

MAGAZINE OF THE RED DE TRABAJADORAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN (NETWORK OF WOMEN EDUCATION WORKERS)

**CARING FOR THOSE
PROVIDING CARE
AT HOME AND IN THE CLASSROOM**

**EVANGELICAL & NEOLIBERAL
PHILANTHROPY: A model
exported from the USA to
Latin America**

**GENDER EQUALITY
POLICIES: A key tool to
combating gaps in our
trade unions**



EDUCATE, FIGHT AND PROVIDE CARE?

The overloading of care provision on women:
Education unions and the dilemma of reconciling work,
union activism and family life.



Internacional de la Educación
América Latina
IEAL

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL LATIN AMERICA (EILA)

REGIONAL OFFICE, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Ph. (506) 2234-8404

Post Office Box 1867-2050

Email america.latina@ei-ie-al.org

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Editorial Coordination:

Gabriela Sancho Mena

Writing and editing of articles:

Alina Rodríguez Rodríguez,

Bolívar Rojas Vargas

Contributors:

María Leonela Artavia Jiménez, Miladis Bustillo, María José Chaves Groh,

Paola Giménez Silva, Sandra Hernández, Alejandra Paniagua Bonilla,

EILA's Observatorio Latinoamericanos de Políticas Educativas – OLPE

Revision:

Lucía Zúñiga Solano

Translation:

Lucy Toner

Design, layout and illustration:

Estudio Casarli, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fotografías: **Archivo IEAL, Wikimedia Commons.**

ISSN: 2215-4884. NÚMERO 1, VOLUMEN 9, AÑO 2023

Available for electronic download at: www.ei-ie-al.org

EILA REGIONAL OFFICE TEAM

Combertty Rodríguez Principal Regional Coordinator

Gabriela Sancho Regional Coordinator

Alina Rodríguez Communicator

Bolívar Rojas Communicator

Veronica Leiton Administration

Jacqueline Calderón Administration

Website www.ei-ie-al.org

Portal www.educacionpublica.org

Observatory www.observatorioeducacion.org

Observatory of the RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación:

sumemosigualdad-ieal.org

 /ie.americalatina  @internacional_educacion

 /inteducacion  /internacionaldelaeducación



Attribution - Noncommercial - ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



CONTENTS

EDITOR'S PREFACE

By Gabriela Sancho Mena

PÁG 4

INTRODUCTION

By Fatima Silva

PÁG 5

COVER PAGE

By the EILA Editorial Team

PÁG 6

COVER PAGE

Caring for those providing care at home and in the classroom

By María Jose Chaves Groh and Alejandra Paniagua Bonilla

PAGE 7

The care crisis in Central America: The case of paid domestic work in Costa Rica and Guatemala

By María Leonela Artavia Jiménez

PAGE 12

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Gender equality policies: A key tool to combating gaps in our trade unions

By Alina Rodríguez R.

PAGE 16

The experience of the collective formulation of the COLPROSUMAH gender equality policy

By Nancy Miladis Bustillo and Sandra Hernández

PÁG 24

SOCIAL NOTES

Evangelical and neoliberal philanthropy: A model exported from the USA to Latin America

By the Latin American Observatory of Educational Policy- OLPE

PÁG 28



Indigenous teachers inspire change from their classrooms and their communities

By Alina Rodríguez R. Communicator, EILA

PÁG 40

RESEARCH

¿Who will foot the bill? The loss of labor rights and the deepening of the care crisis for teachers in eight Latin American countries during the pandemic

By Bolívar Rojas Vargas Communicator, EILA

PÁG 43

THE NETWORK WRITES

Chakan Putum's Mayan Resistance: 504 years of history and the challenge of continuing to defy colonial thought

By Paola Giménez

PÁG 47

CULTURAL OUTLOOK

Eternal Voices

Bolívar Rojas Vargas

PÁG 50



Recommendations

PÁG 52

NETWORK LENSE

The Regional Meeting of EILA's Network of Women Education Workers

September 2022, Recife, Brazil

PÁG 54





EDITOR'S PREFACE

By **Gabriela
Sancho Mena**
Editorial
Coordinator
RED Magazine

RED Magazine is an alternative space for dialogue and political formation that promotes research from a gender perspective, embracing feminist thought and critical perspectives. Through this resource, EILA's RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Women Education Workers) seeks to make visible the social, political and union realities that teachers and women in this region experience. The magazine is published annually and is directed at our member organizations, teachers, trade unionists, activists, researchers and other social movements.

Volume 9 of RED Magazine takes on the task of addressing important issues for women education workers. In the first section, analysis is made of the crisis of care and how this impacts on the lives of women teachers and trade unionists due to increasing inequalities. The enormous efforts that women education workers make when undertaking their work responsibilities and trade union and social activism collide head-on with social expectations and demands for them to assume care work on their own.

"Educate, fight—and provide care?", the phrase used on our cover and that serves as the title to this issue aims to question the triple workdays that trade union women undertake. Moreover, it seeks to provoke reflection and action towards the fair distribution of care provision tasks.

Next, the Regional Overview section describes the policy proposals promoted by the Network regarding the development of a Gender Equality Policy within union organizations. This implies a strategic political approach within unions and educational institutions. This section explores the importance of these processes, their challenges, and the experiences of three member organizations from different countries.

The Social Notes section raises two central themes. The first is the political-economic and ideological impact of fundamentalist Christian groups in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the way the influence of these can even dictate educational policy in the region through the donation of millions of dollars. The second article is based on interviews with women Indigenous educators from four countries in the region: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Chile and Paraguay. These women struggle on a daily basis against critical conditions in their profession and context, as well as having to deal with the power structures in their Indigenous communities.

The fourth section reviews the recent study, *Who will foot the bill?*, coordinated by the Network and carried out by CEFEMINA. This study was undertaken in eight countries in the region, analyzing the working conditions of teachers and the impact of these in the most critical moments of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, RED Writes is a section included for the first time in this issue. This space is launched to share articles written by fellow women teachers and trade unionists in the region, showcasing their reflections and points of view. On this occasion, exploration is made of the theme of Mayan resistance and the decolonial perspective of history.

Finally, the Cultural Outlook section is a space that explores music, art, cinema, and critical literature, among others, also telling the stories of women employing different types of artistic expression to contribute to social struggle in the region.

The RED Magazine is one more communicative tool that contributes to the enrichment of trade union political action that the Network of Women Education Workers has activated as part of the struggle for the rights of women.

INTRO- DUCTION

By **Fátima Silva**
General Secretary of CNTE Brazil
Vice-President of the EILA Regional Committee

The women of the 21st century have had a long history of struggle and conquests. In Middle Ages, our predecessors had to endure the trials of the Inquisition and the burning of witches carried out by the Catholic Church. During the Industrial Revolution, they fought for their right to work and for fairer working hours, and at the beginning of the 20th century, they defended their political rights. Today we have women heads of state, women in parliament and holding other positions of political power. Yet despite these achievements and enormous progress, we still encounter enormous challenges.

Now we have commenced the third decade of the 21st century, and we still have to fight for equal pay for equal work, given that our wages are up to 70% less than those of men performing the same work.

In addition, we must face up to the difficulties of double working days that include the tasks of caring for minors, dependent people and other adults. These conditions limit our participation in public forums, in social and trade union organizations, and in politics. Historically we have been conditioned to live and conduct our lives in private spaces, while men assume roles in the public sphere without limitations; changing this situation is another challenge to overcome.

After several decades of work and experience, the RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Women Education Workers) has witnessed certain changes. In the beginning, very few women participated in trade union meetings. Fortunately, today we have many women representatives amongst us from all the member organizations and all countries in the region.



While we have political forums in our organizations, we continue to face challenges, accusations and attacks. Our capacity and leadership as women is challenged, regardless of our performance. We face obstacles intended to prevent us from equitably taking on positions of power and decision-making in our trade union organizations and in society in general.

In this ninth issue of the RED Magazine Educate, fight—and provide care?, we share articles to encourage reflection and dialogue on the crisis of care, gender equality policy and the conditions of women Indigenous teachers, among other topics. We hope that it will serve as a formative tool in our organizations, allowing us to become empowered as women education workers in order to overcome the challenges we face every day as women, as female teachers, and as trade unionists.

EDUCATE, FIGHT AND PROVIDE CARE?

EDUCATION UNIONS AND THE DILEMMA OF RECONCILING WORK, UNION ACTIVISM AND FAMILY LIFE

Our cover phrase seeks to question the difficulties faced by women education workers in fulfilling their work responsibilities, their union activism and their socially-assigned care provision tasks. The impossibility of reconciling work, union activism and family life requires that we to act against the unfair distribution of care provision work.

As a contribution to stimulate reflection, we share two articles that address the crisis of care. The first of these was carried out by the teachers and researchers María José Chaves Groh and Alejandra Paniagua Bonilla, and the second was written by the economist and researcher María Leonela Artavia Jiménez.

These articles approach the topic from different perspectives: The first is written from the perspective of women education workers and points out the strength of education union organizations in fighting for justice in care provision; the second article presents a comparative analysis of the situation of paid domestic work in Costa Rica and Guatemala, emphasizing the value of care provision tasks towards sustaining life.

The issue of care provision also arises when discussing gender equality policies in union organizations, and the working conditions of women Indigenous teachers, two of the topics addressed in the magazine. Additionally, this same issue is the central topic of the study reviewed, "Who will foot the bill?" Thus, the care crisis is dealt with throughout the ninth issue of the RED magazine.

We in the Network of Women Education Workers are committed to taking action to build a future in which no one needs to stop working or fighting the good fight to take on care provision, in which all people can provide and receive care as needed. In the face the overload of care provision work falling on women, education union organizations have the presence and strength to start fighting for the fair distribution of such tasks, in which different actors assume shared responsibility for them.

Editorial Team
RED Magazine

Caring for those providing care at home and in the classroom

Care provision tasks in political
debate, academic reflection, and
union and social agendas



*By María José Chaves Groh * Consultant to
the Observatory of the NETWORK of Education
Workers: Let's Add Equality*



*By Alejandra Paniagua Bonilla * Consultant
to the Observatory of the Network of Women
Education Workers: Let's Add Equality*

* María José Chaves Groh. Sociologist and feminist. María José teaches at the School of General Studies at the University of Costa Rica. She is also an activist and researcher at the Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (Feminist Center for Information and Action, CEFEMINA). E-mail: lunaysol1980@gmail.com. San José, Costa Rica.

Alejandra Paniagua Bonilla. Social worker and feminist. Alejandra is a teacher and researcher for the Social Work Degree at the Occidental Branch of the University of Costa Rica. She also chairs Social Work at the Universidad Estatal a Distancia. E-mail: paniaguab@gmail.com. San José, Costa Rica.

AMAIA PÉREZ, FEMINIST ECONOMIST, DEFINES CARE AS ALL THOSE THINGS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO MAKING LIFE WORK ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. CARE IS, SO TO SPEAK, THE PROCESS OF DAILY RECONSTRUCTION, WHICH IS ALWAYS UNFINISHED, OF PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING (DECEMBER 15, 2020, PARA. 3). SHE FURTHER STATES THE IDEA OF CARE IS LINKED TO DOMESTIC WORK AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK. (APRIL 14, 2022, PARA. 3). AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK. (APRIL 14, 2022, PARA. 3).



Since the 1960s, and especially in the 1990s, different academic and political attempts have been made to conceptualize and debate the issue of care provision and how these tasks are naturally and unilaterally delegated to women, impacting on their time and lives.

Deep debate and ruptures have been caused by positioning the concept of care provision in academic reflection, political debate and as the subject of action by social movements. This problematizes development, interrupting economic models that seek to quantify the generation and production of wealth. It has further opened new debates on the impact that care provision has on women's time, giving rise to what is colloquially known as the double working day.¹

In this context, it is appropriate to consider the historical motto of feminism, "The personal is political." Thus, a debate that could have been focused on the redistribution of domestic tasks within families, that is, within the private sphere, led to a

political discussion about the capitalist economic system built on the basis of homo economicus, or the ideal worker, as Corina Rodríguez labels it, this being a worker who works full-time, and even overtime, and who devotes very little time to physical maintenance of the home and the care of dependent persons (2007, p. 231).

The capitalist economy, in addition to being built on the "ideal worker", places the market at its center of action, such that everything that does not generate wealth, that is not monetized and that is not profitable, lacks economic value and, therefore, social value. Given this premise, it is impossible to delay a discussion on care provision, because this ideal worker requires care for his or her vital reproduction. This is why Amaia Pérez Orozco claims that care provision is the hidden face of the system.

From the above, it is possible to affirm that reflecting on care provision directly challenges the system by insisting that it should not be

A DEBATE THAT COULD FOCUS ON THE REDISTRIBUTION OF DOMESTIC TASKS WITHIN FAMILIES, THAT IS, WITHIN THE PRIVATE SPHERE, LED TO A POLITICAL DISCUSSION ON THE CAPITALIST ECONOMIC SYSTEM

¹ This term is used to refer to the multiplicity of responsibilities that women must attend to in the workplace and at home.



“IN THIS SCANDALOUS THING (THAT IS, IN HETERO-PATRIARCHAL, NEO-COLONIAL AND ECOCIDAL CAPITALISM), CARE PROVISION IS INVISIBLE BECAUSE, IF WE SEE IT, WE BEGIN TO ASK OURSELVES QUESTIONS THAT ARE VERY UNCOMFORTABLE: WHY IS PROVIDING CARE FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE NOT A PRIORITY? WHY DO WE HAVE AN ECONOMY THAT, INSTEAD OF SUSTAINING LIFE, ATTACKS IT?” (PÉREZ-OROZCO, APRIL 14, 2022, PARA. 5).

the market, but the sustainability of life, that is, care provision that forms the underlying structure to the economic, political and social model. Placing emphasis on care provision therefore involves rethinking social organization, both inside and outside the home, as well as the forms of political organization and its objectives.

This theoretical and political debate has also involved discussion as to who is the “subject of care”, and here feminist economists quickly draw attention to the fact that, although there exist populations in need of assistance to meet their basic needs in a way that enables them to live and experience well-being, such as children and people suffering certain illnesses or disabilities, we must not lose sight of the fact that all people — as people, not only as workers — require care, and therefore all people have the right to care.

The incursion and permanence of women in the world of work —that is, remunerated work— has placed the tasks of care provision, which have been historically and socia-

lly assigned to women, in conflict with their job responsibilities. This has created the conditions for the so-called “crisis of care” that currently exists. However, the structure of the social organization of care has (poorly) adapted to this dynamic by splitting tasks between management and performance. It maintains women —within the family— in management, that is, in planning and organizing household work (deciding when to wash, what to cook, among other tasks) and delegates the performance of these to other women (grandmothers, older daughters, paid domestic workers).

These always temporary and uncertain arrangements work as long as the women to whom the tasks are delegated can assume them, for example, provided that the grandmother is not very old or does not suffer from health problems, or provided that the domestic worker can be paid. In addition to being unstable, these arrangements have been shown to be insufficient to meeting the demands of care, such that it becomes imperative that the state, private enterprise and men

IT BECOMES IMPERATIVE THAT THE STATE, PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND MEN ASSUME A COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARE PROVISION.



assume a commitment to social co-responsibility for care provision, in order to overcome the one-sided logic that has hitherto taken control of women's time, efforts and bodies, as if they were inexhaustible resources that the market economy can freely dispose of according to market demand.

Care provision work: The dilemma of providing education while providing care

In a recent study, the CEFEMINA research team identified the deepening of the care crisis for teachers in eight Latin American countries during the pandemic. In this context, as a consequence of the gender-blind measures adopted by most Latin American states, women educators had to meet the demands of the educational process under precarious conditions while lacking state support. Simultaneously, they took care of their own children, as well as dependent and/or sick family members.

For educators, the aforementioned deepening of the care crisis has a differentiated impact to that exercised on other public sector workers for a number of reasons. Firstly, the teaching profession is very highly dominated by women; both

the official data and the lines of research demonstrated that this profession represents an important source of employment for women.

Due to both their sociodemographic and gender characteristics, women teachers have family responsibilities and therefore care provision responsibilities (Rodríguez and Marzonetto, 2015; Esquivel and Pereira, 2017). In our region, this has particular repercussions, because the social organization of care provision tends to place the burden of this care on families and/or on markets. The participation of the state tends to be subsidiary, because, to a greater or lesser degree, it intervenes to attend to those that the market or families cannot provide for on their own (Batthyáni, 2015).

Secondly, in the formal structure of employment, these women professionals are engaged in an occupation that provides care (Rodríguez and Marzonetto, 2015; Esquivel and Pereira, 2017). These occupations are characterized by strong gender connotations, because they require workers to take up maternal attitudes, with the caveat that such attitudes are devalued as they are assumed to stem from women's nature (Rodríguez and

DURING THE PANDEMIC, THE ROLE OF WOMEN TEACHERS AS PROVIDERS OF CARE BECAME VERY CLEAR, WHEN THEY HAD TO NOT ONLY TAKE CARE OF THEIR FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT ALSO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THEIR STUDENTS

Marzonetto, 2015; Esquivel and Pereira, 2017). The formal structure of employment thus aligns with gender roles (Arteaga, 2021).

During the pandemic, the role of women teachers as care providers became more evident, with them not only attending to their family responsibilities, but also maneuvering to provide assistance to their students. They unfairly made up for the lack of state support using their own time and income (CEFEMINA and EILA, 2021).

Nonetheless, the demand to provide care for students neither started nor ended with the pandemic. In Latin America, care provision is socially organized to be delivered by public institutions (and, within these, mainly by health and education professionals) alongside families, communities and the market. The incorporation of children into the schooling system is one of the strategies used by families to reconcile the conflict between work and family life (Faur, 2017). Therefore, despite not being the focus of their daily work, women teachers end up “assuming functions rightly belonging to families (...) that could be considered as providing assistance” (own translation, Faur, 2017, p.90).

The pandemic demonstrated that, when state responsibility decreases, the burden of care provision for women teachers increases. For example, during the pandemic in many countries it was women teachers that were responsible for ensuring compliance with public health protocols. Similarly, in the face of socio-environmental disasters, they have been responsible for appropriately setting up classrooms and other spaces in which to impart face-to-face lessons and/or to provide support to students.

Neoliberal reform in the field of education and the gradual deterioration of education threaten this becoming a recurring demand, that will consistently grow in stren-

THE CHALLENGE FOR TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS IS TO PROVIDE CARE FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN CARE PROVISION IN HOMES AND IN CLASSROOMS

gth. In this adverse scenario, trade union organization is central. In this regard, the research reveals that, in the field of professions related to care provision, educational workers have the best work conditions, precisely because of their historical capacity to organize themselves through unions (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017) and to negotiate collectively.

At this point, the challenge facing teaching organizations is to integrate actions addressing the differentiated impact of care provision into their struggle agenda. In other words, they must provide care for those engaged in providing care at home and in classrooms.

References

- Arteaga, Catalina, Andrade, Valentina, Jiménez, Ariel and Fuentes, Javiera (2021). Tácticas y estrategias de mujeres trabajadoras del sector servicios en Chile frente al conflicto: Participación sindical, empleo y cuidados. *REVISTA CUHSO*, 31(1), pp. 144-175. <https://doi.org/10.7770/cuhso-v31n1-art2296>
- Batthyány, Karina. (2015). *Las políticas y el cuidado en América Latina: Una mirada a las experiencias regionales*. CEPAL, Serie asuntos de género No. 124. *Las políticas y el cuidado en América Latina: una mirada a las experiencias regionales | Publicación | Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (cepal.org)*
- CEFEMINA and EILA. (2021) *¿Quién paga los platos rotos?: pérdida de los derechos laborales y profundización de la crisis de cuidados para los docentes de ocho países de América Latina durante la pandemia. (Who will foot the bill?)* Editorial Internacional de la Educación para América Latina. <https://www.ei-ie-al.org/noticias/quien-paga-los-platos-rotos-ieal-publica-investigacion-sobre-afectacion-de-la-pandemia>.
- Esquivel, Valeria y Pereira, Francisca. (2017). *Las condiciones laborales de las y los trabajadores del cuidado en Argentina. Reflexiones en base al análisis de tres ocupaciones seleccionadas*. In *Trabajo y Sociedad* No. 28. Retrieved from *Las condiciones laborales de las y los trabajadores del cuidado en Argentina: Reflexiones en base al análisis de tres ocupaciones seleccionadas* (scielo.org.ar).
- Faur, Eleanor. (2017). *¿Cuidar o educar? Hacia una pedagogía del cuidado*. In *Encrucijadas entre cuidar y educar. Debates y experiencias*. (pp.87-114)
- Pérez-Orozco, Amaia. (December 15, 2020) *¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cuidados? El Laboratorio Filosófico sobre la pandemia y el antropoceno*. <https://redfilosofia.es/laboratorio/2020/12/15/de-que-hablamos-cuando-hablamos-de-cuidados-amaia-perez-orozco/>
- Pérez-Orozco, Amaia. (April 14, 2022) *¿Cuidados? Una palabra en disputa política*. *CAPIRE*. <https://capiremov.org/es/analisis/cuidados-una-palabra-en-disputa-politica/>
- Rodríguez-Enríquez, Corina. (2007) *Economía del cuidado, equidad de género y nuevo orden económico internacional*. In *Del Sur hacia el Norte: Economía política del orden económico internacional emergente*. <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/clacso/sur-sur/20100705083822/22RodriguezE.pdf>
- Rodríguez, Corina and Marzonetto Gabriela. (2015). *El trabajo de cuidado remunerado: Estudio de las condiciones de empleo en la educación básica y en el trabajo en casas particulares*. In *Documentos de Trabajo Políticas públicas y derecho al cuidado*. Retrieved from *El trabajo de cuidado remunerado: Estudio de las condiciones de empleo en la educación básica y en el trabajo en casas particulares* (conicet.gov.ar)

The crisis of care in Central America:

The case of paid domestic work in Costa Rica and Guatemala



By *María Leonela Artavia Jiménez*¹

The arms of women who sustain life, strong arms, invisible arms.

Life is nurtured every day, at all hours, even when it's not noticed, even when it's not seen. This is not achieved spontaneously nor in a way that is separate from human work. The actions related to this sustainment are known as care provision. They take place in the home in a way that underpins the development of all social processes, from the domestic sphere to the largest multinational company.

Historically, women have taken on the responsibility for performing these vital activities. Perhaps for this same reason, these forms of work are not considered to be relevant nor transcendent to humanity. Patriarchal bias is what renders both life and its sustainment invisible.



Wikicommons, Carolina Latorre Canet.



PAID DOMESTIC WORK: ONE OF THE MOST PRECARIOUS BRANCHES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA



and to receive care from others.² This crisis is due to a whole set of causes,³ but, for the purposes of this article, the patriarchal culture in particular will be taken into consideration, as this organizes life and constitutes work markets that are governed by the rules of the game, which do not take into account the care responsibilities of working people. This intersects with the escalation of insecurity in the working conditions of millions of people.

Paid domestic work and job insecurity

Paid domestic work is an activity that is highly dominated by women workers, on whom the sustainability of thousands of Central American households depends; it is comprised of tasks such as cleaning, washing clothes, washing dishes, food preparation, and taking care of children and teenagers, among others. In addition, it is one of the most precarious branches of economic activity in Central America, making it one of the main fronts of the crisis in the region.

The sustained deterioration over time of working conditions and work relationships manifest in the lack of social protection (job informality), job instability and low remuneration— usually below the minimum wage— which is known as job insecurity. This

In the modern world, the means and methods of providing care have gone through abrupt change under pressure from a structure based on the prevalence of the processes of accumulation of wealth —of capital— and the individualization of the dynamics of life, in a time in which an unprecedented care crisis has emerged with increasing force.

LABOR MARKETS GOVERNED BY THE RULES OF THE GAME THAT DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE CARE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WORKING PEOPLE

The care crisis

The care crisis is understood as a state in which it is difficult to provide care for others, for oneself

phenomenon has been increasing throughout Central America—and in the world—as part of the process in play of the destabilization of working conditions and the reduction of margins for negotiation and trade union action that characterize this neoliberal era we are currently experiencing.

Employment informality as a lack of social protection

Employment informality is a state implying a lack of social protection in the present and the future, in which workers lack health insurance and do not contribute towards pensions.

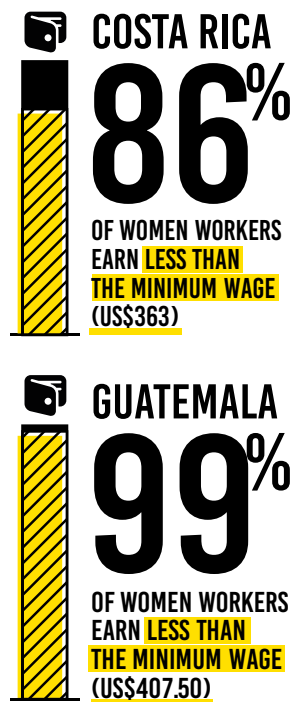
In general, the majority of women performing paid domestic work in the region do so under these conditions. For example, 2022 statistics showed that, in the case of Costa Rica, 88% of women performing paid domestic work were informally employed, while, in Guatemala, 99.5% were in this situation. The above implies that these women are excluded from social protection measures such

1 Master in Latin American Studies and Economist. Academic coordinator of the research project “Trabajo y Crisis: Aportes desde una economía política crítica heterodoxa para la vida” (Work and Crisis: Contributions from a critical heterodox political economy for life), for the School of Economics at the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica.

2 Ezquerro (2011) provides a very valuable analysis of the care crisis.

3 See Artavia, M., Quirós, F. and Benavides, S. (2022).

4 To demonstrate this, see Guatemala’s Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos (Multi-Purpose Household Survey-2022) (INE, 2022) and Costa Rica’s Encuesta Continua de Empleo (Continuous Employment Survey), Fourth Quarter, 2022 (INEC, 2022).



sick leave, disability coverage, health care, and a pension on reaching retirement age.

Job instability

The existence of work contracts ensuring stability over time is of great importance when it comes to making decisions related to meeting the present and future needs of workers, while additionally allowing them to enjoy the peace of mind of a secure income. Nonetheless, instead of being a right, these exist more as a privilege only available to some domestic workers. In countries like Guatemala, only 2% of domestic workers have contracts; in the case of Costa Rica, this is more common, covering 90% of women domestic workers, although, in these cases, such permanent contracts are not linked to the households employing them assuming the responsibilities arising from said employment, such as insurance.

Low remuneration

Wages represent the main source of income for most Central Ameri-

can households, with low salaries and low purchasing power. This frequently implies the population living in conditions of poverty and even extreme poverty, even when they have jobs.

The salient point regarding paid domestic work is that in Guatemala 99% of working women receive less than the minimum wage (3209.24 quetzals = approximately US\$407.50 American dollars), while 26% of these workers have more than four children, implying quite difficult living conditions in terms of the satisfaction of basic needs.

In Costa Rica, this also represents a significant problem, with 86% of women domestic workers who are not underemployed receiving less than the minimum wage in 2022 (216,500 colones = approximately US\$363).

The above has direct implications with respect to the needs of these women workers being met, placing them in conditions of poverty, vulnerability and in circles of low social mobility that include

the people dependent on them, especially when they also act as heads of their households.

The scope of job insecurity

At this point, it is important to consider that the job insecurity is expansive, because working conditions can be seen to have a multiplying effect on the conditions of people's lives. It can therefore be said that insecure jobs result in insecure lives. This leads to the urgent need to protect these jobs, which can protect having the needs met of hundreds of thousands of children, adolescents and other dependents. Even child and adolescent labor could be avoided if the conditions of these working women were improved.

Policy action and the challenge of committing to the change required

Lo lógico ante esta gran precarizaThe logical thing to do in the face of this great insecurity and its related impacts is to coordinate actions against these. To this end different public policy initiatives

and agreements exist to commit states to promoting better work conditions for those performing everyday support work for families who THUS allow both women and men to enter the labor market.

One of the most significant actions in this field is the International Labour Organization's Convention No. 189, which establishes the conditions under which this activity should be carried out, including coverage for migrant popu-

THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO FOR THE WORK CONDITIONS AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS OF PAID DOMESTIC WORKERS TO IMPROVE IN CENTRAL AMERICA



lations in the countries ratifying it. However, a decade after its adoption, it has only been ratified by 36 countries. In Central America, only Costa Rica and Panama have done so, demonstrating the inauspicious treatment given this branch of work, and, even more, the inauspicious treatment given those who perform it.

There is thus still a long way to go before Central America improves the work conditions and employment relationships of paid domestic workers. In the meantime, life will continue to be sustained at the expense of hundreds of women who nurture the children, wash the clothes and prepare the food of the Central American workforce and their employers; women who take care of us with love and dedication, even when they have had to leave their own dependents in the care of someone else; women living in precarious conditions in the face of the indifference of the state, companies and society, for whom they are invisible although they hold us all within their arms.

References

Artavia, M., Quiros, F. and Benavides, S. (2022). "Los cuidados en pandemia: un sector en crisis que sostiene la vida." In Ruesga, S., Pérez, L. and Cebral, M. (2022). "Debates sobre socioeconomía. Precariedad laboral, informalidad y mujer. Políticas de cuidados." Instituto Belisario Domínguez, Senado de la República-Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. <http://bibliodigitalibd.senado.gob.mx/bitstream/handle/123456789/5710/Libro%20Precariedad%20Laboral%20%28010922%29%20vf.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Ezquerro, S. (2011). *Crisis de los cuidados y crisis sistémica: la reproducción como pilar de la economía llamada real.* Investigaciones Feministas. http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_INFE.2011.v2.38610 Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) (2022).

Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos. <https://www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2023/03/23/20230323214737Qdung3ix6ZUh8TejqRC7gLeXcHuhwxAl.sav>

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC) (2022). Encuesta Continua de Empleo. <http://sistemas.inec.cr/pad5/index.php/catalog/302>



Wikicommons, Carolina Latorre Canet.



GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES: A KEY TO COMBATING GAPS IN OUR TRADE UNIONS

EILA'S NETWORK OF WOMEN EDUCATION WORKERS WORKS TOGETHER WITH MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS TO FORMULATE GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

*By Alina Rodríguez R.
Communicator, EILA*

Education International Latin America's RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Women Education Workers) always emphasizes one important fact: about 70% of the people affiliated to the education unions in Latin America are women. Since teaching is historically a profession dominated by women, this proportion makes sense.

Nonetheless, the fact that this statistic does not carry through to be reflected in leadership posts should not fail to surprise us. For decades, such positions have been occupied only by men, which has hindered not only the exercise of women's leadership, but also the visibility of their challenges and concerns.

Maritza Rojas serves as a researcher and consultant for EILA. During the last few years, she has been in charge of providing su-

pport to the process of elaborating a gender equality policy for a number of unions affiliated to EILA. We talked to her about the importance of having the appropriate tools to guide efforts to remove the barriers and obstacles to significant equality within unions.

Rojas is clear in stating that, "When there are no forums for women's participation, their issues become invisible, there is little empathy to understand the concerns of most of the members, because those in positions of power do not share the same experiences."

The process required to achieve equality is complex and doesn't happen overnight. Inequality between women and men is a structural element in our countries, therefore making up part of the culture and daily practices of people and organizations. For this reason, EILA and, in particular, the Network of Women Education Workers, have promoted

the creation of gender equality policies within our member organizations.

The gender equality policy is a political and strategic document that expresses the commitment of trade union organizations to the principles and objectives of gender equality. It includes the global strategy required to implement the related mechanisms.

According to Rojas, it is important to understand that "people think that a gender policy is a policy for women or to promote women, but in fact what we are seeking is to identify the gaps between men and women so that we can identify which critical issues need to be worked on."

The process that Maritza has provided support for, together with Gabriela Sancho, coordinator of EILA and the Network of Women Education Workers, is made up of several stages that include a diagnostic process of each country's situation





ANDES 21 de Junio Gender Equality Policy Workshop, El Salvador

and of the reality of members — both within trade union organizations and in their educational institutions— through documentary review, surveys, virtual and face-to-face workshops with women from the organizations, and analysis and systematization of all findings to consolidate the policy document.

IDENTIFYING WOMEN'S CONCERNS

Maritza explains that a diagnostic process when drawing up a gender equality policy is extremely important, because it permits the context of the women in the organization to be taken into account, as well as the issues they face in their private lives, their work and their union activism.

The review of statistics regarding violence against women, political participation among other issues is a challenge due to the lack of a gender approach on behalf of countries when collecting data;

however, with the information available, in addition to workshops conducted with member organizations, it is possible to understand the situation of women education workers.

Entre los principales hallazgos RA-

mong the main findings repeated in each organization is the existence of many problems of violence against women in the private sphere. This situation, although it does not occur within the unions, problematizes the participation of women and their militancy within unions.

“WHEN THERE ARE NO FORUMS FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION, THEIR ISSUES BECOME INVISIBLE, THERE IS LITTLE EMPATHY TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERNS”

MARITZA ROJAS



SUTEP Gender Equality Policy Workshop, Peru

Another important limitation for women's participation is the lack of empowerment and awareness of the work done on gender issues by women members. In many cases, this reflects the need for training and union political formation processes with a gender focus.

A TASK FOR ALL WOMEN AND MEN

Unfortunately, the limitations for women's participation do not only occur outside union organizations.

Most unions and educational institutions lack regulations and norms to address instances of sexual harassment and bullying. "Codes of conduct must go beyond the promotion of international conventions such as International Labor Organization's Convention 190. We need to define what the position of the union is in the face of these offenses when a union member commits them," she said.

"CODES OF CONDUCT MUST GO BEYOND THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS SUCH AS ILO CONVENTION 190"

MARITZA ROJAS

"Bullying is a behavior found, not in all, but in many organizations that has been normalized," she added. As this expert explained, on some occasions, there are difficult decisions to be made, given that some union members fear that these regulations will become attacks against them, an obstacle that can only be overcome by working on cultural change with all the people in the organization and on the construction of new masculinities.

According to the expert, one of the most outstanding points noted in the workshops is the way in which women and men assume leadership and power differently.

“For men, there is no question that they want power and deserve it, and it is normal for them to participate in such positions. Not for women. So, we also have to work on the reconfiguration of what these new masculinities mean that allow more spaces to cede power: the conclusion is that we must work with men as well,” she explained.

Rojas additionally stated that it is also important for women to reflect on the issue of identity: in education, there is an established discourse in which women teachers are second mothers, and therefore “they can do it all”.

“The woman teacher is a teacher, a psychologist, a nurse, the second mother, the one who is in charge, the one who takes care of the children. The reproduction of these processes is very strong because it tends to reproduce the maternal figure, which is a figure of sacrifice and may fall prey to the idea that others deserve to be in decision-making positions while women teachers don’t,” Rojas explained.

SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Although the process of the elaboration of the gender equality policy has been valuable, Rojas explained that, once the results have been systematized, it must be ensured that the policy allows for real change.

This is achieved by defining a medium- or long-term policy, that asks what change is expected by the organization and that defines: periodic measurements to be made monitoring how this change manifests itself; who is going to be in charge of the specific tasks; and what resources are going to be allocated to this process. That is, the equality policy must be institutionalized within the organization.

THE MAIN CHALLENGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY IS MUSTERING THE POLITICAL WILL TO ENACT IT

“If we do not have clear actions of compliance, in which women themselves do the monitoring, nothing is achieved by creating a policy. That’s why it is important that the policy is built from the grass roots up,” Rojas explained.

However, she also stressed the need for the union hierarchy be involved in the process, because, once approved, the main challenge for a successful gender equality policy is mustering the political will to enact it. Empowering women and

opening spaces for their participation within organizations is also a way to attract new members. A trade union movement cannot be conceived of without clear policies for women’s participation, empowerment and training in order for the unions to be truly democratic and representative.

Maritza Rojas, EILA consultant





Paola Giménez,
head of the Women's
Secretariat of
OTEP-A, Paraguay

THREE COUNTRIES, THREE EXPERIENCES

LEILA's Network of Women Education Workers, together with the consultant Maritza Rojas, have provided support to the process of developing gender equality policies in four organizations in three of the region's countries: Paraguay, Peru and El Salvador.

This began with a diagnostic process within organizations, the results of which are being systematized, and which will be included in the final document created for these policies.

We asked women representatives of these organizations to explain the work done, the main findings and the importance of this initiative for their organizations.

Paola Giménez, Organización de Trabajadores de la Educación del Paraguay-Auténtica (OTEP-A)

Paola is the policy manager of her union's Women's Secretariat, a body that has existed since the organization was founded. The secretariat has tried to work on the issue of political training and gender training to meet the needs of women members who suffer the consequences of living in a country where a succession of conservative governments has allowed the deepening of gender-based violence.

In this context, a group of women from OTEP-A have participated in the workshops to elaborate a gender equality policy, a process that has come to strengthen the efforts already made by the organization.

"It is a very important step that we have to take as an organization to deepen the political participation of women, discussing what we understand gender equality to mean and how to make this concrete in terms of trade union policy," she reflected.

**"IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT
STEP THAT WE HAVE TO TAKE
AS AN ORGANIZATION TO
DEEPEN WOMEN'S POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION"**

PAOLA GIMÉNEZ

She explained that the Secretariat has tried to develop tools to support female members who suffer from domestic violence. “Although we cannot replace the role that state institutions should play, it is an urgent issue and we cannot turn our backs on these people,” she said.

Paola highlighted the political formation of the organization’s women as one of the most important branches of its work. She indicated that, at a time when union members are retiring and in the face of the strong progress of religious discourse, it is particularly important to incorporate women more intimately within the union dynamics.

On the other hand, she said there is a clear need for some reflection on how to incorporate Indigenous women into unions. Currently, they are encouraging the National Indigenous Peoples’ Forum to appoint two women for inclusion in the national team.

Paola highlights that among the

main limitations identified in this process are the obstacles of reconciling union work with the care provision tasks that fall to the majority of women.

She believes that one of the priorities on the organization’s agenda should be to press for compliance with the law on school-based childcare. The union is currently looking for ways to cover this need, with care services already being implemented in some regions.

“We expect to continue to provide support to this process that we have been defending from within the organization, so that more women members can take up this work and strengthen the OTEP-A Women’s Team, and strengthen the empowerment processes,” she stated when talking about future prospects.

“It’s a challenge for us women. We have to take ownership of this as an organization, the policy must not just remain on paper,” she concluded.

Rosa María Leyzaquía, Sindicato Unitario de Trabajadoras en la Educación del Perú (SUTEPA)

Rosa is the Secretary of Gender Equality for SUTEPA and she recognizes that through the workshops for a gender equality policy, she has discovered new opportunities for change that can be generated through this forum.

In Peru, as in other countries in the region, the pandemic saw a dramatic increase in reports of gender violence. There is an alarming scenario of a lack of protection for women and, even more so, for girls.

SUTEPA has therefore held various workshops on gender equality and gender awareness “but we hadn’t had the opportunity to follow up on these and for them to become something more concrete.”

“We women started working in 2020 and those who were at the last workshop are different women,” Rosa María says, referring to the change of colleagues involved in these pro-

*Rosa María
Leyzaquía,
Secretary of
Gender Equality,
SUTEPA, Peru*



“WE WOMEN REALLY NEEDED FORUMS FOR CONVERSATION AS WOMEN, AS TEACHERS AND AS TRADE UNIONISTS.”

ROSA MARÍA LEYZAQUÍA

cesses. One of the most important findings of this process has been that “women really needed forums for conversation as women, as teachers and as trade unionists.”

“We have been working on the issue of taking up a gender perspective, but it was not serving as a backbone. Work was being done with students, but never starting from ourselves and our reality as teachers or within the organization,” she added.

Rosa stated that the process has allowed women to identify as violence certain situations that had previously been completely normalized. For example, she indicates that previously they did not see the overloading of tasks that teachers are forced to complete as teachers, mothers, psychologists, nurses, etc., as violence. Similarly, they identified as violence their exclusion from decision-making spaces in which they did not feel involved.

“Today more of our women colleagues are visible in the union structure, but they now have the goal of changing the statute and moving towards greater representation,” she explained.

She added that these measures must be accompanied by training that allows women, on the one hand, to feel capable of taking on these tasks within the organization, while on the other hand, having men be willing to give up some of these spaces, while also listening to the experiences of their female colleagues.

The findings of the workshops with the women in SUTEP are in the process of being systematized, and once this stage is completed, the gender equality policy can be submitted to a vote.

“Now the challenge is to make visible the leadership of the women members who have grown through this process. To see them more empowered, speaking with more strength, speaking to the masses with confidence,” she said.

Rosa hopes that the gender equality policy allows the organization to follow up on these initiatives, whether she or someone else comes to occupy the Secretary position. “We want it to be possible that there is a change in the incumbent and yet for continuity to occur,” she concluded.

Gloria de María Roque,
Asociación Nacional de
Educadores Salvadoreños
(ANDES 21 DE JUNIO)

On making comparisons with other organizations in her country, Gloria de María Roque —Secretary for Women in ANDES JUNE 21— gives thanks for the opportunities to participate that are given its women members by the union.

“Often when women are taken into account in organizations, it is only to support the struggle on the street, but not to occupy important positions,” she explained.

However, in a country in which domestic violence, work and street harassment are an everyday issue for women, the activist recognizes the importance of spaces such as workshops for the elaboration of the gender equality policy.

As in other unions, she explains that, even when spaces for their participation exist, women still have limitations, because they depend on the permission of their husbands to participate, and there are even situations in which



Gloria de María Roque, ANDES 21 de Junio Secretariat for Women, El Salvador

they claim not to feel capable of doing so.

“Women’s main commitments are still to household matters, and these patterns make it difficult for us to take up positions both within the union and at school,” she explained.

For this reason, Gloria considers one of the main findings of the workshops to be the need for training to awaken the interest of women in getting involved in trade union activities. This is “important to us because only through unionization can we find someone who will fight for our interests,” she said.

Gloria indicated that this process highlighted other issues that confront women teachers, such as the need for childcare so that they can attend meetings, as well as the difficulty faced by some to attend union activities since traveling can be dangerous.

The process of elaborating the gender equality policy is also very advanced in this organization. The policy should be systematized,

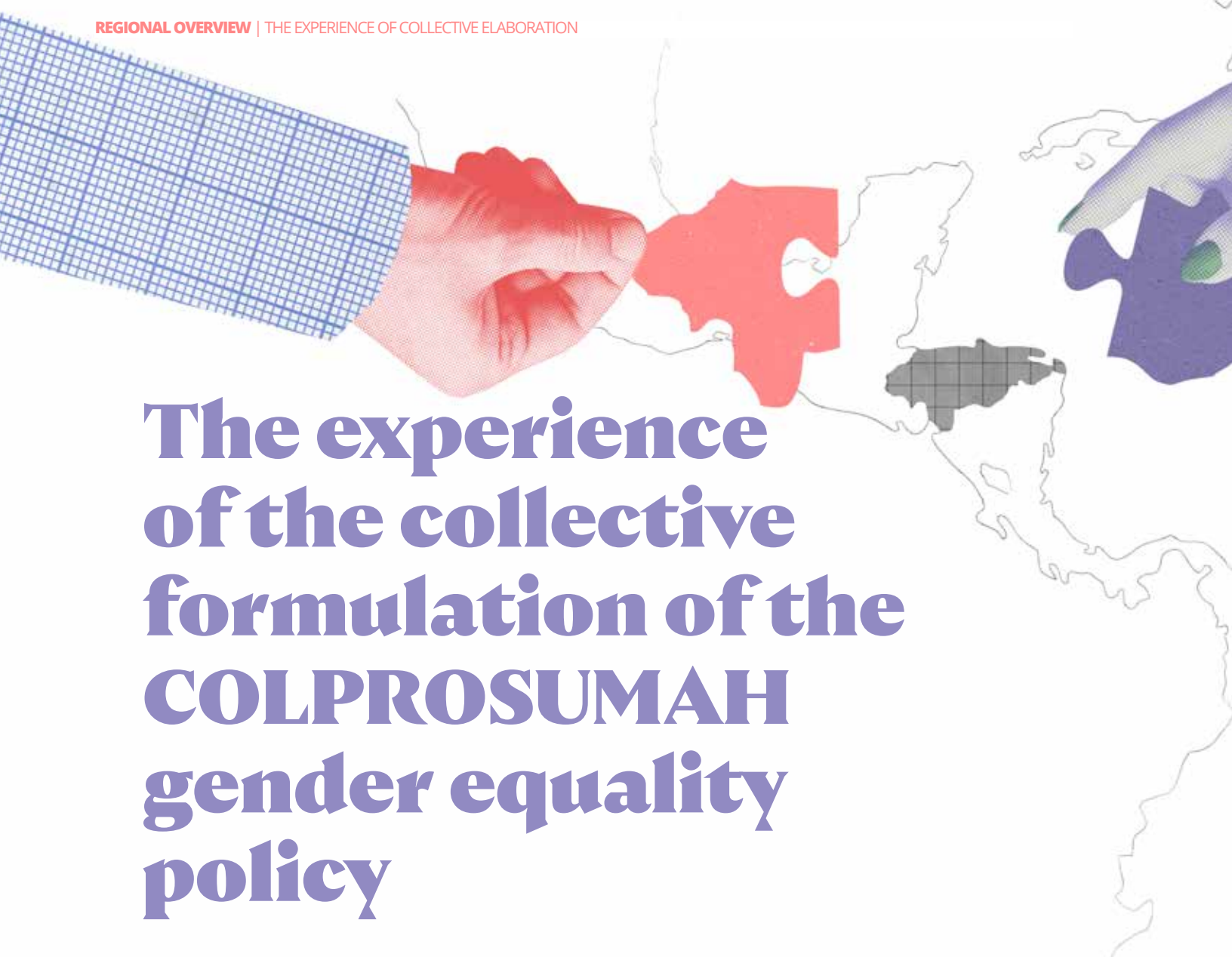
then promoted in all departments, and finally approved by the executive council.

“The women who participated in this process are very grateful to the national leadership for the

political will to go through with it,” Gloria de María said, noting that the organization’s leadership is committed to this initiative, an important requirement when it comes to giving continuity to processes like this.

“THE WOMEN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROCESS ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE POLITICAL WILL TO GO THROUGH WITH IT”

GLORIA DE MARÍA ROQUE



The experience of the collective formulation of the COLPROSUMAH gender equality policy

THE COLEGIO PROFESIONAL SUPERACIÓN MAGISTERIAL HONDUREÑO (HONDURAN PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, COLPROSUMAH) THROUGH ITS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST EDUCATION UNIONS IN LATIN AMERICA TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THIS LEVEL ON THE ISSUE OF EQUALITY.



By Nancy Miladis Bustillo, (Former Secretary of Women's Affairs) and



Sandra Hernández (current Secretary of Women's Affairs)

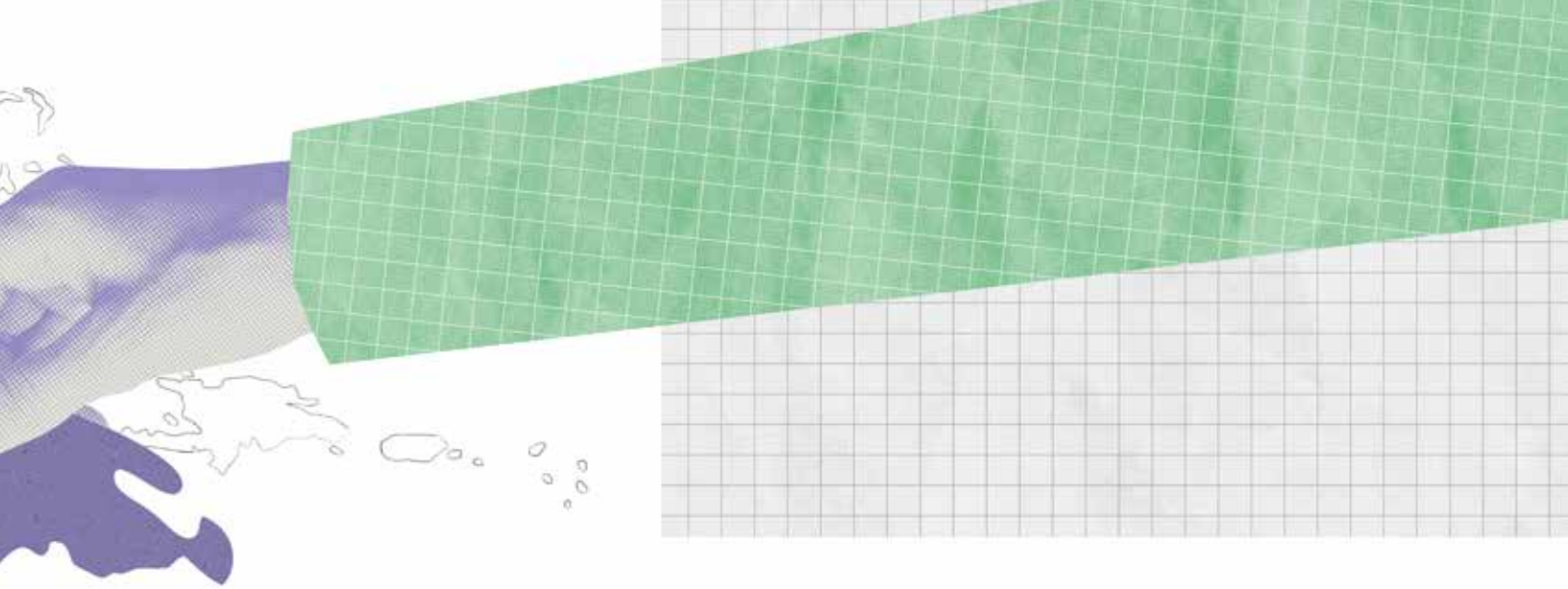
In 2018, in a context of social, political, and economic instability and anti-union violence in Honduras,

the Colegio Profesional Superación Magisterial Hondureño (Honduran Professional Teachers Association, COLPROSUMAH for the initials in Spanish) opted to issue the mandate to create a gender equality policy, as a political-organizational strategy to strengthen the union.

The General Assembly of the union voted unanimously in favor of ta-

king a significant step in the field of rights, making it one of the first education unions in the region to achieve this level of progress in matters of equality through a general assembly.

In 1993, by agreement of its Ordinary Assembly, COLPROSUMAH had already created a Secretariat of Women's Affairs belonging to the



TO ACHIEVE A RESULT LIKE COLPROSUMAH'S, SUCH AN INITIATIVE MUST EMERGE WITH THE SUPPORT OF POLITICAL WILL, FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR ALLOCATION TO THE GENDER SECRETARIAT, AND AN AWARENESS-RAISING PROCESS FOR MEMBERS.

Central Executive Board, which has thus been operating for 30 years, during which time it has achieved the strengthening of gender equality and the participation of women on equal terms with men.

That is why in 2018 the gender equality policy was proposed, with the objective of making visible and acting on the main issues and needs confronting the organization's members, to eliminate all forms of discrimination existing between men and women, and to seek greater equity and equality within the union.

It was a political decision, proposed to the organization's Executive Committee by the Secretariat of Women's Affairs, and then elevated to the organization's highest authority, COLPROSUMAH's National Assembly.

This organization, a member of Education International Latin America (EILA), complied with the suggestion of this body to promote this type of policy to encourage the effective and fair participation of women in trade union organizations.

Since then, the General Assembly has issued a mandate to the Central Executive Board (2018-2020) to start this process. This work involved enormous effort and political resources as there is resistance to understanding how this process is a key strategy to union strengthening, despite the fact that more than 80% of education unions are made up of women.

To achieve a result like COLPROSUMAH's, the initiative must emerge with the support of political will, financial resources for allocation to the gender secretariat, and an awareness-raising process for members.

Because of this, a methodological participatory process was initiated in two stages: the first was the construction of a diagnosis of the current state of social equality of teaching professionals who are COLPROSUMAH members; and the second was the formulation of the Institutional Gender Policy (PIG for the initials in Spanish), and the related mechanisms and tools (PEG, PAG and a Project Portfolio) which together constitute the Institutional Gender System.

PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS

This first stage was enriched by an in-depth discussion about the conceptual orientations that have inspired gender public policy documents in Honduras and the world. Based on this, a conceptual framework was developed that contributed to gaining a closer understanding of the situation of the women in COLPROSUMAH.

The women managed to visualize, analyze and become aware of the different ways in which gender inequities and discrimination occur in their union organization, educational institutions, communities and families.

Other important actors that participated were the leadership of the different boards of directors of local, departmental and national branches of COLPROSUMAH, who provided an in-depth analysis of the causes, effects, equality gaps and institutional guarantee mechanisms for the formulation, operation and sustainability of the Gender Policy, the Strategic Plan, and the Action Plan.

The diagnostic process included a workshop analyzing the educational ecosystem. This was conducted in a hybrid fashion using social networks, telephones and face-to-face meetings.

THE WOMEN MANAGED TO VISUALIZE, ANALYZE AND BECOME AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH GENDER INEQUITIES AND DISCRIMINATION OCCUR IN THEIR UNION ORGANIZATION, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES.

To carry out the participatory research, a group of 32 representatives from 16 Honduran departments was formed. Each of the women teachers were trained researchers who assumed the responsibility of reviewing materials, designing work sessions in their respective territorial areas, calling on participants in the 167 sections, recording and consolidating data, organizing logistics and the identification of the material resources necessary for the application of the surveys used, an essential step with respect to the quality and nature of the information collected.

There was a third methodological step involved in this diagnostic process involving the fieldwork in each COLPROSUMAH regional section, the municipal territorial spaces where focus groups were held and surveys were administered.

90 to 95 teachers per department participated, as did 160 parents and community members. In addition to this, the external consultant who assisted the whole process conducted nine in-depth interviews with the members of the National Central Executive Board.

The fourth step of the diagnostic process was an online virtual survey. This was to facilitate the completion of this instrument by those teachers who were not visited or did not participate in the focus groups and who wanted to contribute their point of view with respect to gender gaps and inequities.

The final step consisted of the retrieval of results and the later drafting of the document. This was validated by the organizational structure of the Secretariat for Women's Affairs, COLPROSUMAH's Central Executive Board, and Education International Latin America (EILA). Additionally, it was disseminated at the union assembly held in December 2019 and at meetings of COFENACOL, COFEDCOL, and COFESECOL between January and March 2019. All this acted as a preamble to creating the Gender Policy Institutional Formulation document.

DESIGN OF THE INSTITUTIONAL GENDER POLICY

The second stage of the process was the design of the Institutional Gender Policy, along with its mechanisms and instruments, which were developed on the basis of the priority areas identified by the participating teachers.

These included leadership and the participation of women, the elimination of violence in the classroom and in COLPROSUMAH structures, the creation of safe spaces for teachers, recognition that gender equality priorities

are essential in the organization's plans, that the Education Secretariat and COLPROSUMAH's budgets and statistics should have a gender focus, the implementation of regulations on gender equality, and working on the empowerment of women to occupy representative positions.

These reflections and analysis of the situation represented in COLPROSUMAH's gender diagnosis allowed it to go ahead with the second stage of the process, creating its Institutional Gender System. This included the design of the strategic, tactical and operational documents intended to lead to overcoming the inequalities existing in the teaching profession and the Honduran educational system, culminating in September 2020.

The Gender Policy represented an extensive and challenging process of consultation among the union's women members, and it established the roadmap to be followed in forging a new form of union coexistence within COLPROSUMAH.

At all local, departmental and national organizational levels, it was possible to identify the problems that afflict women in their daily lives, in the exercise of their profession and in their union activism.

The principles and values, the mission and the vision contained in the policy indicate that a new type of leadership, ethics and morals must be fostered for the organization to achieve gender equity. To this end, substantial and coherent elements are required to

THE GENDER POLICY INVOLVED AN EXTENSIVE AND CHALLENGING CONSULTATION PROCESS CARRIED OUT AMONG THE UNION'S WOMEN MEMBERS, AND IT ESTABLISHED THE ROADMAP TO BE FOLLOWED IN FORGING A NEW FORM OF UNION COEXISTENCE WITHIN COLPROSUMAH.



THIS EXPERIENCE TOOK 9 MONTHS OF INNOVATIVE PARTICIPATORY WORK AMONG THE WOMEN IN THE DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES.

support the priorities and efforts of the national, departmental and local structures of the Secretariat for Women's Affairs, and strategic alliances must be created with the government, civil society, and other relevant actors.

This experience took 9 months of innovative participatory work among the women in the different organizational structures.

The 32 women who made up the management team undertook the design of the participatory research, analysis of the context, planning, the design of the Institutional Gender System and its promotion.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER POLICY

From the moment it was approved, the organization achieved a series of successes in implementing this policy.

Firstly, it has allowed them to maintain the local and departmental structures, providing constant motivation for processes of training and awareness-raising with regards to gender issues.

The organization has promoted strategic alliances with other actors such as the group *Ecuménicas por el Derecho a Decidir* (Ecumenical Women for the Right to Decide), further undertaking a series of human rights training sessions, forming the *Red de Docentes Defensoras en Derechos Humanos* (Network of Women Teacher Hu-

man Rights Defenders), and holding a training process on sexual education and reproductive rights with the participation of teachers from 16 departments, along with students and parents.

The Secretariat of Women's Affairs has also prioritized the promotion of the gender policy's initiatives, participating in the organization's radio and TV programs, elaborating pamphlets and working on a book of *Women's Stories*.

In addition, they have promoted participation in international spaces such as the *Marcelino*

Women Teachers (DDHH).

However, as can be expected in these types of processes, the application of the gender equality policy has also had to overcome some obstacles. Among these are the weak commitment of the structures to undertaking activities on section (local branch) and departmental levels, and the high incidence of men in decision-making in structures at all levels.

In addition, there are some pending issues such as expansion of the Secretariat's budget in order to be able to undertake face-to-face

THE ORGANIZATION HAS PROMOTED STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH OTHER ACTORS SUCH AS THE GROUP *ECUMÉNICAS POR EL DERECHO A DECIDIR* (ECUMENICAL WOMEN FOR THE RIGHT TO DECIDE), FURTHER UNDERTAKING A SERIES HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING SESSIONS, FORMING THE *RED DE DOCENTES DEFENSORAS EN DERECHOS HUMANOS* (NETWORK OF WOMEN TEACHER HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS), AND HOLDING A TRAINING PROCESS IN SEXUAL EDUCATION AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF TEACHERS FROM 16 DEPARTMENTS, ALONG WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

Muñoz Foundation's forum, *El papel de la mujer en el desarrollo de América* (The role of women in the development of America), the forum *Formación en el marco del día de la mujer hondureña* (Training in the framework of Honduran Women's Day), and in the forum, *Experiencias exitosas de la Red de Maestras* (Successful experiences of the Network of

activities, organize its website and include training on masculinity (although these events have already been scheduled).

Without a doubt, the case of *COLPROSUMAH* is an example and starting point for other organizations in the region that want to carry out similar work to build just, equitable and violence-free organizations.

EVANGELICAL AND NEOLIBERAL PHILANTHROPY: A model exported to Latin America from the USA

At Education International (EI) we promote a secular state that guarantees freedom of worship to all people, regardless of the religion or faith they profess. The secular state must safeguard the secular character of the educational sector, so that all religious practices are considered equally valid, without one having privileges or advantages over another. However, in the region it has become increasingly common that the demand for a secular state is losing focus, while political machinations to use religion for electoral purposes are growing, with increased limitation of the freedom and autonomy of people to exercise their faith, as well as their right to congregate to exercise their religious beliefs freely.

By the Observatorio Latinoamericano de Política Educativa (Latin American Observatory of Educational Policy, OLPE)

The progress of the regional anti-rights agenda, favorable to economic liberalism and social conservatism, is part of a thematic program with planned actions. Religious movements —mainly made up of evangelical and neo-Pentecostal groups, and to a lesser extent those from Catholic sectors and Protestant groups¹— are key allies of this anti-rights agenda.

This program did not arise organically in Latin America, but rather the progress of anti-rights movements is backed with multi-million-dollar funding by evangelical and Christian philanthropy organizations, following action strategies designed to achieve this goal. The same recipe is observed from the United States to Tierra del Fuego.

This converts religious structures and people's faith into instruments used to exercise and consolidate political and ideological control by the most conservative sectors.

Making use of structures of faith is

UNA MISMA RECETA SE OBSERVA DESDE ESTADOS UNIDOS HASTA TIERRA DEL FUEGO, SEGÚN LA CUAL LAS ESTRUCTURAS RELIGIOSAS Y LA FE DE LAS PERSONAS SE CONVIERTEN EN INSTRUMENTOS PARA EJERCER Y CONSOLIDAR UN CONTROL POLÍTICO E IDEOLÓGICO DE LOS SECTORES MÁS CONSERVADORES.

not a new phenomenon, but rather is a common practice in the region

for over a century. However, in recent decades greater technical and legal capacity for political lobbying can be observed, as well as greater sophistication in the discourses and allies within the region's judicial, legislative and executive powers.

The funds that support the anti-rights lobby and its mobilizations come from multiple religious actors. According to studies published by The Guardian newspaper, during the 2010-2015 period, the U.S. Catholic group Human Life International mobilized more than US\$1,300 billion for organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean to campaign against the legalization of abortion, including the Fundación Sí a la Vida (Yes to Life Foundation) in El Salvador, which received about US\$47,000. At the same time, organizations such as 40 Days for Life and Heartbeat International have developed a training strategy for anti-rights individuals and groups (Human Life

¹ The Protestant denomination is traditionally used to refer to Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Lutheran churches.

² Reports were audited from 2012 to 2021. See <https://www.hli.org/about-us/annual-report-2020/>

International, 2012-2021).²

Extensive analyses have been made on how the largest evangelical churches³ in the region have become “rich and powerful enterprises, operating in a symbiotic relationship with the political establishment and extending their networks internationally” (Cairns Dossier, 2021) with the backing of donations and financing funds. Large evangelical churches thus operate as business structures with a great deal of economic power and with clear objectives about the type of electoral political scenario and public policy management that is functional for them to maintain that power, with which they come to influence even areas such as educational policy.

Given the above, in this article, the Latin American Observatory of Education Policies (OLPE for the initials in Spanish) proposes to analyze the role of evangelical philanthropy in supporting and developing an international movement with an anti-rights program and some historical elements of the behavior of this philanthropy.

Iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) in Avenida Corrientes, City of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Roberto Fiadone.



WHY SHOULD THE UNION MOVEMENT CHALLENGE THE ANTI-RIGHTS PROGRAM?

The Latin American trade union movement is the main ally of working people and it therefore is essential that it join in on regional debate when, led by the discourse of religious movements, this focuses on the well-being of families.

Why is the union movement an ally of families? For over a century, the trade union agenda has struggled for the protection and strengthening of a set of rights and institutions that are essential to the well-being of families: the defense of decent wages, clear limits on working hours, paid parental leave for the pre- and postnatal period, safe conditions and risk prevention in the workplace, the protection of children from exploitation and child labor, the defense of public education and public health services, access to early childhood care services, protection of the right to holidays and retirement, and wage increases to match inflation.

However, none of these struggles are included in the continental programs of religious movements, which claim to represent families from groups such as Con Mis Hijos No Te Metas (which originated from the North American group “Don’t Mess with My Kids”), Por la familia (For the Family) and the so-called pro-life groups, present in countries such as Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Argentina and Chile.

Don’t Mess with My Kids is an international structure that is gaining popularity at a time when Latin America is seeing progress in sexual and reproductive rights as the product of life in a democracy and several decades of protest and mobilization by social movements. This progress includes achievements such as gender identity laws, sexual rights and



Protest march of conservative movements in Lima, Peru. Mayimbu.

the decriminalization of abortion, laws allowing marriage between same sex couples, etc.

In Colombia, parents in different cities marched in August 2016 to oppose the inclusion of comprehensive sex education in school curricula, considering this to represent “gender ideology”. Two years later, in Costa Rica, parents blockaded about twenty educational institutions on the first day of the 2018 academic year in order to protest against sex education programs. In 2019, family mobilizations occurred in the Dominican Republic. Similar mobilizations have taken place in Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and Colombia. In fact, in May 2023, even as this article is being written, there were

³ Some examples of evangelical congregations are the Assemblies of God, the Foursquare Church and The Church of God, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Elim Pentecostal Church and The Word

demonstrations in Honduras against the Law for Comprehensive Education for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy, which was to see this educational content implemented in secondary education. The first Honduran presidential appointee, Salvador Nasralla, participated in the mobilization.

The Don't Mess with My Kids groups have displayed systematic activism in opposition to the implementation of comprehensive sex education programs with a gender perspective and against diversity in public education policies in the region, so generating a climate of

threats and harassment against teachers, students and educational authorities. At the same time, although with less funding and lacking an evangelical philanthropy structure to sustain them, student movements in the region have developed their own mobilizations to defend and demand compliance with their right to comprehensive sex education.

In the face of these attacks, it is pertinent to remember that union and social movements with a human rights perspective are the true defenders of families in the region. Defense of the right

to work, of eight-hour working days, of parental leave, of public education from early childhood, protection of the right to retirement, access to housing without paying usury costs, of the right to public healthcare and to safe public spaces: this, the agenda of the trade union, is the true agenda of family rights.

THE POLITICS OF HATRED AND FAITH, A SPRINGBOARD FOR NEOLIBERAL ECONOMICS AND THE CONSERVATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The continental program promoted by religious groups does not address the lack of policies for work-life balance, the need to improve maternity and paternity leave, let alone the impact of unemployment and low wages, much less the serious inequality in the distribution of wealth that affects families. From the point of view of public policy, these issues

are considered urgent for the well-being of families.

Rather, as previously mentioned, the topics promoted in the agendas of the the "Don't with my kids" groups are usually opposed to comprehensive sex education, to progress in legislation on sexual and reproductive rights, and, in general, to taking up a gender perspective, both in educational

policy and in other public policies.

The "Don't Mess with My Kids" movements are opposed to this type of legislation because they consider that this extension of human rights threatens the existence of the hetero-parental family (with a female and a male parent). They consider that these initiatives are supported by progressive international philanthropy sectors (which supposedly have George Soros' resources at their disposal) with the aim of imposing a new socio-cultural dynamic in favor of "homosexualization from childhood",⁴ and the promotion of a



The then President Jair Bolsonaro visits the Temple of Solomon, belonging to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in São Paulo.

free market for abortions and sex change, among others.⁵ Religious sectors can be seen repeatedly alleging that the gender perspective (or “gender ideology” as they call it) is imposed by the economic elite “to impose the gay agenda on public policies” (Diario UNO, February 19, 2017).

The “Don’t Mess with My Kids” movements are promoted as initiatives lacking ideology. However, in the different countries where these movements operate, believers in fundamentalist Christian ideology, sympathizers, financiers and donors to right wing political

and in the sphere of public opinion, generating an unfavorable climate for the growth and consolidation of opinions more focused on human rights. Four notorious cases have been observed in Bolivia, Peru, Costa Rica and Brazil.

In 2021, the Peruvian journalist Graciela Tiburcio Loayza⁶ announced that Keiko Fujimori met with more than seven hundred ultra-conservative evangelical pastors, thanks to the efforts of pastors to intervene in political life, as was the case of Pastor Nestor Encinas, who had been a candidate to the Andean Parliament for



Keiko Fujimori.

IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, THESE MOVEMENTS HAVE DISPUTED PUBLIC POLICIES THAT PROTECT AND EXPAND HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL POLICY WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE, POLICY THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION.

parties and the religious right can be seen to be participating in their ranks. Such movements tend to defend positions based on economic liberalism and social conservatism. They invoke slogans against gun control, opposing public attention on human rights, particularly with respect to sexual and reproductive rights, supporting the death penalty, the use of physical punishment against minors, and harsher penalties against young people in conflict with the law.

In different countries in the region, these movements have disputed public policies that protect and expand human rights, including educational policy with a gender perspective, policy that promotes diversity and comprehensive sex education. These groups are usually very visible in the media

Fujimori’s political party.

In 2020, it was learned that during the government of Jair Bolsonaro,⁷ the Secretariat of Communication of the Presidency (Secretaria de Comunicação da Presidência, SECOM) paid for airspace for up to thirty million reais (approximately US\$6.1 million) on radio and television stations belonging to religious leaders who had openly expressed their support for Bolsonaro, among these TV Record belonging to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and TV Pajuçara. This represented 10% of SECOM’s entire budget.

During the 2022 electoral campaign, Rodrigo Chaves, the current president of Costa Rica, signed an agreement with a group of evangelical pastors during Foro Mi País (My Country Forum). The

agreement included, among other things, eliminating the gender perspective from health and education policies, as well as facilitating the proposal of candidates by the religious sector for the Ministries of Health, Education and Foreign Affairs, among others. The same agreement established that the now President Chaves would collaborate with the evangelical sector throughout the country “from the Presidency and the various state ministries”.⁸

Finally, in Bolivia, in 2019, Luis Fernando Camacho, considered the main ally of evangelical leaders in Santa Cruz, led the protests that ended in a coup d’état against Evo Morales. Attacks against Morales were based on sayings from the Bible and religious arguments.

The neoliberal sectors and the conservative church groups organized their alliances to achieve control of the state in the region. From country to country, the use of the same topics is repeated as content in electoral programs, in the absence of relevant political proposals. The financing mechanisms of religious groups in political campaigns are also repeated, with the consequent “payment of electoral debt” by appointing figures of religious groups to public office.

⁴ Speech by the Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, Zsolt Semjén, at the 2017 Parliament, “The Christian duty is to fight against the Satan/Soro’s plan”. <https://wise-gra-dpost.com/en/2017/10/12/hungarian-christian-democrats-against-satan-soros-and-the-freemasons/>

⁵ Schlatter, Evelyn and Steinback, Robert (December 9, 2010) “10 Hateful Anti-Gay Myths Debunked”.

⁶ Article available at: <https://wayka.pe/keiko-fujimori-recurre-a-alianza-con-pastores-de-con-mis-hijos-no-te-metas/>

⁷ Article available at: <https://apublica.org/2020/06/governo-gastou-r-30-milhoes-em-rádios-e-tvs-de-pastores-que-apoiam-bolsonaro/>

⁸ Article available at: <https://www.nacion.com/el-pais/politica/chaves-se-compromete-con-pastores-a-eliminar/JUFZSQUQBKAS4F2JMIWFSJ4/story/>



Former General Efraín Ríos Montt testifying at the trial in which he was convicted of crimes against humanity and genocide due to the massacre of Indigenous peoples in Guatemala carried out during his mandate.

THE FOOTPRINT OF WASHINGTON

Leftist social movements in Latin America have repeatedly denounced the way in which the United States governments have instrumentalized and financed Protestant missionary groups to counter the progress of left-wing Catholic movements as “the option for the poor” and liberation theology. More recently, the clear sponsorship of political groups by the evangelical sector has been seen.

The progress of neo-Pentecostal and anti-human rights sectors is nourished by the absence of the State and the weakening of the social fabric caused by neoliberal policies. These are very active among the politically impoverished and unaffiliated populations, who may see the churches’ notion of economic growth as a mechanism for upward social mobility, a mechanism not offered by neoliberal politics. One of the first evangelical pastors in Latin America to take advantage of the political and electoral influence of religious groups was the Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt in 1982. Ríos Montt had the active support of the Reagan government, which lifted the arms embargo on Guatemala with the

public backing of the American pastor Pat Robertson, founder of Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), which transmitted the “Club 700” program throughout Latin America.

But long before this, even from 1900, initiatives by United States governments and private companies to use religious missions to control the third world were recorded. The book *Thy Will be Done* by Gerald Colbi and Charlotte Dennett (1996) collects evidence of how the United States, and

specifically the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in alliance with private corporations, undertook religious missions to achieve political and economic control in Latin America. Religious missions in the Amazon Basin had the role of facilitating access for oil and gas companies—mainly Texaco and Standard Oil—to Indigenous settlements in the basin, that is, in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and part of Venezuela.

Colbi and Dennett (1996) point to Nelson Rockefeller as the author of the design of this form of political manipulation. Rockefeller assumed the position of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs during World War II and was in charge of this matter for thirty years.

This appointment was not free from what today the business sectors call “conflict of interest”. One of the companies with the greatest weight in the promotion of religious missions was the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1920, the Rockefeller Group had shares in thirteen oil companies (including Standard Oil), 35 railway lines, and more than 35 corporations, all with business and interests in Latin America. The Rockefeller family was therefore deeply interes-



Pat Robertson, founder of CBN TV channel, was a candidate for presidential nomination for the Republican Party in 1988.



ted in being familiar with and controlling the state of political affairs in the different countries.

There are records showing a planned increase in American religious missions in Latin America, even before the First World War. The Interchurch World Movement Survey shows that the Rockefeller Foundation perfected the presence of United States religious missions in Mexico. While in 1914, the missions were present in only 20% of the Mexican territory, by 1920 when the First World War had ended, the North American religious missions were present

all over the country.

Rockefeller designed a strategy of cooperation and collaboration between the different religious missions that competed within territories, allowing them to quintuple their presence in the Mexican territory. Religious collaboration was subsequently applied in Guatemala, mainly in sugar and coffee plantations and other areas of economic interest for the United Fruit Company (Colbi and Dennet, 1996, p. 39). Later this same strategy was applied in the Amazon basin in favor of the interests of oil companies. In 1917, the Cen-

tral American Missions (CAM) were in operation. These were not so much aligned with Mott's gaze as with more fundamentalist approaches.

The control of socio-cultural processes in Latin America based on religious missions had both programmed development and financing. In a report prepared in 1919, the director of John Mott's Committee on Cooperation in Latin America informed the Rockefellers and their allies that the tropics were an "open field for future activities". John Mott had been in Russia during the Bolshevik revolution and later returned to the US to promote uniting all religious entities to combat the thesis of class struggle (Colbi and Dennet, 1996, p. 36). At this same time, the missionary William Cameron Townsend was leading a mission in Guatemala. He was an ally of the Nelson Bell Christian Church, a church that would be inherited by Billy Graham.

Townsend translated the first testament into Cakchiquel, having spent thirteen years in Guatemala, financed, by the Sun Oil Company (SUNOCO), among others. In line with Mott's warning, Townsend went to the Amazon in 1930 and founded the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which used the Bible to encourage communities to submit to the authorities by asserting that all mandates and authorities "come from God". This institute became a fundamental mechanism in the intervention into Amazonian peoples, in favor of their political, cultural and economic control. Both coup governments and civilian ones in the region hired the SIL to undertake different projects.

After the founding of this institute and the arrival of the North American oil companies, the Indigenous populations of the Amazon experienced horrors such as the Cinta Larga massacre (1963) and

the forced re-education camps in Crenaque, Minas Gerais.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics continues to operate, although in 2023, it was rebranded to be known as SIL International, which continues to be present in Latin America. It supports education and linguistics programs for Indigenous people in Mexico in alliance with the Benemérita Autónoma Universidad de Puebla, in Peru together with the Universidad Ricardo Pal, and in Brazil with the Evangelical Missionary Linguistic Association (Associação Linguística Evangélica Missionária, ALEM).

In 1921, Standard Oil Company started extracting oil in Guatemala. That same year, the Rockefeller Foundation's International Board of Health, with the support of the Guatemalan army, installed religious health missions against yellow fever on the border between Mexico and Guatemala, which they used to control Mexican revolutionary social movements via health quarantines and martial law (Colbi and Dennet, 1996, p. 36).

The strategy of injecting funding and influence into religious structures for political, cultural and economic control in Latin America is not an innovative tactic, but, on the contrary, represents a stale and outdated mechanism. This mechanism would not be viable if there were no local sectors with a "backyard" attitude willing to play with the sovereignty of their peoples.

MONITORING THE EVANGELICAL PHILANTHROPY THAT FUNDS THE ANTI-RIGHTS AGENDA

Understanding how the anti-rights movement is organized in the United States is fundamental because, as described by Samuel L. Perry, author of the book *The Flag and the Cross*, this movement promotes a white Christian nationalist political and cultural project that represents "a global trend towards populist authoritarian regimes, and anyone who values democracy, legal equality and representation and liberal democracy in that sense faces a problem."

To be converted into a global trend, white Christian nationalism required financial resources, a program of proposals, a communication strategy and allies in the different regions. The cultural battles engaged in by the United States have always resorted to two mechanisms: money and local allies. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which promotes a citizens' faith movement, also employs this mechanism.

In the United States, religious groups have historically been the most successful structures in collecting donations. In 2016, 32% of all donations recorded in that country (US\$127.37 billion) went to religious organizations. It is noteworthy that following donations to religious groups, 16% of philanthropic donations were directed to educational projects.

In a 2019 study, the North American journalist Emma Green detailed the route of evangelical "mega-donations" to political groups in that country. These mega-do-

nations have become a significant part of the "identity of evangelicalism in the American popular imagination" and, above all, they guarantee the means for Christian elites and Evangelical millionaires to "affect the world around them and to foster a different public image for the church" (Green, 2019).

Green emphasizes the Christian dispute over generational change, an argument that they seek to win through a cultural battle based on the use of wealth and the "theology of prosperity" as a tool to convince the masses.

One of the main mechanisms for the collection of donations for the religious sector in the United States is The Gathering. Josh Kwan, director of The Gathering in 2019, helped to found Praxis, a consulting firm for investors seeking to establish for-profit companies with the intention of increasing the social influence of Christianity. In order to better explain the vision of religious philanthropy in terms of its political impact, Green refers to a statement made by Josh Kwan assuring that "God cares about more than just the field of creating churches, He cares about politics and changing laws" (Green, January 2, 2019).¹²

On the other hand, OLPE checked at least three sources of information with regards to Catholic structures registered in the United States. These are the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Faithful Citizenship movement promoted by the USCCB, and the Church Militant, which self-defines as a Christian militia.

THE CULTURAL BATTLES ENTERED INTO BY THE UNITED STATES HAVE ALWAYS RESORTED TO THE USE OF TWO MECHANISMS: MONEY AND LOCAL ALLIES

¹² Article available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/01/evangelical-mega-donors/578563/>

The Faithful Citizenship movement was promoted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2015, with the intention that catholic people in the United States take up active participation in political processes. Its aim was to encourage these to learn “how to influence public policy so that they can work within the political structure to effect change”. Specifically, the Faithful Citizenship document states that a Catholic person must not vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of something intrinsically “evil”, such as induced abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, the deliberate subjugation of workers or the poor to substandard living conditions, the redefinition of marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behaviors, if the voter’s intention is in favor of such a position. In such cases, a Catholic would be guilty of formally cooperating with something that is “intrinsically evil” (USCCB, 2015, p.19).

In the same way, the Militant

Church structure has an action plan directly focused on Catholic people “taking action” and undertaking a “cultural battle” to combat what they consider to be the “evil” that has been inserted into culture and politics.

The financial reports of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 2022) show that every year this structure collects and sends funds to the Catholic churches in Latin America. In 2020 and 2021, it generated donations of US\$3,029,000 and US\$1,167,000 respectively.

Along with these donations, the USCCB invests up to fifteen million dollars a year in the Catholic Communication Campaign, which has a political lobbying branch to affect governments. In 2010, the USCCB sent a donation of US\$819,840 to Catholic churches in Latin America; in 2011, this was US\$1,300,771; in 2017, it sent a total of US\$3,24,9137; and in 2018 it donated US\$1,599,651. Although these are relatively low amounts,

it is relevant to note that the USC-CB includes among its lines of work communication strategies, which are a key tool in the conservative anti-rights cultural battle.

At the time of publishing this article, there was no access to detailed reports of the exact placement of these donations. However, it is possible that the donations made in the region are focused, among other things, on actions aligned with the 2021-2024 strategic plan of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB), which includes among its aims the strengthening of its influence on activities to promote and defend the family headed by heterosexual spouses, and to impact on educational policy with a special emphasis on continued education for teaching and administrative staff (p. 11) to educate these from a Catholic perspective of “human, male and female, people proclaimed by faith and affirmed by science and reason” (USCCB, 2021, p. 9).



Betsy DeVos, former US Secretary of Education, held her position during the Trump administration.

USA: THE CRADLE OF USING EVANGELICAL MONEY IN ELECTORAL MAQUINATIONS

Electoral machinery being sustained through strategic alliances between neoliberal actors and conservative religious groups is far from an original model. It could even be said it was imported to Latin America from the United States.

In 2005, Time magazine reported that among the most powerful evangelical financiers in the United States was Howard Ahmanson, heir to the assets of Home Savings and Loan, a mortgage and insurance empire. The Ahmansons invested millions of dollars in Republican electoral initiatives and campaigns in California; in 2008, they donated more than \$1 million to support Proposition 8, which successfully banned marriage between same-sex couples in California.

Another funder with a religious affiliation is Betsy DeVos (whose given name was Betsy Prince), who served as secretary of the US Department of Education during the Trump administration. In 1989, DeVos was a founding member of the Dick and Betsy DeVos Family Foundation, which made donations to charter and Christian schools, Christian-related education groups, organizations supporting electoral

colleges, and various universities and artistic foundations.

But currently the real king of evangelical philanthropy is Barre Seid. In 2022, the journalists Kenneth P. Vogel and Shane Goldmacher reported a donation by the businessman Barre Seid for US\$1.6 billion to the Marble Freedom Trust, founded by Leonard A. Leo, renowned anti-rights activist in the USA. This latter has even been recognized as the main lobbyist in favor of the overthrowing of Roe vs. Wade, the ruling that in 1974 decriminalized abortion in the USA (until 2022, when the Supreme Court annulled it).

In other words, one of the main anti-rights activists received what is considered the “largest donation ever made to apolitically focused non-profit Furthermore, this type of lawfare (i.e., the use of legal systems and institutions to delegitimize an opponent) is also allied with evangelical philanthropy. In recent years, Leonard A. Leo has established himself as the main donor to the conservative Republican sector. Leo heads the legal group “Federalist Society’s Leonard Leo”, which has lobbied to influence the configuration of positions in the Supreme Court.

In fact, the Marble Trust reported donations of almost \$229 million to other non-profit organizations dedicated to achieving conservative Republican control of the Supreme Court. It has made a permanent lobby to achieve financing for anti-rights campaigns such as the elimination of the right to abortion, as well the prevention of the advancement of policies on climate change and to put a stop to reforms to the US electoral system.

These are not minor events, given that one of the main difficulties with respect to the money placed in the Marble Freedom Trust is that donors can transfer money in this way without having to disclose it publicly. Vogel and Goldmacher reported that “the injection of cash was arranged through an unusual series of transactions that appear to have avoided taxation obligations” for donors.

These donation and resource mobilization mechanisms to influence electoral politics, party politics, and public policy in the US and in other countries constitute a permanent risk to democratic systems. Such donations work as unrecognized, unofficial and invisible channels of control over the state and over public goods and services.

The members of the US Supreme Court, whose conservative majority overturned the Roe vs. Wade ruling in 2022, which previously allowed abortion nationwide in the US.





A pro-abortion protest outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC.

EVANGELICAL PHILANTHROPY ALSO AFFECTS EDUCATION

In addition to mobilizations against curricular content on comprehensive sex education, OLPE has identified how the formats of public-private partnerships in the educational sector have acted as a tool with which different faith organizations have received public funds, consolidating their religious influence over educational policy.

For example, in 2022, the United States Supreme Court of Justice approved the Maine Ruling, which authorizes the use of public funds to pay for or subsidize educational services to religious schools. This arrangement was prohibited until the intervention of the Supreme Court.

From Canada, the EduDeo Minis-

tries group promotes the establishment of Christian schools in the countries of the global South. This multi-church group has the aim of promoting Christian educational projects all around the world. One of its objectives is the formation of “Christian” teachers who “integrate the Gospel into every subject, lesson and story” (EduDeo).

The objectives of EduDeo include teacher training and “Christ-centered teaching. When you invest in teachers and leaders, students reap the benefits.” In its 2018-2019 annual report, the Canadian group reported the collection of US\$2,735,203 in the period between July 2018 and June 2019 (EduDeo). Of this amount, 86.3% went to collaboration with the projects of “allied churches”, while 8.6% went to the development of Christian schools. For the period

2021-2022, EduDeo’s financial reports of donations detail the following donations for religious educational projects in Latin America:

Nicaragua: US\$418,458
 Dominican Republic: US\$386,881
 Guatemala: US\$67,897
 Haiti: US\$196,187.

The OLPE has also monitored cases in the Dominican Republic and Colombia in which education-based public-private partnerships benefit religious groups with public education funds.

The evangelical and Catholic sector in the Dominican Republic is represented in the Higher Council of Education, which includes the Conference of the Dominican Episcopate, the sector of non-Catholic Christian churches, Catholic private schools

¹³ Article available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/politics/republican-dark-money.html>

¹⁴ Article available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/04/leonard-leo-federalist-society-conservative-abortion>

¹⁵ The 2019-2021 financial reports of the EDUDEO group are available here: https://edudeo.com/storage/documents/financial_report_2022.pdf



Lakewood Megachurch in Houston, Texas, USA

and non-Catholic denominational private schools (MINERD, 2006, p. 5).

In this forum they were signatories to the National Pact for Educational Reform 2014-2030, which includes, among other aspects, “promoting a national debate on secular education and/or addressing religion in education, as a state commitment” (CES, 2017, point 4.1.6. p. 12). However, this commitment to secularism may not be being taken into account.

In February 2019, the Ministry of Education (MINERD) promoted an agreement with the Evangelical Dialogue and Representation Forum. Through the Agreement, at least 134 educational institutions were transferred to be co-managed as evangelical-run public schools (see video, MINERD, 2020). In the Agreement, the Ministry of Education committed itself to allocating funds to hire (as part of its payroll) the teaching staff of these institutions and to grant these the “same benefits and obligations in place for their own employees, as well as to provide these with training.” The OLPE concluded that one of the main beneficiaries of the Agreement was “the Asociación Nacional de Colegios Evangélicos Privados (National Association of Private Evangelical Colleges), because the MINERD will finance the premises owned by the churches and it will also build educational facilities which it will hand over in concession to be administered by

the Christian institutions” (OLPE, 2021).

The way in which this Evangelical Forum for Dialogue and Representation managed the agreement with the Dominican educational authorities should neither be taken lightly, nor considered an isolated case. This forum was derived from the Latin American Evangelical Alliance (AEL for the initials in Spanish), to which several national structures belong. Among these structures, can be listed: the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala, the Evangelical Alliance El Salvador, the Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras, the Costa Rican Evangelical Federation Alliance, the Evangelical Alliance of Panama, the Evangelical Council of Colombia, the Ecuadoran Evangelical Fellowship, the Christian Evangelical Churches Union of Peru, the National Evangelical Union Broad Forum, the Council of Evangelical Representativeness of Uruguay, the Association of Evangelical Churches of Paraguay (ASIEP), the Evangelical Christian Alliance of the Argentine Republic, and the Evangelical Alliance of Brazil, among others. Under the umbrella of the Latin America Evangelical Alliance, these national structures have aligned around an attack on sex education and the gender and diversity perspective for public policy.

The person currently presiding over the Alliance is the Paraguayan Reverend Juan Cruz Cellammare Jorgen-

sen. As president of the AEL, and through the Joven Foundation, Cellammare Jorgensen has repeatedly promoted religious formation days held in different Paraguayan schools (see video, 2023), including the private schools Cristiano Natanael College and Centro Educativo Las Palmeras. At the time of publication of this article, it had not been possible to confirm whether the schools pay a cost for these activities.

Finally, in 2021, the OLPE reported that, at that time, the Dominican Union of Educational and Private Institutions (UDIEP for the initials in Spanish), brought together more than 4000 private colleges, including those belonging to the RD Cristiana Action Group and the Association of Reformed Christian Colleges (COCREF for the initials in Spanish). At the time, COCREF had reported an investment of US\$948,893, almost a million dollars, for the expansion of its educational facilities (OLPE, 2021). In 2018, COCREF announced its “merger” with the Asociación de Ministerios Mundiales de la Iglesia Cristiana Reformada en America del Norte en República Dominicana (Association of World Ministries of the Reformed Christian Church of North America in the Dominican Republic, AMMICRAN for the initials in Spanish) and the Centro de Misión Transformadora Dominicana (Dominican Transforming Mission Center, CMTD) to form a new organization under the name of Fundación de Liderazgo Transformador (Transforming Leadership Foundation). The FLT Synergy group has different operational programs linked to education for “school improvement”, “student support” and “gospel-centered schools” (FLT Synergy). This private group has strategic alliances with the Canadian EduDeo Ministries group, one of the promoters of religious philanthropy in education.

Due to cases such as these, the OLPE considers that evangelical philanthropy also affects education and achieves great influence on educational processes.

IN CONCLUSION

People have the right to the exercise their faith and their religious practices without being used by actors or groups seeking to mobilize economic resources and gain a share of political or institutional power. It is vital to continue to defend and demand a secular state as a condition for the freedom of the exercise of faith and religious beliefs.

To continue advocating for a comprehensive, relevant human rights agenda, the trade union movement must work to unmask the money flows behind the religious agenda and the anti-rights movements.

While the growth of conservatism feeds on the vacuums created by neoliberal democracies, evangelical philanthropy is a tool used by groups eager to maintain control of the political and economic destinies of our peoples.

TO CONTINUE ADVOCATING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA, THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT MUST WORK TO UNMASK THE FLOWS OF MONEY BEHIND THE RELIGIOUS AGENDA AND OF THE ANTI-RIGHTS MOVEMENTS.

The education trade union movement, through the Latin American Pedagogical Movement (MPL) and the Network of Women Education Workers, are committed to promoting access to information and critical analysis to help denounce the way the promotion of right-wing and conservative positions among the population and the search for militants of religious political parties does not happen naturally, but rather is a strategy with multi-million dollar financing, that operates in a similar fashion from the United States to Tierra del Fuego.

In the face of the concerns of families with regards to the contents of education that takes up a gender and human rights perspective, education unions have a great opportunity to approach these families, listen to the origin of their concerns, and provide pedagogical information on the importance of protecting a set of robust, comprehensive public policies that respond to the diversity of the population.

There is also the opportunity to talk with parents about their right to guide the educational process of their children. At the same time, that right must be aligned with the duty of the state and of educational policy to ensure that children and young people develop the knowledge and skills to become subjects with rights, with the capacity for critical thinking and a commitment to transforming the reality that surrounds them, especially if that reality permanently curtails their human rights.

References.

- Carey, Anita. (July 10, 2019). *Thousands protest infiltration of gender ideology into Dominican Republic. Church Militant.* <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/thousands-protest-infiltration-of-gender-ideology-in-to-dominican-republic>
- Archdiocese of St. Louis. (2023). *Faithful Citizenship.* <https://www.archstl.org/faithful-citizenship>
- Bedoya, Carlos. (January 11, 2017). *¿Quiénes son #Con-MisHijosNoTeMetas? Agencia Latinoamericana de Información.* <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/182778>
- Cairns Dossier. (2021). *Latin America's evangelical wave.* <https://www.cairn-int.info/dossiers-2021-1-page-1.htm>
- Colbi, Gerald. Dennett, Charlotte. (1996). *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil.*
- Diario UNO. (February 19, 2017). *Los engaños detrás de la Ideología de Género.* <https://diariouno.pe/columna/los-enganos-detras-de-la-ideologia-de-genero/>
- Exitosa Noticias. (March 8, 2017). *'Con mis hijos no te metas' asegura tener apoyo de bancada fujimorista en el Congreso.*
- Exitosa Noticias. Posted on November 19, 2018 to <https://exitosanoticias.pe/con-mis-hijos-no-te-metas-asegura-tener-apoyo-de-bancada-fujimorista-en-el-congreso/>
- Freston, Paul. (2008). *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America.* Print ISBN 9780195174762. Oxford Publishing.
- Moats, Maria (June 11, 2021). *The Director's Guide to Shareholder Activism. The Director's Guide to Shareholder Activism.* <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2021/06/11/the-directors-guide-to-shareholder-activism/>
- Green, Emma. (2019). *Evangelical Mega-donors Are Rethinking Money in Politics. The Atlantic.* <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/01/evangelical-mega-donors/578563/>
- Human Life International. (2012-2021). *LI Annual Report.* <https://www.hli.org/about-us/annual-report-2020/>
- NP Source. (2021). *Charitable Giving Statistics.* <https://nonprofitsource.com/online-giving-statistics> "El 82% de peruanos está a favor del enfoque de género en el currículo escolar. *El Comercio:* April 25, 2019."
- Pat Bauer. (2023). *Betsy DeVos, American stateswoman. Fact-checked by The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica.* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Betsy-DeVos>
- Robbins, Joel. (October 2004). Brenneis, Don; Srier, Karen B. (eds.). "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity". *Annual Review of Anthropology. Annual Reviews.* 33: 117-143. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.32.061002.093421. ISSN 1545-4290. JS-TOR 25064848. S2CID 145722188
- SIL. (2022). *About SIL* <https://www.sil.org/>
- Kenneth P. Vogel and Shane Goldmacher. (August 22, 2022). *An Unusual \$1.6 Billion Donation Bolsters Conservatives. The New York Times.* <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/22/us/politics/republican-dark-money.html>
- USCCB CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. (2022). <https://www.usccb.org/resources/2020-and-2021-statement-USCCB-Strategic-plan>. *USCCB Strategic plan.* <https://www.usccb.org/about/strategic-plan>

Indigenous teachers inspire change from their classrooms and their communities

Women educators lead struggles for the recovery of land, access to services and the strengthening of their culture in different Latin American countries.

By *Alina Rodriguez R.*
Communicator, EILA

Lidia Beatriz De León, Guatemalan Indigenous teacher, is excited to talk about how girls in the communities where she teaches are motivated by seeing her work as a professional. In a context in which it is common for women to drop out of school in sixth grade, "girls seeing you as a woman and as a teacher inspires them with the dream that they can continue studying and making progress," she explained.

Lidia is one of many Indigenous teachers engaging in tireless work

each day in the classrooms of different Latin American countries. In

"GIRLS SEEING YOU AS A WOMAN AND AS A TEACHER INSPIRES THEM WITH THE DREAM THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE STUDYING AND MAKING PROGRESS"
LIDIA BEATRIZ DE LEÓN

these forums, they face enormous challenges as the result of decades

of exclusion from the communities in which they live and work. However, outside the classroom, these women are also community leaders who have managed to be a part of the significant changes achieved for their people despite the obstacles they have faced.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Sandra Carrasco is a teacher in the Mapuche territory in Chile. The school where she teaches is, in her words, "at the center of the conflict" in which the Mapuche people dispute their territory with the forestry



Marta Ramírez, member of OTEP-A in Paraguay



Sandra Carrasco, member of the Colegio de Profesoras y Profesores de Chile (Association of Teachers of Chile).



Lidia Beatriz De León, member of STEG in Guatemala.

companies installed there.

This teacher recalls that, thirty years ago, when these demands began, it was difficult to access forums for discussion if you were a woman. "We were invited, but the men would talk, make proposals, and the women were off making the food," she recalled. Nonetheless, she decided to stay in the meeting; "I have no problem with cooking, but if I have to cook and miss out on the meeting, I'm not going to do that." She assures us that since then the situation has changed, and now the roles are distributed more equitably in these forums.

For Idalia Andrade, the first female cacique in Costa Rica, it was also no easy task to take on her leadership role. In addition to balancing her work schedule as a teacher with all the responsibilities she inherited from her father, the previous community leader, at first Idalia had to deal with people questioning her ability to take on this task.

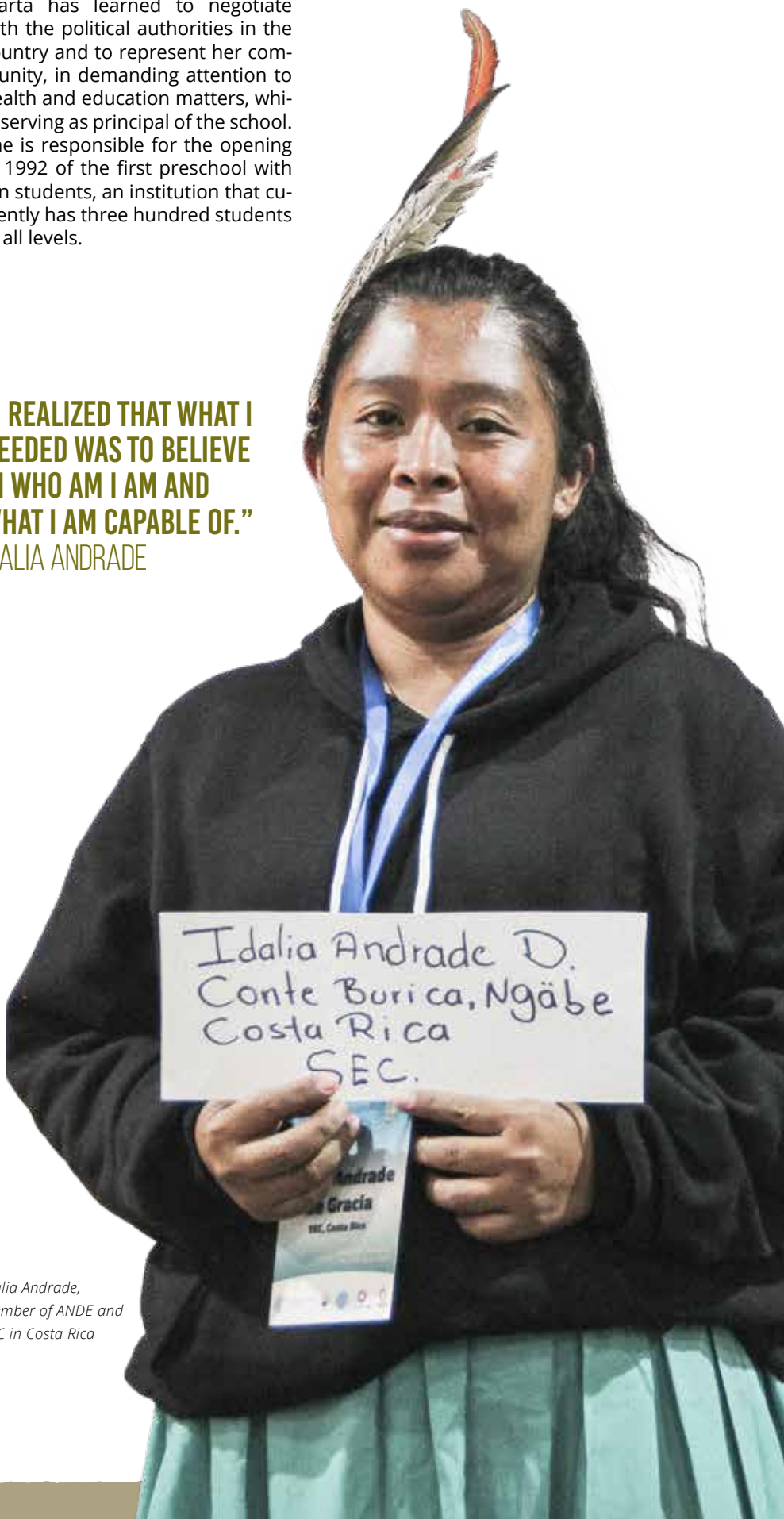
"The first few months were the hardest and I was about to quit. But my kids and my mom convinced me to continue on. I realized that what I needed was to believe in who I am and what I am capable of," she said, adding that those who initially questioned her leadership are now seeking her advice.

Marta Ramírez is also a leader in her community, elected by an assembly. This educator from the Mascoy ethnic group in Paraguay assumed a leadership role after the death of her brother. Over time,

"I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH COOKING, BUT IF I HAVE TO COOK AND MISS OUT ON THE MEETING, I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT."
SANDRA CARRASCO

Marta has learned to negotiate with the political authorities in the country and to represent her community, in demanding attention to health and education matters, while serving as principal of the school. She is responsible for the opening in 1992 of the first preschool with ten students, an institution that currently has three hundred students at all levels.

"I REALIZED THAT WHAT I NEEDED WAS TO BELIEVE IN WHO AM I AM AND WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF."
IDALIA ANDRADE



*Idalia Andrade,
member of ANDE and
SEC in Costa Rica*

INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

If the struggle of these four women has anything in common, it is recognizing the importance of intercultural bilingual education to maintaining their culture alive, and to making children aware of the issues facing their community.

"I believe that school can resolve the problem that school itself has generated," Sandra said, recalling that, through the educational system, the Mapuche people, along with many other Indigenous peoples in the region, were forced to leave behind their language, their history and their worldview.

"My grandmother had her fingers broken for not knowing how to speak Spanish. My mother lost her mother tongue because she had to go out to work in the big cities and assimilate. Today, school can repay the historical debt it owes our peoples," she said.

For her part, Lidia — who comes from Cobán, Guatemala — is a teacher, a graduate in clinical psychology and she additionally holds a master's degree in intercultural bilingual education.

She states one of the main difficulties encountered when teaching her Quekchí language is the lack of teaching material: "Although the policies in the country are well established, we have significant deficiencies in infrastructure and material for bilingual lessons."

Idalia faces the same situation when teaching her classes in Punta Burica in Costa Rica. Materials in the Ngäbere language do not exist, so teachers must resort to their creativity when giving lessons to their students.

"What I do is take English images and translate them," Idalia explained. However, this implies that Indigenous language teachers must perform double tasks, not only teaching

their lessons, but also designing materials that already exist for their colleagues teaching other subjects.

Despite these difficulties, the educators agree that education is essential to preserving the identity of their people, as Marta's community has done since they were able to open their educational institution.

"The only way to get ahead is education and thanks to that we already have several professionals today," she proudly explained.

The same is pointed out by Sandra, who emphasizes the importance of the fact that, in the midst of the conflict faced, her people now have historians, engineers, lawyers, teachers and doctors who were able to access this type of education.

"We have gone to the academy to find the knowledge we need to fight for what is ours in those forums of power," she said.

For Lidia, teaching can be best performed when one understands the reality of the communities worked with, something which professional training does not prepare teachers for. "Knowing the students' native language is an advantage, there is

"THE ONLY WAY TO GET AHEAD IS EDUCATION AND THANKS TO THAT WE ALREADY HAVE SEVERAL PROFESSIONALS TODAY"

MARTA RAMÍREZ

better communication and you can understand their circumstances," she said.

INSPIRATION FOR THE NEW GENERATIONSS

"Teacher, teacher! I saw you on TV!" This is how the students of the first female Costa Rican cacique greet their teacher, who says that girls and young people have told her how they want to be like her when they grow up.

The girls from the communities led by Marta in Paraguay and Idalia in Costa Rica are growing up with examples of "empowered women", as Idalia calls them, not only in their classrooms but as those responsible for the decisions that affect the whole community.

Sandra explains that it is important for her to destroy the limiting gender stereotypes for girls. She therefore devotes part of her lessons to deconstructing myths about assigned gender roles, trying to motivate students to become engineers, doctors or even to dedicate themselves to raising their children, as long as this stems their own free choice.

Finally, Lydia is moved on remembering how, in spite of the difficulties, her mom supported her, motivating her to study and to continue on to university, to the point that Lydia considers that her achievements belong to both of them. "I carry this impulse that she and my grandmother gave me, and now I want to give it to the girls who are my students."

We at Education International promote the fundamental role that teachers fulfill in the preservation

of the identity of Indigenous peoples. Additionally we emphasize the need to demand government measures to eliminate the existing gaps with regards to access to services, connectivity, transport difficulties, and other issues that impact both the quality of education and the professional work of these women teachers.

WHO IS GOING TO FOOT THE BILL?

LOSS OF LABOR RIGHTS AND THE DEEPENING OF THE CRISIS OF CARE FOR WOMEN TEACHERS IN 8 LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

The RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Women Education Workers), a group created and supported by Education International Latin America, coordinated this research process with the Centro Feminista de Investigación y Acción (Feminist Center of Research and Action, CEPHEMINA)

*By Bolívar Rojas Vargas
Communicator, EILA*

In March 2020, Latin American governments began to take emergency measures to counter the threat of the SARS-COV-2 virus, better known as COVID-19. The history texts will give an account of the measures and priorities of each government, some aimed at protecting the population, and others aimed at defending particular economic interests.

But, beyond these valuations, it is likely that some years will pass

before we can fully measure the consequences of these events. On the issue of the work rights of women education workers and the crisis of care, the study *¿Quién paga los platos rotos? (Who will foot the bill?)* sheds light on the consequences of the pandemic and the measures taken by governments in the region.

The research was conducted by the Centro Feminista de Investigación y Acción (Feminist Center of Research and Action, CEFEMINA-Costa Rica) at the request and under the coordination of the

Regional Office of Education International Latin America (EILA), as well as with the support of member organizations, coordinated by EILA's Network of Women Education Workers. The research was carried out in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru with the aim of identifying the measures taken in each country on the arrival of the pandemic and the impact of these political decisions on the precariousness of the working conditions for women educators and on the crisis of care.

The research carried out previously by CEPHEMINA, *Sostener el futuro: educar y cuidar sin recursos ni apoyo* (Sustaining the Future: Educating and Providing Care without Resources nor Support), highlighted how women educators assumed the responsibility of ensuring the continuity of educational processes during the peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic, while also taking on an unequal burden of housework. All this without the significant participation of the educational authorities.

This new research arises from to the question posed in the study's title, in view of the setbacks in terms of labor rights and the overload of care work for women emerging as common elements in the countries studied.

Disposable working rights

The majority of the governments in the countries under study established measures to protect companies, through which, in the short term, achievements in the field of labor rights won after decades of struggle were discarded. These decisions were made and enacted in a context of confinement and physical isolation, which limited the possibility of any reaction or mobilization on behalf of trade union organizations, which were unable to use one of their main

IN THE SHORT TERM, ACHIEVEMENTS IN LABOR RIGHTS WON AFTER DECADES OF STRUGGLE WERE DISCARDED

political strengths to influence the public agenda: street protest.

In different countries, the reduction of working hours and suspensions of contracts without compensation for working people were approved. Corporate contributions to social security systems were suspended or decreased, and even retrenching workers without severance measures was allowed. These measures contributed to an unprecedented increase in unemployment and a generalized deterioration of family economies.

At the same time that they were making these violations of labor rights, policies to reduce the state and cuts to social investment were promoted, further undermining the ability of states to intervene in the economic crisis unleashed by the pandemic.

The authorities responsible for these decisions presented them as the only option in the face of the emergency; however, the government of Argentina demonstrated by example that it was possible to act in favor of collective interests over private economic ones.

In contrast to the actions of the majority of the Latin American governments, Argentina established the protection of employment by prohibiting layoffs and subsidizing the income of companies affected by closure or falls in production; moreover, it facilitated favorable loans and reduced debts for companies with increases in their payroll. These measures were aimed at ensuring the continuity of work relationships and they cushioned against the loss of jobs.

Ceasing education

Policies representing fiscal austerity and the defunding of social investment had a direct impact on public education systems. Education workers were forced to do remote work with neither previous training nor the material conditions required for the different types of virtual education. In particular, women educators had to deal with an overloading of housework while attending to their students by means of different technological platforms.

Regardless of the modality of non-face-to-face education employed,



the additional costs of this was transferred to teachers. Electronic devices, internet connectivity and data plans were some of the items provided by teachers to give continuity to educational processes in an environment of improvisation and a lack of guidance by the educational authorities.

In most of the countries included in the research, governments imposed the conditions in which the continuity of the school year was to occur in an authoritarian fashion, without consulting teachers or trade union organizations about these. In this scenario, education unions engaged in an intense process of seeking



THE GOVERNMENTS IMPOSED THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE CONTINUITY OF THE SCHOOL YEAR WAS TO OCCUR IN AN AUTHORITARIAN FASHION, WITHOUT CONSULTING TEACHERS OR TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS

dialogue to coordinate a response to the pandemic and provide continuity to educational processes. Despite this initiative, the authorities ignored these actions to make unilateral decisions.

Once again, Argentina provided an exception in this respect, as indicated

in the study's executive summary:

Of the eight countries included in this study, only in Argentina was there a willingness on behalf of the national executive to commence holding these vital dialogues from the beginning. The teaching congresses that Macri suspended during his ad-

ministration were reactivated, and during 2020 and 2021 these reached agreements in different fields that were respected by the authorities (Carcedo et al., 2022, p. 28).

The Argentine government was also notable in including teachers in the early stages of vaccination programs, once the various vaccines against COVID-19.

In the countries studied, the work performed by teachers in the first months of the pandemic was rendered invisible and ignored, with smear campaign towards the teaching sector engaged in, or rather continued, in a way that served to justify attacks on the rights of education workers. "In the first months in Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru and Paraguay, the question was raised why [teachers] continued to receive their salaries when they were at home," the document indicates (p. 29).

THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE STATES PLACED THE BURDEN OF CAREGIVING TASKS ON FAMILIES AND, WITHIN THESE, DISPROPORTIONATELY ON WOMEN

Who washes the dishes?

The researchers coincided in indicating that during the pandemic the care crisis deepened in all the countries in which the study was undertaken. Physical isolation measures implied the permanent presence of all family members in the same residence, which increased the demand for cleaning, food preparation, the care of minors, older adults and people with disabilities, and even for non-dependent adults.

Before the pandemic, time use surveys in countries such as Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica, Honduras and Colombia evidence a marked sexual division of labor in the region, with women taking on the burden of demands for household care alone. The measures adopted by the states placed the burden of caregiving tasks on families and, within these, disproportionately, on women, as indicated by studies carried out in Argentina, Colombia and Costa Rica.

The authors of the research pointed out that the context of the pandemic showed that in periods of crisis, women and their needs become disposable. Further, the impacts of the pandemic on gender equality in the medium and long term have yet to be seen.

The pandemic highlighted the states' blindness to gender inequalities; the majority did not consider

the impact the measures taken might have on women. Similarly, the central role of the work of remunerated and unpaid care and domestic work with regards to the sustainability of life was made clear. Women assumed the heavy burden of care without support and, in the case of women educators, these tasks extended to their students and their families when state responses were insufficient. (Carcedo et al., 2022, p. 38)

Women educators, making up the majority of the teaching bodies in all the countries in the region, thus faced a set of situations that affected their income, job stability, professional development, and their physical and mental health. During the pandemic, women teachers showed that they were able to "face both the challenges of the precariousness of teaching work and those of the unprecedented overload of care work" (p. 36). The answer to the question posed in the title of the study thus seems obvious.

The document will serve as a record for the Network of Women Education Workers and organizations affiliated to EILA, indicating the future magnitude of the impact of the pandemic, the subsequent economic crisis and the measures taken by the states with respect to the field of labor rights and the deepening of the care crisis in Latin America.

It is now necessary to work to recover lost ground, continuing the fight to recover progress in labor rights and women's human rights.

The struggles of the Network of Women Education Workers for greater equality and against violence gives us a starting point for education trade union organizations to add to their activism seeking a more just social organization of care.

On an internal level, trade unions should reflect on the co-responsibility of men and women for care work, and moreover, we must ensure that co-responsibility is also assumed by states, employers, the community and families. The demand for universal state care services represents a concrete measure towards greater justice in the distribution of care tasks.

The research is available to be read and downloaded in the Publications section of the EILA website (www.ei-ie-al.org).

References:

Carcedo, A., Lexartza, L., Kennedy, M., Chaves, M., Paniagua, A. (2022). Resumen Ejecutivo (Executive summary). In *Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (Ed.), ¿Quién paga los platos rotos?* p. 8-42). San José, Costa Rica. Editorial Internacional de la Educación América Latina.



SCAN
THIS QR
TO VIEW
THE STUDY
ON-LINE

THE MAYAN RESISTANCE OF CHAKAN PUTUM: 504 YEARS OF HISTORY AND THE CHALLENGE OF CONTINUING TO DISPUTE COLONIAL THINKING



By Paola Giménez
Officer for the Women's Secretariat of the Organización de
trabajadores de la Educación del Paraguay – Auténtica (OTEP -A)

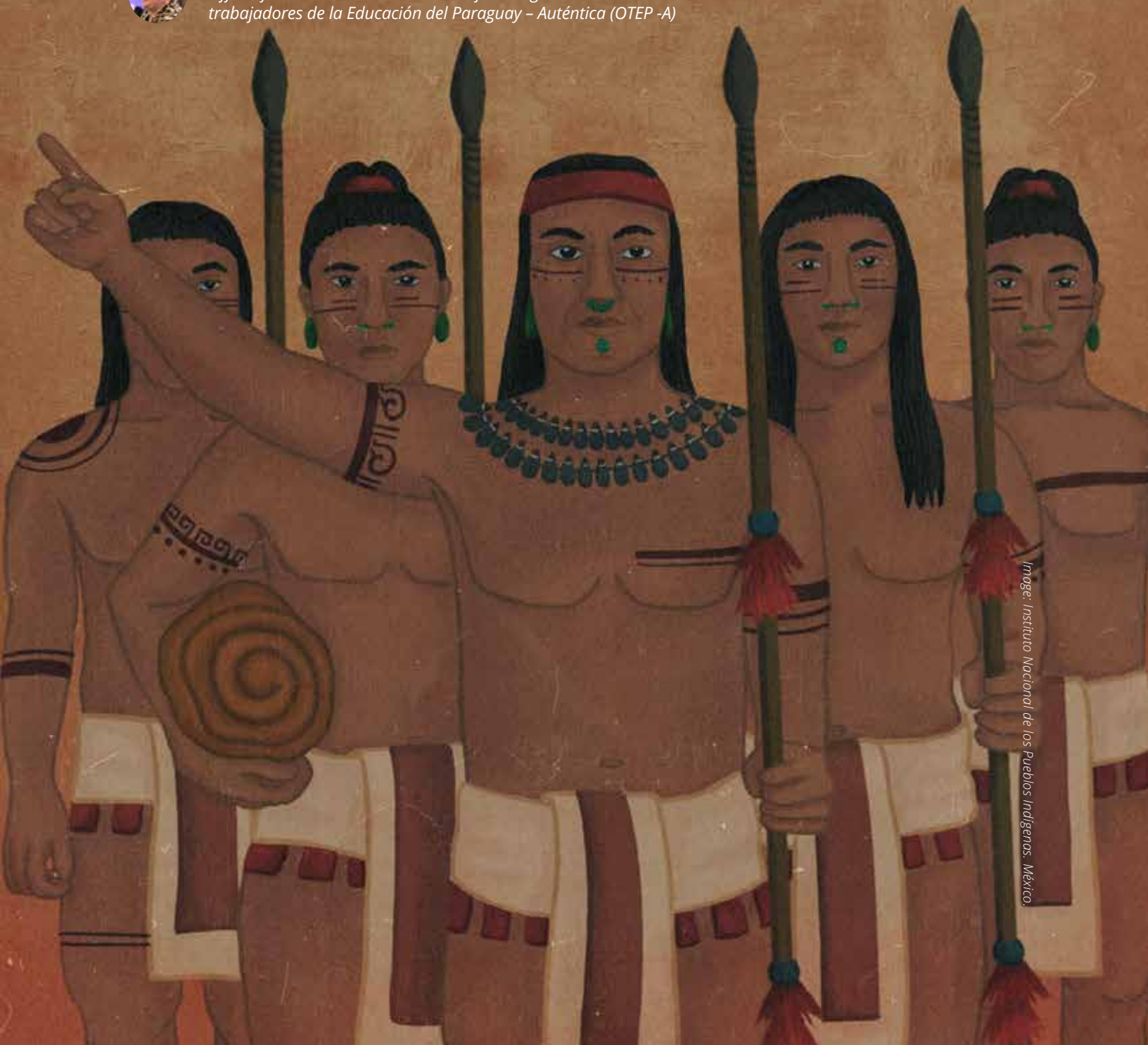


Image: Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas, México.

AMERICA INVADED AND PLUNDERED

This statement is becoming more and more forceful, evident and proven in the light of research and the latest findings, as well as the guiding behaviors based on the colonial/Eurocentric thought. Every October 12, history invites us to reflect on the true implications of the arrival of the Spanish in America and the so-called conquest. From an early age, we are taught the predominant narrative according to which on October 12, 1492 America was discovered and two cultures embraced to give birth to a crossbreed. The current epistemological perspective of that historical event makes it possible to analyze and reflect on another narrative, that is, a narrative of liberation.

FROM AN EARLY AGE, WE ARE TAUGHT THE PREDOMINANT NARRATIVE ACCORDING TO WHICH ON OCTOBER 12, 1492 AMERICA WAS DISCOVERED AND TWO CULTURES EMBRACED TO GIVE BIRTH TO A CROSSBREED

From this narrative of the liberation, I want to dwell on a particular historical event that allows us to understand the logic of Eurocentric thinking in the face of colonial power. In their theoretical proposal, Ramón Grosfoguel and Santiago Gómez Castro invite us to understand this very issue based on their approach consisting of a decolonial turn.

THE DECOLONIAL TURN

For Grosfoguel, the decolonial turn is a change: turning things around to see them from another perspective. We are Eurocentric in the conception and consideration of everything that has been done and studied in history to such an extent that we do not perceive that we are seeing everything from the point of view of Europe, the United States and the cultures imposed on the basis of experience and learning.

From this perspective deconstructing the logic of Eurocentric thought, for those of us who believe that everyone can form part of this world without exclusions, it is essential to consider the history of the peoples who have resisted the dominant thinking imposed on America through the genocide of Indigenous peoples.

In his article "Epistemic Racism/ Sexism, Westernized Universities", Ramón Grosfoguel performs an

analysis in which he deepens the criticism of Enrique Dussel with respect to Cartesian philosophy. He explains three world-historical processes, to which he adds another world-historical process: that of genocide/epistemicide against Indigenous peoples. He points out: "The relationship between the Conquest of Al-Andalus and the Conquest of the American continent has been under-researched in the existing literature. The methods of colonization and domination used against Al-Andalus were extrapolated to the American continent" (own translation, Garrido Aranda, 1980).

THE LOGIC OF THE CONQUEST OF AL-ANDALUS WAS THE PATTERN TO BE FOLLOWED LATER FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE PEOPLES

Here exploration is made of that historical-Mesoamerican process, for which the logic of the conquest of Al-Andalus was the pattern to be followed later for the extermination of the knowledge of these peoples.

As in any historical process, often the dominant narrative voice establishes this hegemonic discourse. In view of this, based on the Indigenous resistance to the colonial Spanish power over the years, in this essay I present the history of struggle and resistance of the Mayan people attested to in the resounding victory known as the Battle of Chakan Putum, the territory today known as Campeche, Mexico.

THE MAYAN RESISTANCE TO THE INVASION OF THE SPANISH COLONIAL POWER

The cultural pattern expressed in our behaviors and ways of thinking show the perspective of colonial/Eurocentric thought.

Image: Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas. Mexico.



Therefore, the historic event of the victory of the Battle of Chakan Putum allows us to learn and understand how the resistance to the Spanish invasion known as the conquest occurred.

But why, out of so many stories of Indigenous resistance, choose the Battle of Chakan Putum? What is the meaning of the term Chakan Putum?

Chakan Putum is a Mayan word coming from the roots Chakan: savanna and Putum or Petén: region or shire, thus meaning "region of the savanna", which currently has become known as Champotón.

Champotón or Chakan Putum was founded by the Itza, one of the most important lineages of the Maya, when these left Chichen-Itza around the year 700 of our era. They returned to their native Chichen-Itza 280 years later.

March 25, 1517 was the day of the Victory of Chakan Putum, when the Mayans faced up to the first attempts at Spanish conquest, by combatively resisting the troops under the command of Captain Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.

The Spaniards were approaching this place where they discovered an imposing civilization of about 8000 households and around 2000 canoes, with a population of approximately 40,000 inhabitants. The Spanish expedition had been searching for water. When they came across a well of potable water they decided to spend the night nearby. The Mayan people saw a certain danger in this and, consequently, the first confrontation occurred between the two cultures, the Spaniards and the Indigenous peoples.

It was the first battle between two well-armed groups, each employing clearly different technologies. While the Indigenous peoples had spears and arrows, the Spaniards had spears, shotguns and cannons. In that fight, led by the cacique Moch-Couoh, although traditiona-

CHAKAN PUTUM WAS THE FIRST STRUGGLE FOR THE DEFENSE OF HERITAGE, THE DEFENSE OF TERRITORY, IN WHICH THE MAYANS DEFENDED THEIR IDENTITY

lly not recognized with any certainty as having occurred, around 57 Spaniards died, including Hernández de Córdoba, who, after receiving multiple arrow-wounds, later died on the island of Cuba.

Based on this historical account, from what we already know so far about Champoton, it is not for nothing that it is considered the honor of America, because it was the first struggle for the defense of heritage, the defense of territory, in which the Mayans defended their identity. Later, as an independent nation, it continued to set an example of resistance. Chakan Putum stood strong once again in the Pastry War of 1838, resisting North American intervention in 1846 and 1847 and French intervention between 1864 and 1867.

Chakan Putum is one of the biggest examples of Mayan resistance, of resistance to colonial/Eurocentric thought, which allows us to think about how to build the future based on resistance, as the Mayans demonstrated.

The current challenge is recaptured in the thinking on that historical event and then to dismantle some historical constructions continually taught and repeated, in particular the idea that it was very easy to conquer the Mayan people.

It is important to reflect on that past, on how to consider the present, and, above all, to ensure this historical reflection does not embody a racist or colonial perspective. The resistance of Indigenous peoples, including that of the Mayan people, continues. The



Francisco Hernández de Córdoba.

real challenge we must embrace is therefore to deconstruct colonial thought, and on these lines, enact the Grosfoguel proposal with regards to taking a decolonial turn. We must begin to decolonize the epistemology of power, of being, of doing, and the way we relate to the planet. The decolonization of being, through knowledge.

Long live the Indigenous resistance!
Long live Chakam Putum! Victory and honor to Champotón! Long live Mexico!

References

Grosfoguel, Ramón. (2013) *Racismo/sexismo epistémico, universidades occidentalizadas y los cuatro genocidios/epistemicidios del largo siglo XVI*. Bogotá, Colombia. *Tabula Rasa*, No. 19, July-December, 2013, pp. 31-58.

Ochoa Muñoz, Karina. (2014) *El debate sobre las y los amerindios: entre el discurso de la bestialización, la feminización y la racialización*. *District Federal, Mexico: El Cotidiano*, No. 184, March-April, 2014, pp. 13-22

ETERNAL VOICES

Elza Soares and Gal Costa, exceptional composers and performers, left the legacy of their voices and their social struggle

By *Bolívar Rojas Vargas*
Communicator, *EILA*

In 2022, Latin America lost two giants of Brazilian popular music (MPB for the initials in Portuguese). In all corners of the planet, these two unique women, ambassadors of Brazilian culture and art, were remembered.

Elza Soares, Arquivo Nacional, Brasil

Elza Soares died on January 10 in Rio de Janeiro, and on November 9 the death of Gal Costa was announced in Sao Paulo. These two women left a deep mark on Brazilian and Latin American music, while their talents influenced the culture and politics of the South American giant. Their contribution to the fame of Brazilian music around the world and their successful musical careers establish their status as Latin American cultural icons.

Elza Gomez da Conceicao Soares was born on June 23, 1930, in a favela in Rio de Janeiro. She was the daughter of a construction worker and a maid. She was forced to marry at the age of twelve and lost two of her children to malnutrition when she was still a minor. She decided to enter a radio competition hoping to win one of the prizes to be able to buy medicine and food for her children. The presenter jokingly asked her which planet she came from, mocking her outfit; "From Planet Hunger," she replied boldly, her gaze fixed on the prize. Several years passed after this, Elza's first triumph, before she devoted herself to music completely.

EMaria da Graça Costa Penna Burgos was born on September 26, 1945 in Salvador de Bahia. Her mother listened to classical music during the pregnancy, hoping to musically stimulate the child in her womb. It could be said that this stimulus was the first step in Gal Costa's long musical career.

¡Brasil! Mostra tua cara

From different social contexts, Elza Soares and Gal Costa are faces of the Brazil that fought to defeat the dictatorship, of the Brazil that stood up to violence and machismo, of the Brazil that faces up to inequality, discrimination and injustice. Their voices are listened to by millions today and, among the joyful beat of samba, jazz and MPB, the most recognized phrases of their performances are sung.

"The cheapest meat on the market is black meat," repeats Elza Soares with her characteristic husky voice in her interpretation of the song *A Carne*, originally released by the group *Farofa Carioca*. The mix of hip hop, funk and soul in Elza's version denouncing the racial injustice experienced by the black popula-



Listen to Elza Soares by scanning the code from the Spotify app



tion in Brazil is heard throughout the country and beyond its borders. The images of the song's video clip reinforce the message of protest against racial discrimination.

ELZA SOARES AND GAL COSTA ARE THE FACES OF THE BRAZIL THAT FOUGHT TO DEFEAT THE DICTATORSHIP, OF THE BRAZIL THAT STOOD UP TO VIOLENCE AND MACHISMO, OF THE BRAZIL THAT FACES UP TO INEQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION AND INJUSTICE

"Brazil! / Show your face / I want to see who pays / To make us stay like this / Brazil! / What is your business? / The name of your partner? / Trust me." Brazil, anthem against inequality and exclusion, originally composed and performed by Cazuza, achieved greater fame and recognition through the voice of Gal Costa. The bisexual singer scandalized conservative Brazilian society when performing this song live in Rio de Janeiro in 1994 with her breasts uncovered. Gal showed the hypocrisy of those who are outraged by seeing female nipples while remaining silent in the face of the poverty and inequality denounced in her song.

Mulher do fim do mundo - Não temos tempo de temer a morte

The 1964 coup and the military dictatorship impacted on the history of Brazil and the lives of both artists. Elza Soares' house was

machine-gunned at a time when she was already singing against machismo and racism, making the military regime uncomfortable. She decided to go into exile in Europe, like so many other Brazilian artists.

Gal Costa was living her most prolific stage of creation and composition when Institutional Act Number 5 (AI-5) was instated, restricting freedoms and rights and concentrating power on the military usurpers of the state. The inclusion of compositions by her exiled friends in her albums, her sensuality and her rebelliousness positioned her as a symbol of resistance to the dictatorship's censorship and violence.

"We need to be attentive and strong / We don't have time to fear death," sang an extraordinary Gal at the IV Festival of Brazilian Popular Music in 1968 where her powerful interpretation of *Divino, Maravilhoso*, composed by Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, emerged as a song of resistance to the violation of human rights

Me deixem cantar até o fim

Planeta Fome (Planet Hunger) and *A Mulher do Fim do Mundo* (The Woman at the End of the World) are two of Elza Soares' most recent albums, in which she continued with her anti-racist activism, protesting in favor of women's rights and her stance on inequality and hunger. These albums allowed a new generation to become familiar with her music and to reflect on the ever-present themes in her musical repertoire. "

Al igual que Elza, Gal disfrutó relike Elza, Gal had recently enjoyed a great deal of popularity with the younger crowd. "I never imagined that at my age I

could reach young people in this way. It possibly has to do with having sung everything, bossa, samba, rock. I've always experimented. As an artist I took risks and took on challenges," she said in a 2017 interview with the Argentine newspaper *Página 12*.

"I was never satisfied with what they told me was in store for me, the misfortune, the terribleness. On the contrary, I have always chosen to fight, to transform. I am that struggle," Elza replied to the same Buenos Aires newspaper a year later.

"Até o fim eu vou cantar / Eu quero cantar, eu quero é cantar / Eu vou cantar até o fim," repeats the deep voice of Elza in the clairvoyant song *Mulher do Fim do Mundo*. This prophecy was also portrayed by Gal. Both extraordinary singers and composers delighted us with their music until the end of their days, and their eternal voices will always accompany us.

Gal Costa. Documentary archive: Correio da Manhã



Listen to Gal Costa by scanning the code with the Spotify app



RECOMME

CINEMA

EL ABRAZO

(ABRAÇO, 2019),
BRASIL. CUT, CNTE,
SINTESE.

"In 2008, Brazilian teachers wage a legal battle against the government to prevent a loss of their rights. In the midst of this struggle, teacher Ana Rosa experiences the challenge of being a mother, a woman and a union leader"



LITERATURE

KATYIA ADAUI

(1977), LIMA, PERÚ

Short story writer, writer of the novel Nunca sabré lo que entiendo (I will never know what I understand). In 2021 she published the book of short stories Geografías de la Oscuridad exploring family relationships.



LITERATURE

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

(1908-1986),
PARÍS, FRANCIA.

Philosopher, writer, activist. Her ideas have influenced the struggle for the defense of women's rights all over the world. One of her best-known works is the essay, The Second Sex. She also has written novels such as The Mandarins, The Woman Destroyed and She Came to Stay.



PHOTOGRAPHY

TINA MODOTTI

(1896 ITALY -1942
MEXICO)

Photographer and activist who lived in several countries, arriving in the United States and then settling in Mexico in the 1920s, where she became a member and supporter of the



Self-portrait: Tina Modotti.

FOUNDATIONS

Mexican Communist Party and the Mexican socialist labor movement. Friend of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, among other artists. Her greatest photographic production occurred in this country. She also collaborated with the struggle of Augusto César Sandino in Nicaragua. The writer Elena Poniatowska reviewed her life in the biographic novel *Tinísima*.



"Woman with Flag", Mexico, 1928.

MUSIC

MAF É TULÀ
COSTA RICA,
PERCUSSIONIST
AND COMPOSER
ANYUL ARÉVALO,
COLOMBIA AND
COLLABORATORS

Y Somos Todas, a song produced by EILA and the Network of Women Education Workers for the EILA Campaign to ratify ILO Convention No. 190 against violence in the world of work.



MUSIC

SARA CURRUCHICH
(1993), SAN JUAN COMALAPA, CHIMALTENANGO, GUATEMALA.

Guatemalan singer and songwriter of Mayan Kaqchikel origin, activist in defense of the rights of women and the Indigenous peoples of Guatemala. Her song *Pueblos*, which she sings together with the Mexican singer-songwriter Lila Downs advocates in favor of the struggles of Indigenous peoples.



PODCAST

RADIO AMBULANTE
(NPR, EE.UU.)

Radio Ambulante is a narrative podcast that tells the stories of Latin America in Spanish, put out by the United States National Public Radio (NPR). It features episodes from different countries in the region.





LENTE RED:

Regional Meeting of the Network of Women Education Workers, EILA

September 2022, Recife, Brazil





