of the cost of the land, which at that time was $1,500 pesos, and it took a long time for you to get it together.

A: And all of that was before you got here...

P: Before arriving at these plots of land. So when I saw how the grenadiers threw tear gas at us, beat us and everything, I said "I'm not going to live through that again, I'm not going to live through it". So when we came here, my husband, well, my children's father, a friend of his who is now dead told him that yes, there was a chance that he could go in. He said "give me $500 pesos and I'll take you a little plan and you can build your house there". My children's father arrived and said to me "oh, you think, they're selling us a plot of land" and I said "and then what's the problem?" And he said to me "but Jesus wants $500 pesos and right now, where are we going to get it? And I said "don't worry, I'll see right now". Because I liked cleaning houses, washing suits, washing clothes, and so I was making my little piggy bank, and I did have money saved up, but since my husband liked wine a lot, and that was his hobby, then I thought "no, if I give him the money and he spends it," so what I did was that I just gave him $250 pesos. I said "look, if it's really true that this person is honest, give him the $250 pesos and tell him that in two weeks you'll give him the rest, but that he should take you there today and measure you". And that's how we got here, that was already the land here, in the middle of Fuerza Street, in front of a beauty parlour.

Well, afterwards, as his wife was a bit special and gossipy and still is when I arrived, she said to me, "hey, are you the one who bought the land from my husband? I said "no, I didn't buy anything from him, we just gave it to him because he did us the favour of measuring it for us". And she said to me "well you know what, you're getting off that land". And he started to go to the neighbours, there was a neighbour who had already passed away and others, because they still didn't sell to Mrs. L. And he said to me, "you know what, you're going to get out, because I said so". So I went to the president of the neighbourhoods and I told him, "Sir, I have a problem". And he said, "What is it? I told him "well, you see, first her husband sold us a little piece and measured us, and now he wants me to leave, but where am I going?”

Then he said to me "and what's behind where you live" I said "there's a cave". And he said to me, "Well, go down to the cave and don't give him anything, when we start to regularise and measure then I'll see where I can accommodate you". Perfect, I went down to the cave. And then afterwards, I went with him, because I went everywhere with him. And I saw how he gave me space, because I had to support my children, because my children's father was unfortunately very unobliging. And of course, here we go to the community work (faena), there are the shimps, there's the hammer.

A: Here it is?

P: These are called shims, because you have to put them in, son, so that they expand the.... [Noise is heard as she takes tools out of a part of the room. He shows me the tools that were used to break the stone in the community work.]

Look, I'm speaking the truth son, I don't like to make fantasies or say that I'm the founder. No, I am not the founder. I was first a hoarder, well we were all hoarders. Here's the hammer, it's 16 pounds.

A: And then this is the one they used to.... [referring to the different tools that he is showing me].

P: To do the work, to break stones and open the streets.

A: And they used this one for that too?

P: Yes, well, it's for taking out the pieces of stone when you break them, son. And you put them in a lot of water so that the stone would expand. These were the ones that were broken in your cart. They are the springs of the wagons. And we put them to good use here.

A: You put this one in the stone...

P: This is how you put it in the stone, look, you made a hole in it and in a little slot here you put them in, first you put one and then the other. why? so that they would expand the stone?

A: Ok, and then you would break them with this? with the hammer?

P: Yes son

A: And then they would remove them with this...

P: And do you know what the handle of my hammer is made of?

A: What is it made of?

P: From a Piru tree, son, look at it. Velo, it's not a handle that they buy here in the market.

A: So you made it?

P: My children's deceased father made it. He made it.

A: This is what you used for all the community work (faenas)?

P: Yes, to do the chores here. And I look after it like a treasure, because we are people who came here as parachutists because that's what they told us, that we were parachutists, so I mean, it's a memory for my children to see that we didn't just arrive and sit down and we had everything. No, we worked our butts off. Being here cost us tears and blood. Because there were times when you walked almost barefoot, son, just with what's here, because the stone is very rough. I'm going to bring you a piece of stone that I have down there so you can see it, my heart. The stone was so sharp that you could even peel a potato there.

A: Yes, it's the volcanic stone, isn't it?

P: Sure, you know what I mean? When you walked around here, you had to walk between the stones. And it was just a little foot, son, because you had to go in with the little sidewalk because on this side there was a lot of thorns, and on this side too. What we had here was a lot of piru, piru trees.

A: Can I take a photo of this?

P: Sure, go ahead.

A: Thank you

P: The piru trees and the palo loco. There is still a lot of that in C.U.

A: And then you were involved in all the faenas (community work)...

P: In all the faenas (community work), because I used to say to my children's father: "hey, you can't see them making any progress". And he would say to me "oh, what do you think these are enchiladas? these are not enchiladas". Then one day, I was fed up. Sick of my mom always walking around with her knees all scraped up.

A: Was she here too?

P: Yes, because I brought her here because she was close to one of my sisters, the older one. But she was very bald, so I told my mum that I didn't need to put up with my sister. I told her "you have to come with me and you and I are going to live here". But my mum pulled my other sister.

So I said to the man, "You say they're not enchiladas" and he said "Yes, they're not enchiladas. They would say to each other "what's up, neighbour? no, let's go to the faena (community work), let's go". And they had their glass case of pulque, cured, natural, their cartons of beer, and there you would say which you liked better, the carton of beer, which was the Victoria or your pulque. Well, no, they were already drunk and what were they going to be thinking about when they were going to have to open the street.

So in that street I made friends with many neighbours and many ladies near the neighbourhood president's house. Where this post office is now, in that little street, that's where they all lived. And then I said to them, "Hey, look at these scumbags, they just keep swallowing filth and we don't see them making any progress. Well, what do you think if we all get together? Look, one of us is going to go down there during the week and look for carts of rubble". Because one of them came up with the idea of bringing a cart of dirt, but what do you think, it was made of chewy dirt. So when you go in and it's raining, no man, you slip. Like that, you feel like you're in an ice rink. No, that's where you went to vote, no, you got all scraped up. So what I said was "you know what we're going to do? a lot of cars with rubble go by". And they told me "I know why you are going to ask for rubble. Because I've seen you collecting rebar and things to sell."

And I told them "yes, yes I do, and to feed my children too, but I don't think that's a crime". I grabbed and bought a little pot, smaller than the one we have in front of us. And when the rubble carts arrived and they brought whole castles, I took all the mixture and the sticks out of them. And I kept it all to sell it for food, that's true. I'm not lying to you, and I don't want to pretend that I was the one who had a lot here, no. I was very poor. Sometimes we had enough to eat and sometimes we didn't, but I put in the pounds, and that didn't mean I didn't go to the faenas (community work), to the meetings, to whatever was needed.

A: Those meetings were with the president of the neighbourhood.

J: Yes, there was one for the area around here, and from the other street down it was someone else. There were several presidents depending on the area. And from here to Tetl up there was another one, who was from Guerrero.

A: And they organised the people?

P: They all organised the people, for example, here one had his vice-president, who lives very close to my house. And on this side there was another vice-president and her people who helped them.

A: You were all neighbours here?

P: We were all neighbours, all of us. Nobody came from anywhere else, we were all settlers here. But it turns out that when the people from Los Reyes started to see that we were already organised and we were opening up streets, because we women, as I just explained, started to bring in carts of rubble. The first one that was opened up completely was the one here, near the popular community centre, and the one that borders Fuerza.

Then, the people over there, from that part, what they did was to open up a part that went out to Copilco. And nobody knows about that, many people will tell you no, that this, that that, but no. The truth of the matter is that the people who did it, the ones who did it, the ones who did it, did not know. The truth of the matter is that those of us who were in the movement know exactly how all this manifested itself. And don't think that the presidents of the neighbourhood had a little piece of it. No, they were expanded to there because we bordered with Imán, we bordered with Los Reyes Coyoacán, we bordered with Ajusco and on this side we bordered with Copilco and we bordered with Universidad.

A: And then the presidents of the neighbourhood called the faenas (community work)...

P: And what did we do, when we saw that the people from Los Reyes were already coming, because there was a lady who commanded them, she was a very aggressive lady and she was the one who moved all the community members from Los Reyes Coyoacán. One day she arrived with a lot of people, and she always used a rifle, a .22, because I know a lot about guns, because I also had my .22. Well, I'll tell you, she brought people in to beat us to get us out because it was theirs. So we all said to a leader, the president of the neighbourhood: "Well, you talk to them, tell them that we don't want to steal their land, what we want is for them to do us the favour of selling us, but at a fair price, and not to tell us that they are going to sell us, we pay them and then they take us out, no. We want a paper that protects us.

We want a piece of paper to protect us, because this is theirs and we know it very well, because we are invaders, yes, but we are not willing to steal anything from them, we want them to set a fair price". So that's what happened. And one day I was walking there in the neighbourhood of the clock, because I tell you I used to work there, and I said to someone: "Hey, is that little piece of rail no longer of any use to you? And the man said to me: "What do you want it for? I said "well, look, sir, I sell old iron, so I wanted to see if you would give it to me as a present". And he said "yes, take it away, it's already rubbish". It wasn't his either, but well, you have to ask if it's in a place, you have to ask permission, you're not going to take it because you see it lying there, you have to ask permission. So I brought it with me, I brought some rubber and everything, and I said I don't know what this is going to be useful for, but it's going to be useful for something. Well, since they were already coming, we told the people, "Well, let us know". And they told us, "But how? What are we going to do, smoke signals or what?" And I told them: "look, I just found a piece of rail, when that's what it is we're going to put it in one of the trees, we're going to hang it up, and from there we're going to knock". And they said "Oh, what about us? I told them "well, if you have an old lid that is no longer useful, play it, and if others have a frying pan, a pot, that is no longer useful, use it". And we all started to do that.

When the villagers came and wanted to take us out, we would touch the rail, the lids, the spoons and everything, the pots, because back then there were no plastic pots like there are today, it was all those oil cans, but they were made of metal. So that's what we did, when the mounted police arrived, one day they came here with guns and wanted to take us out, the mounted police. So what I said to the women was "you know what? it's enough that they are scaring us, they are scaring us, we have to get our fingernails out, gather stones together". And we started to pick up stones. No, we took them with stones from here to the exit of the neighbourhood Ajusco. Yes, we took them all the way down there, because we were fed up with them scaring us that they were going to shoot at us, they were scaring us that they were going to take us out, so where were we going to hit them?

A: And at that time you were still in the cave?

P: Yes, they still didn't measure us. Later, when they started measuring, the neighbourhood presidents came to an agreement, and they didn't fight anymore. Because look, they had a vision. They all met up there in the house of one of the leaders, because they say they have a big house, I never saw it. But they say that up there they all got together with all their secretaries

and all their treasurers and all the people, they would get together up there and they would drink and they would be very quiet, laughing together. But in front of us they made us confront each other, you know what I mean?

A: From each group?

P: The people from each group. Until one day, I caught them. I caught them because I went to the house of one of the presidents because I was going to go and leave him some papers that I had that he needed and I had stayed with them. But because I'm like that, I go there, I go here, like a chinampina, I forgot. And I went and I met two of the leaders, who were chatting very pleasantly. And I said, "oh my gosh, they just told us that they wanted to kill us up here". Because we used to call the little hill here where the base of the Route 90 bus route is. And I said "what the hell, and right now they are very talkative, well how is it?" and I said to the people "you know what? from now on we are not going to fight with the people of each leader, why? because I heard the hypocrites who were very talkative, very friendly". Once I was going to shoot one of them, can you imagine if I had shot him? Because he was going to hit another one of the leaders that I was supporting.

A: And when they made them fight, why was it? why?

P: Because of the territory, because, for example, a leader who was ours couldn't go to the side where he was already someone else's. He couldn't go, you know what I mean? He couldn't go, you know what I mean?

And the other one couldn't go here either, because it was the other one's territory. You know what I mean? That's why we used to go back and forth and they made us fight. And I assure you that nobody has told you all those things. Well, I was going to shoot, I had a .22 that my mother hid or sold, and she took it away from me because she told me "you never measure yourself, you never think, you act and you don't give a damn if you leave us in the middle of your nonsense". So they hid the gun from me so that I wouldn't be armed any more. Well, after all, I didn't even want to, I had good hands and as I had a very good punch, I didn't even worry about it, right? Well, it happened. And then they started to measure us, and then the lady from Los Reyes, when INDECO (the government company that regularises land) came in, she talked to them, which is where all the Fideurbe (similar to INDECO) houses are, we call them Fideurbe houses, but those houses were built by INDECO. That's why we beat INDECO out of here. We didn't tell them "please leave". No, we beat them out, because they were reducing our land. That's why on the street that borders Ajusco the plots are less than 100 metres, you can measure them, why? because INDECO started to reduce them. There they always did their despapaye, from the entrance of Ajusco to here, son, right? That's why I'm telling you, well, the lady has calmed down, she didn't come anymore. The last time she came on the 15th of September and they did kill a person there where the paintings are, because they came to shoot at us, to try to get us out again, but there was no chance, because then Fideurbe had already come here.

I'm not just telling you this so that you can say 'oh, this lady is so intense' [she reaches for some papers that are deeds and records of what she is narrating] look, son, INDECO came to register us, or to take a census, whatever you want to call it, INDECO. Right now I'm going to show you the papers, because I don't like to speak without basis and without foundation, I like that when I'm talking to you and I'm telling you it's because I have documentation to back me up. Because I can tell you many lies, "Oh, I was the founder of Santo Domingo". No, I was not a founder, I was like everyone else, a parachutist

A: And you told me that you caught the leaders of the neighbourhood, they are very close friends here, and so you stopped fighting?

P: We stopped fighting, I told the people: "Why are we going to kill each other because of these guys? If they want to fight, let them fight, and if they want to fight, let them fight, not us. Because if they kill someone, who's going to take care of their children? Do you think they will? No, well no, so let's think clearly".

A: So that's where the feud ended

P: That's when their enmity ended, when they saw that they couldn't move us around like puppets any more.

A: [looking at the documents] and this now belongs to Fideurbe.

P: Fideurbe, but here is the date, they came to census us.

I have old papers, but look, I treasure them. Here it is, look [she shows me the documents and some photographs] this was the file and this is when they registered us. That's when they came to measure. This was our census.

A: Aha. Here you are.

P: Yes, with my children's father, look. And here are my three little children, so they don't say I didn't come when I was 17 and with three children. Look here are my children, and I was 17 years old because I had the children in a row, my husband didn't give me space for my children to grow up. And it turns out that we had three expropriations here. When López Portillo came in, when we were already regularised and everything, he started to give us deeds. And I received this one in the sports palace, which is the first deed I had from José López Portillo. But I am talking to you with bases and foundations, not lies. I was just one more of all of us who were here.

A: And at that time...

P: The neighbourhood was expropriated, and according to him, he regularised it and gave us title deeds. But here's the thing: many of them were given with title, and I don't have title. But many of the people who were there at that time had the title deeds with ownership. But not mine, thank God.

So, what happened? Look, this was the first deed we had, look, here is the old one, but I have it here, here is Miguel de la Madrid's deed. Can you take a picture of it, eh?

A: Can I take a photo?

P: You can take a photo, the young people who came when they came to see the land issue also took a photo and this is the deed of José López Portillo. You can also take pictures of the inside so you know what year it was.

A: Yes, it said 76.

P: There it is, and here is the record of when we were censored. If you want, I'll put it here so you know because I'm telling you the truth son, I don't like to be a liar, I don't like to say that I did everything. No, here it was everyone. Miguel de la Madrid arrived and expropriated the land again and gave me the deeds again, but since I had a problem with my husband, who said we were going to divorce and I don't know what, and that he was fighting me for the land, I didn't buy them and he told me: "I was going to give you the new deeds, but you know what, the way you are, you say that you should buy them with your money". And I told him "after all, I didn't want them, and I don't care".

Time went by, Carlos Salinas de Gortari arrived, and expropriated the pedregales again. And then I got really mad and I told him, because I worked with them in the publishing house, because Adriana Salinas hired me to clean the office, all the offices. And one day I arrived and she said to me "why are you crying?" To which I said "what do you think, look they expropriated Santo Domingo again and it was in the gazette, and the deeds are very expensive and I'm not going to have any money, and you see I already told her that I don't want to ask the father of my children for anything because I'm going to show him that I'm a big woman and I can do more than him". And they put me to talk to the president, and I told him "I don't know why you do that to us poor people, because it's like pulling a hair out of a cat, because they expropriated Pedregales de Santo Domingo again when you went there to campaign and you were treated well, I don't know if you remember. And he says to me "So what? And he grabs and gives the driver the money for the cost of the deeds and he paid for them. These are the last ones. I'm talking to you with bases and foundations. I couldn't buy the others because, I tell you, my children's father wanted to think he was the father of the chicks, he wanted me to go around begging him. And no, I wasn't born to beg anyone.

A: And at that time the neighbourhood president thing was still going on and you were still participating?

P: Yes, but not very much anymore, because I had a lot of... Look, here is the gazette, so you can see that I'm not lying to you or anything, you can take a picture of it as well.

A: You said then that you were no longer participating so much in the neighbourhood?

P: No, not so much, because by then they had already measured the land here and then, thank God, God listened to me, and I was in a cave. My first house was a 12 metre cave.

A: Is that cave still here?

P: Yes, it's where the entrance rooms are now, that was my first house. And then after all this we started to fight because they wanted to put in utility bills. They started from Rueda Street, and I tell you they have always started from there. They started to put in the water meter, and then I said to them, "hey, but neighbours, why did you allow them to put in the water meters if we don't have water and it's just like this [inaudible] and what water do you have? And it's marking, have you noticed?" And they told me "no, well no". And I told them "well, look at it". And they said "no, but they said that the water company said that if we didn't put it in, that if we didn't let them put the meter in, then they were going to take away our water supply". And I told them "they don't have to take it away from us". And then I became more abused, I learned about important things. Instead of watching cartoons and all that, I started to read the Mexican constitution, the political constitution of the United States of Mexico, and I also read the Federal Labour Law, and as I was there working with Salinas, I said "they're not going to take me for a ride".

So I got a lot of people together so that they would shut down our water supply, but the water people said "well, since you want the meter to be removed, yes, it will be removed, but you know what? you are going to pay the higher quota". And we said "but why?" - "because you are parachutists, you stole this territory" - "no, no. We made an agreement with the Fideurbe company and he bought from the community members, whether he paid them or not is their problem, because we made the agreement".

But as here there are always people who want to feel more than others. When López Portillo was there, they had already opened the Cerro del Agua street, but right where the gas station is, there is a fence, and you can go and take a photo of it, I don't think they will say no to you. That was the first street to go out to Cerro del Agua, there was no other.

A: By the Copilco metro, where that street is now.

P: Exactly, but where the Copilco gas station is, there is a green fence, that was the entrance where we used to go in and out to Cerro del Agua. That's where all the government people lived. Not just any starving government people lived there, so I tell you that, as people have always been barbera and dragged to death, and excuse me, but that's how it is, I've never liked dragging myself in front of anyone, but there are people who do. Well, what do you think, they organise a little lunch for López Portillo, that's why that INPI is called Margarita Maza de Juárez because they came to inaugurate it and they named it Margarita Maza de Juárez. The president gave it that name. And they started to buy caguamas, this, bottles of beer, and so on, and while they were on the stage, President López Portillo was up there, and since they were all very happy and everything, they came down in a small plane, that plane disappeared from the INPI, there was a small plane where López Portillo came down.

Well, I'll tell you, they were already very drunk, and I never like vice, I'm a teetotaler. Well, when they were already well drunk, he went up to the platform and said "we're going to get these miserable, filthy, starving wretches out of here, because they make the university look bad, and we don't want these lousy people here". But now that we had opened the street, now that everything was fine, now that we had water, now that we had electricity, then we looked bad. But how come we didn't look bad before?

Now that we had everything, then we were the lousy ones, the dirty ones, the ones who looked bad. And then I said to the people: "Did you hear what the president said? -What did he say? -Well, he said he's going to get rid of all the filthy and lousy people here, that's what he said. But then you can see that he always brings an escort, they all brought an escort. Well, they quickly brought the limousine, they put him in it and took him and the escort and the retinue he was bringing, and the others in cars, but as there was that street that I'm telling you that you went out to Cerro del Agua street, they quickly left, they even left the plane here. And I said to the people: "you see, and you almost put yourselves on the carpet, so that this man can tell us and offend us". But before leaving, he said: "but yes, I am going to make one thing clear to you, that all of you will pay the most expensive taxes in all of Mexico and the Federal District". Well, since he was already in a rut, I didn't know what he was saying. So here we paid for the land, the water, the electricity, and all the most expensive things, as if we were residential. They had us as residential, even though we were poor and miserable. Then they started charging us more and more for water, more and more expensive, more and more expensive.

So I know a lot of people from Ruiz, from Santa Ursula. I know some people who were in leadership at the time. I went around asking about the president, and I went around investigating, investigating, investigating. Here I knew that the Díaz Ordaz was run by a woman and here in Santa Úrsula, in the Ruiz Cortines, it was another man. Well, I started to investigate, to investigate, and I told the people who wanted to, because here in my neighbourhood many did want to and signed, others didn't want to and they threw me out like crazy, because I just liked being a troublemaker all my life. Well yes, I didn't like being a troublemaker, but what happened was that I didn't like that they wanted to cheat us.

A: That was when they wanted to introduce the water meters...

P: When they had already put them in, but they charged us a lot of money. Well, I started to get people together and we went to the SACMEX offices, which was the water commission. And here it is, look, so you can see that I'm not lying to you, look at the date on this sheet. I got a lot of people together, a lot of people did want to accompany me, they did me the great favour of listening to what I was telling them, why we were going to pay for the water as they wanted, and a commission got together. We were a world of people, son you should have seen it. It was a world of people who got together and then they got more people together, to go and fight so that we would be charged a fixed fee. And the fixed fee was 162 cents.

A: It says here, in this document, in 97. It was changed to a fixed fee because it says that they were starting to charge them bimonthly, and it says here that the water payment was excessive.

P: Sure, sure, that's true, you think I'm talking to you with lies? No, I am talking to you with the truth

A: Yes, I believe you completely

P: Yes, I'm talking to you with the truth, kid, because I don't like, as I said, that everyone says that I believe me a lot because he always said that I worked, because I did work.

A: [looking at another document] And this one is from when they put the net in...

P: Exactly

A: And how was all that about putting in the water network?

P: Because we opened the stocks, and when we started to open the stocks, we opened them from over there. Ah, because let me also tell you that we, the women, opened the streets, we opened the streets with ropes. That's why they are all crooked, because it was all women who did it. A few men did want to enter, but many because they always thought that women couldn't and shouldn't do anything.

A: And how did you open up the streets? How did it happen?

P: By opening the street, so that we could pass and walk like people, not like before. So when we opened this street I had my little daughter and I told them, "I entrust you with my daughter" and what do you think, my daughter went head first into the hole and you know what I did? I grabbed a rag and wet it with oil, because we used to cook with oil. Here we had little stoves that were made with oil, if you cut your hand, your foot or something, the first thing you did was pour oil on yourself, because here there were no doctors. Here you never saw doctors.

A: And then after they built the streets we put in the water.

P: We put the water in. Before a year ago, son, we had water, electricity and pavement.

A: Before they put the water in, you had to carry it.

P: Yes, we all carried the water with water holders, all the way to Ajusco,

A: Where did they bring it from?

P: From the neighbourhood Ajusco down here, where Aztecas street is, we used to go there to get water. So we would go there to wash, but the lady who lives there, where the schools are now, across the street, that lady was very mean to us, she didn't like us because we were filthy, because we were dirty, and we would go there to wash. I would take my bathtub and then we would go there to wash, we would go there to wash and bathe the kids and then we would bring them back here bathed.

A: Did you go there every day?

P: No, I only went once a week, or twice a week at the most, because unfortunately I had to work for my kid. But I used to say to my mum, "I don't want you to get wet or go and wash down there, you see the lady is very rude, she's not going to give you a bad blow".

A: But there were a lot of people there?

P: Yes, there were many of us from here, yes, but later a leader here had his donkeys and he would carry the water for you with the donkeys.

[shows a document].

These were the first deeds we had, well the deeds we bought.

Yes, at that time there were already people who carried water for you, thank God. With donkeys, with cans, and they would come and fill one or two little tanks and with that you had to use it to wash dishes, to bathe. I used to bathe my children in a bathtub, I put them all in there and, hey, to bathe. Then my mum too, and then she would say to me "oh, you're really crazy Pilar, it's very early and I'm very cold". - Yes mum, but you have to take a bath, with the pain".

A: If it wasn't the donkey, then you had to carry the water with the water holder.

P: With water holders, but by then, thank God, I already had someone to carry the water for my mum and they brought it to my mother.

A: Was it a neighbour?

P: They were neighbours who sold their land.

A: And they helped you bring the water?

P: They helped us to carry the water, they sold us the water barrels

A: They sold it to you?

P: They sold them to us, nobody gave you anything for free here, it was in exchange for money.

A: So that's how you got the water?

P: That's how we got water. We started to get water. Then we got the tank here at the secondary school, which was a water tank that came to fill a water truck. But there were a few quarrels, really, but quarrels...

A: Between neighbours?

P: Between the neighbours. They were always quarrelling...

A: And why?

P: They would say to each other, "I left my boat, and how, you threw it further away and took it away". And that's why they started fighting. And I told my mum, "no, I don't want you to stand up there".

A: Is that where they lined up to fill their water?

P: To fill the water cans, and I told my mum, "I don't want to see you there, mum, so you don't get a bad blow".

A: Here is the one with the deeds [I give her back the document].

P: And then I said to her, we suffered, but here we are.

A: So if you didn't go there, did you bring the water here?

P: I didn't let my mum go to training. When I was there and this boy didn't come because there was a lot of demand for water, I went to carry the water. I had my water holder that I had made and my cans. And one day, what do you think happened to me, I was filling up with water and I bought about 10 of those oil cans that were made of sheet metal. And guess what, well, there I come and there I come and there I come, and when I came back they had already stolen them with all the water, you think? and I said "oh no, I'm in a hurry and I'm bringing my water and these people without any training and without anything, they took the water".

A: Did that only happen to you once?

P: Only once and not anymore

A: And here is a document from 81, so it wasn't until the 80s that they put in the water network, but it says that you did it too,

P: We did, yes, we opened the pipe.

A: How did you go about opening the pipe?

P: Well, with a hammer and everything because here it was all stone. That's why I'm going to show you a volcanic stone so that you know how thick the stones were here.

A: So maybe with the hammer they had to open it up to put...

P: Yes, that's how it was opened and then they came. But when we were halfway through, they did us the favour of coming from the mayor's office to help us, if you want to take a photo in complete confidence.

A: Yes, I'm taking a photo of them. I mean, it says here that the people put in the labour to build the water system.

P: Of course I do, do you think I'm going to lie to them? No son, I have documents to back them up.

A: Yes, here it is, there is proof of the contribution of labour to introduce the secondary drinking water network.

P: I'm not talking to you with lies, there will be people who don't even know, because there are people who are liars and say "I was the founder". But I am not the founder son, I came here as a parachutist (land invader) and as a parachutist I did my work because I wanted something for my children, something that my children could have and that they could say "here I can shout, here I can do what I want because I am inside my house".

A: And then when you installed the water network, did the government offer you any payment for your labour or give you materials?

P: No, nothing. It came later when it was already done, and then they charged us for the material they put in, they charged us in small instalments. But I don't remember that, I think my children's father kept those documents, but since he had another house....

A: So you put in the labour, you worked to put in the water,

P: Yes

A: And then the government comes and wants to charge the water fee.

P: Sure, that's how it was used before. That's how it was used, don't think it's like that today. Before, you worked and the government charged you.

A: And now that you were able to get the water in, did the water from the intake work well?

P: Everything was working fine until they started to charge us high water fees, high fees.

A: Until they were able to define a fixed fee.

P: Yes, because I was looking for who they were. Before, they wanted to put natural gas in here, and we fought to stop them from putting it in, you know why? because they wouldn't dig more than 30 centimetres. And that is a time bomb. If we made the very deep water tanks, when there are earthquakes, the stones come together and break the pipe. Just think heart, yes or no?

A: Sure, so you say that you took a group of neighbours, they went to SACMEX (the city water system).

P: We went to SACMEX to ask that they respect us and that they give us a fixed quota, that they were no longer charging us as if it were water at the price of gold. And we agreed on that, I had the official diary of how much we agreed on the fixed quota.

A: He told me 163 pesos

P: 163 with fractions of cents. Yes [showing me a document] this is the one they made me look at, now with the health thing. And they took it to another country, and now that the guys came they asked me if they could take a photo of it, and I said yes so that they could spread it around, not just keep it. It's useful so that when people die they know what they're going to die of, because there are people who die and don't know what they died of. So I'm telling you kid, I had that official diary, I don't know where it was [looking at and reviewing his documents], because it says the quota and I also have the signatures. I have the signatures of all the neighbours who went to stand there, it was an old sheet of paper. Let's see [she asks me for help], see if you can find it among these.

Look, I'm telling you that I haven't just fought for a day or two, we've fought for a long time. And I have fought, even if people say that I am always a mitotera (loud, scandalous), that I am ashamed to be a mitotera. No, I'm not ashamed. And do you know why I'm not ashamed? Because thanks to that we all have the vital liquid, all of us. Not just me, not just my children, no. We all have it thanks to God. We all have it thanks to God, and thanks to the fact that we have fought like crazy. And there were always many people who wanted to support us.

When the water committee and the meetings were held back here on Patos Street, back here on the street, I went from house to house knocking on people's doors to ask them if they wanted to participate, because it wasn't fair that the government was taking away our rights. It was the Toledo government, and you know what they did to us? if you weren't from the PRD, you know what? there was no water truck. They asked us "where are you from?" Because they moved everything like that.

A: So how did you form the committee?

P: We formed the group with other neighbours here because one day we had no water, and when we were tired and the pandemic was upon us, Sandra came to my house and knocked and told me all about it. She lives back there on the other street, she's the daughter of my neighbour who now rests in peace. She wanted to do something, form a group. I told her about inviting Waldo, who she didn’t know back then, but I knew he was one of the people defending the aquifer here.

At the time I was working in the San Ricardo park, let me tell you.

A: And what did you do there in the park?

P: Cleaning the toilets in the bathrooms there, inside the park. I'm not ashamed to say that because I've worked honestly wherever I want, yes?

A: You're retired now, you say, but you've always worked in cleaning.

P: Yes, I don't work anymore, but even at 63 I was still working. Look, this is the one I have [finds the document she was looking for].

So I said to Sandra "I'm going to bring Waldo". And she said "but I don't know him" - "but I know him and he's an honest and decent person. And he's a comrade who has stood shoulder to shoulder with me, when I removed the natural gas pipes he helped me".

A: How was it with the natural gas?

P: Because they wanted to put the natural gas 30 centimetres away, it's a time bomb.

A: So what they did was to take out the pipes.

P: I took them out and sent for Waldo, then Waldo came and between all of us we took the pipes out and removed them.

A: You already knew Waldo then?

P: Yes, from when we were in the Aztecas 215

A: Is that when you met him?

P: No, I knew him before that. One day we were in a meeting with other comrades, we were in the bathroom and as we always met there. I told a man that there was a water dump there in Aztecas. I said to him, "Listen, how is it that our sacred water is being dumped into the drainage system?

A: And at that time there was already a lack of water here?

P: There was already a lack of water and the Cantil buildings were being built there. So I grabbed them and I talked to him and he talked to Waldo and they held the assembly.

A: Is that how you met them?

P: Yes, because I told this man, and he in turn told Waldo and then the committee was formed and what a good thing, praise be to God.

A: But then during the pandemic you started to struggle here because there was no water.

P: We didn't have water, we didn't even have water to wash your hands, you know what I did? I would recycle the water in little jars, and then I would say to my daughter-in-law "hey, you know what? with less than a cup, you can wash the children's hands".

A: Was it a long time without water?

P: Yes, months. Months, because even though Toledo was no longer mayor of Coyoacán, he moved the next mayor, Valentín, at his whim. He always moved Valentín. So when we asked for a water truck they would say to us:

"Who do you belong to?" - "No, I belong to my mother." -No, don't talk to me like that" - "Well, what do you want me to tell you? -Are you from the PRD? -No." - "Are you from the PAN?" No." - "No." - "Are you from the PRI? No." - "No." - "Then whose are you? -I am my mother's. And that was always my answer. And no, I'd get on their nerves.

A: So if you weren't from the PRD, there was no water truck?

P: No. Look here, thanks to Mauricio Toledo, which street do you like so you can buy drugs? Well, this is what he inherited from us, which street do you like? In all the streets he put little drug shops. And that is a fact. And I told him one day when we were in a solicitation, I told him: "Sir, do you know what you inherited from us? The narco-shop, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

That's why many of his people wanted to attack me, I was exposed to being killed one day.

A: And when he was the delegate he also started this political use of water then?

P: Oh yes, he used it to keep you underfoot. If you were in the PRD, they would even give you your water tank, your water pump and they would give you anything you wanted. You went and they gave you your groceries, you went and they gave your children their Tablet. He was going to kill us, Toledo was going to kill us in an assembly that we held and when he took over the Santa Ursula sports centre he was going to kill us. He sent beaters and the vultures, his group of beaters, he disguised them as police officers so that they would kill us all. Ask Tita because she was there.

Supporting all the people, they wanted to kill us.

A: Was that also the problem with the natural gas?

P: There it was because this Toledo took over the sports complex to build a university, according to him, which he never built a university.

A: Was that when you were talking about the city of the future and all that?

P: No, much earlier

A: And getting back to the Committee

P: We formed this committee because we didn't have a drop of water. So Sandra had brought the people from Channel 6 to do an interview with all of us so that we could say from what date we hadn't had a drop of water and we didn't have the right to a water truck, because we weren't PRD members, simply because you weren't from that party, you know what I mean? And because you were not a member of the PRD you had no right to a drop of water.

Sandra was going to bring the people from the news to do an interview with all of us. So, I told her about inviting Waldo, and then I spoke to him on the phone so he could also speak with the journalists because I know he speaks very well. So that’s when I started knocking doors and going house to house and invite my neighbours and tell them all about this meeting

And I said, "Waldo, the people from Channel 6 are going to come and as I know you know how to speak very well I want you to do me a favour". [She showed me some documents he had found] Look at all my documents, here I have the one from the Santa Ursula neighbourhood, they are very ugly and dirty but you can still see them. Look, in this one you can see that I made a newspaper mural in Santa Úrsula. And that's also why they wanted to kill me because I put up everything that this bastard did to us. [looking at documents] And this is from the Ciudad del Futuro project because I used to buy La Jornada and everything they did to us appeared here. And here's all this, look at this, I'll give it to you if you want to take it with you so that you have something to back up what you're talking about, otherwise it's just a lyrical thing, no, we like to support ourselves with newspapers. I want everything we have suffered in the pedregales to be known.

A: So Sandra comes and knocks on the house here and says to you

P: She knocks and says to me "let's do something and form a committee". And then I started knocking house to house and I told them that if they wanted to come to the meeting, Waldo was going to come here. And who is Waldo? Well, he's the one who has always fought for the shallow aquifer here in Aztecas 215 [she looks at her clippings as she narrates this story].

So the committee was formed, that's how the committee was born. I started to touch the whole street and as the people really didn't have water and the cisterns were about to burst, we started to get together. At that time Toledo and Valentín were no longer there, but there was Negrete, who was the same filth, he was a friend of theirs.

A: So you went from house to house inviting people.

P: Yes, inviting people. And the people responded, thank God they responded, I'm not going to say that they treated me rudely or badly, no. The people received me and I told them I was welcome. The people welcomed me and I told them "I've come to invite you to a meeting with Waldo, with Tita and the other comrades from Aztecas 215. I know them and I've known them for a long time, I know that they are well focused and well organised people". And that's how our neighbourhood committee was formed, well neighbourhood because we are neighbours in defence of water.

A: That's how it was formed for the first time.

P: Like the first time it was integrated again, because I had already integrated it before. And there are the signatures of the people, who accompanied me, so I'm going to tell you that they behaved rudely, badly. Blessed be God, the times that I have knocked on people's doors with decency and respect, they have listened to me. And not because you say "oh, this lady feels she's in the limelight", no. No, because it's a benefit for everyone. No, because it is a benefit for all of us.

A: And now with the committee, how has the experience of being involved been?

P: Well, I'm glad that they are all still going. I can't be there

because you can see what time I left yesterday. And just like those times, when I participated, for example, in the participatory budget, I got home at 1 or 1.30 in the morning, or 2 o'clock in the morning. My children were already very upset, I live here alone, this is my space, but my children were already very upset because they said to me "hey mum, don't you think that one day they might give you a bad blow? You have a lot of enemies because you have a big mouth and you don't know how to hold your tongue when you say things to people in front of them, and one day they will do something to you, mum, stop this nonsense".

And I have 5 children and all 5 of them live here in your house. So sometimes they scold me very badly. Like when we had the pandemic here, my daughter-in-law got infected, my son, his sons, my daughter and my son-in-law died of COVID.

A: I am sorry

P: So that's why I haven't gone to participate with them much because sometimes one of my grandchildren is a little bit like that and you say, "I'd better not go near people, I'm not going to infect them, we don't all have the same defences".

A: How old are you?

P: 67 years old, thank God.

A: Have you had the COVID vaccine?

P: I have all 4, thank God.

A: But you're glad that the group is still going then

P: I'm very happy that the group is not dropping off. And that, even though I can't go because of things I tell you at home, it's not like I'm going to carry an infection, that's why I stayed away too. And when it comes to my son-in-law, I am very grateful to Waldo and the group, who supported me when I needed it most. They supported me, God be blessed, and I thank them infinitely. When my son-in-law had passed away.

But I am still in the struggle and I will never give up, even if they call me a gossip and say I want to feel more than anyone else or that I have never done anything, well, if they want to recognise me, go ahead, and if not, then don't.

A: Do you think that the struggle of the neighbours is worth it?

P: Of course it is, that's what strengthened our neighbourhood. Thank God we all acted together and there were never any divisions between us. There were when our neighbourhood presidents moved us around like puppets, but when I realised this and started to talk to people and tell them that we didn't have to fight with each other, I saw that everything changed, and that we were unified and we fought to have what we have today. Like this land.

A: And do you still feel that there is that unity between neighbours?

P: Well, not all of them, no, because I'd be lying to you. There are neighbours here who don't even talk to me. And no, I'm not interested, I'm still in my world and in my struggle, and whoever wants to greet me, that's great and I thank them, and whoever doesn't, I respect them, full stop.

A: But some are committed

P: Yes, some of them are committed, and they support each other, there is still a lot of support from them for the group. And that's progress and that's very good.

A: Do you think that has helped them in this water struggle?

P: Yes, quite a lot. And if this union had continued in Aztecas 2015, we would have achieved many things, many things. But unfortunately there was discord there, some people wanted to be more than others, and that wouldn't be there, because Waldo united us, Waldo helped us in the struggle, he even exposed his freedom. Because they arrested him, I had to go when Tita told me, and she said "Pilar, come here, they have arrested Waldo" "where?"

And then I told my boss, because he wasn't in Mexico, he was in Guanajuato. I told him and he said "What happened Pilar?" "Well, I'm going to leave my friend here, they've just arrested Waldo". -How? Go quickly, leave everything there, go and see what you can do to help the people. And I told him, "well I'm warning you because I don't want you to think that I'm going alone, because you're my boss, but I'm letting you know what's going on and I'm leaving. "OK, Pilar, go, run along, see how you can help Waldo, see how you can support him". Well, I don't think anything, but when they see that there are people present and they see that he is supported by his people, I think it will help. We closed there on Miguel Ángel de Quevedo Street, many of us were thrown out, others of us talked to the people who were upset, and I say that it is understandable that the people with cars, the people with vehicles, are upset because we are marching and closing streets, but it was for a good reason, because it was not fair that they locked Waldo up for fighting for water rights, which is a benefit for the whole community, not just for Pedregales but also for all of us.

A: Do you think it is important to defend water?

P: Of course it is, it is a struggle that should never fall and that no one should ever think that we are unruly and that because we are unruly we close streets, no. Because it is a right that all people have a right to water. Because it is a right that all people should have. Because it says it in the Mexican constitution, it is a right to water, it is a constitutional right, what does it mean? What does it mean? that all of us, poor, rich and not rich, have to fight for what is ours, and not allow the real estate companies to continue doing so much damage to the city for their own benefit, not for the benefit of the community in which they live.

And how many litres a day does a building use? They wash their vehicles with hoses, they don't know about having a bucket, they don't know what we had to do, that in a pandemic we had to grab a bucket of water and wash our hands with it. Many times we had to wash our faces with a bucket of water, and well, thank God they were born in a cradle of gold and they have plenty of services. They have their parks, their houses, their gardens and they have beautiful gardens, because they send the maid to water them and that water that they waste is what we all need.

A: When there was no water, did you have to save it?

P: Save it in buckets, in tubs, if you washed a piece of clothes because you no longer had to wear them, you had to recycle that water for your toilet.

A: You need it for everything, water...

P: Water is the most important thing, you can't do without water. I have told many people when we have talked that here the war between us is not going to come because we are going to fight for territory or for the political parties that are useless and that are our money-grubbers. Here the war is going to be between us for a glass of water, for a glass of water. Because right now, thank God, our children have water to bathe, to wash their clothes, for everything. But the time is going to come when, just like the real estate companies are building so many buildings, the time is going to come, I swear to you, that we are going to kill each other for a glass of water.

A: And now that the work of the committee continues with the well, were you involved in the well issue?

P: Yes, sometimes, yes and sometimes not. Sometimes I accompanied them, we were there in dialogue with the neighbours, because there were many people who were opposed to the well, to it being built. And I spoke with many neighbours that I have known for years, but they had already been given therapy by a man from the PRD, a staunch supporter of Mauricio Toledo and Valentín Maldonado. He had been the one who had been in therapy with many people there, on that street in Atl, so that they would not allow the well to be drilled. I know this man because many times he came to the bathroom and wanted to hit me with all of Mauricio Toledo's and Valentín's people. Because I didn't let them close it too, because he wanted the well in Santa Ursula, in San Ricardo Street, to be closed, so we got a lot of people together there. I know dates and things, of course, but because we have all fought for water. Because as I have said to everyone, we should not subtract, we should add. What does that mean? That we should all join together, as one, in the fight for our water and our rights, which is water. Maybe I'm wrong, kid.

A: I agree with you, it is a right and it is, as you say, also a human right and it is important to defend it. Well, I thank you very much for everything you have said to me. Do you identify yourself with any indigenous people or anything like that?

P: No, unfortunately. My father was from Celaya, Guanajuato, where my father was born. My grandfather was from Celaya, Guanajuato, my grandmother was from Guanajuato, but she was from Silao. On my mother's side, her father was from the state of Hidalgo, from a little town called Santa María, yes? on my mother's side, on my grandmother's side, my grandmother was from here, around the entrance to Indios Verdes, that's where my grandmother was from.

A: And you were born here in Mexico City?

P: I was born here, I was born and grew up in Ruiz Cortines, because my whole family is from Ruiz Cortines, and they are from San Pablo Tepetlapa. My whole family lived there on my mother's side, right? And they gave my mother a piece of land that was a block, and my mother, in her ignorance because my mother was never educated, sold it for 400 pesos when one of my little nieces was dying because she was anaemic and they didn't have enough money for doctors, for blood transfusions for my little niece, and my mother sold the land. So that's how we kept going back and forth until I got here.

A: So all the history you've told me and now the committee, do you see it as part of that same struggle, that same history?

P: Of course I do, it is a single story and it is a single struggle. Here they are not more or less, nor am I more or less than them. I only help a little bit, with a little bit of my grain of sand, but I do it. When I approach them I do it from my heart, not wanting to feel more or less, I am Mrs. Pilar and nothing more.

A: Well, thank you very much, Doña Pilar, I don't know if there is anything else you would like to say.

P: Well, I don't know, what did you think? Maybe I even put you to sleep

A: No, I found all this history fascinating and fantastic, all the documents you have, all this seems very, very valuable to me and I thank you very much.

P: I hope that when I'm gone, my children will keep it or give it to someone who can use it and know about all the struggle we went through.

A: Well, at the beginning he told me that he agreed to participate in this project.

P: Oh, of course he did

A: And with all this talk, everything you taught me, do you still agree?

P: Of course I do, for me, go ahead, and I hope it's endorsed as something real because it has documents, something that is not a lie and that I'm not just telling you for the sake of telling you or because I heard it, no. Here are the papers that support me. Here are the papers that support me, I have the basis and the foundations to prove to all the people that I was in the struggle.

A: Thank you for your time

P: No, no, it is to serve you, don't worry. We are here to serve each other. Here it is not because you are more or I am less. Here it is a struggle for you to share this and to see the importance of water. Because this is very important. You see in Xoco what they did, the tower in Mitikah.

A: That's right, yes, from here you can see that tower.

P: So it is not fair that those who have more, who have power, always want to surpass those of us who have no power, those of us who fight only with our weapons, our thoughts and our arms. That's the only thing we fight with.

A: And with the neighbours

P: With the neighbours. The unity. Because they don't know how much damage they are doing on that side when they run out of water and there is nowhere to draw from. Because if you look on that side there are hardly any wells. And thank God we have wells around here.

But if you look at all of our mayors, they've never looked out for their own benefit. They have never looked out for the benefit of the settlers, of the people who live within their demarcation. Because if Toledo hadn't, he wouldn't have allowed what happened on the land that the hermanos revueltas school gave him, he wouldn't have allowed those buildings to be built there. And that they continue to build buildings all over Santo Domingo and that the people don't see the damage that they are doing to us and that they are doing to themselves. Because they continue to build buildings here. In Tlalli they are building like 7 buildings, in Mixtli, just look at how many buildings have been built, son. And who are we going to be the ones who are harmed? Not us, not us anymore, son. And I'm going to tell you why, and I'm going to tell the committee, because we are just passing through. We live as long as God allows us to live, because we all have a date to arrive in the world of 9 months, but we don't know our expiry date. And they don't think about the fact that they have children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. And that whatever they don't take care of the water now, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are going to suffer. They will suffer, we will not. Thank God we have already lived, we have already fought and given what we had to give. But poor those who remain, poor. Because they have allowed things to continue to be built.

Many neighbours here have said to me "you are a poor starving woman, look at the house you have". And yes, I am a poor starving person, I don't have a building. If you look at it, I have a poor little house, but for me it's a palace, for me it's something beautiful, something that God gave me without my having deserved it. And I have to see it as something like that, like a palace. Because it cost me my sweat and blood. Because sometimes I only walked around with the top of my shoe and nothing underneath. That's why it's like sweat, tears and blood. But I thank God that this is not stolen from anyone, it is mine. It cost me and that's why I want to take care of it like a treasure.

A: Well, thank you very much for the interview, I was very happy to talk to you.

P: Look, I'm going to tell you something, the week before last I didn't have a drop of water. But I don't know how long ago, I didn't have water, and what do you think? I called the committee, and I asked them if they could do me a favour and send me a water truck. But it wasn't for me, it was for a lady who is sick, she is on haemodialysis and she didn't even have a bottle, so they told me if I was going to give her the serum. And I said yes, with pleasure, because I am also a nurse's assistant and I like to go when you call me, and if you don't have any money or anything else I like to go and give you an IV, an injection, whatever you need.

So I said yes, and the lady I saw her house because her children have a lot of animals, so I saw it was very dirty, so I told her that if they wanted me to go and clean it for them.

A: Is she a neighbour from around here?

P: Yes, a neighbour. And I asked her if she had any water because I was going to wash my hands so I could inject her. Then it occurred to me to call the committee and ask them if they could bring a water truck to such-and-such a number, such-and-such a house, because the lady was very ill and her surroundings were very dirty. You know that in haemodialysis that is very dangerous. I felt so bad, I swear I started to cry because I said, "How is it possible that these women who are on the committee and who have been in until later, still feel that they are the ones who rule everything and are not empathetic with you? If I see that the person is wrong.

And sometimes people come here to wash in my house, since I had water when I built my pipes, I built them all the way down. And when they came to change the pipes the last time, because they've come four times now to change the pipes, they brought labourers. And I asked them to make the hole bigger so that my hose that is supplying me with water is lower, so that I never run out of water, why? because whoever wants water, here they come for water, I'm happy to give it to them. Even if I have very little, because I don't have a very big cistern, it will hold less than 5,000 litres, but I share it from my heart, out of good will. And I felt very bad that they told me that.

And I didn't ask for it again, do you know why? Because I wasn't asking for it for my house, no. I asked for it because I saw the person in a very bad and dirty situation.

A: And I imagine that she didn't know....

P: I had told her, that it wasn't for me, that it was for a person who is ill. I don't need to tell you what the person has. If you are the one in charge and I tell you that I need you to do me the great favour of sending a water truck to the house because the lady is sick, are you going to tell me that she is sick? Why is she sick? How sick is she? For God's sake, they are inconsistencies or I see it that way.

I once told them here at the meeting, and that's why I also stopped going to the meeting, because one day at the meeting I told them "we who are on the committee and who are part of the committee should see the needs of all the people, not just some, of all the people, whether they come to the meeting or not. Because they are our neighbours, because they have also fought with us and when we need them they are there". But if a person is sick

And look, I've gone to ask for things like a wheelchair for this person and the people in charge then answer you ugly or talk to you with sarcasm. But I don't like that because nobody has the right to treat you like dirt. I have my political constitution, my constitution of Mexico City, and every time I can I go and buy the official gazette and the federal labour law. And I tell my grandchildren, "read it, read it so that nobody wants to go overboard with you". I have one grandson who works, the others are studying, and I tell all of them not to hang out with vicious people. I tell them "no children, look, there is no friend more sincere than a peso in the purse because that little peso will always be with you whether you have more or not, it will always be here and it will not betray you" And maybe I am crazy because then they tell me "oh grandma, you and your things". But I speak with wisdom because I lived it, I trusted people who betrayed me, people. And I don't want the same thing to happen to them.