

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF
WOMEN'S AND GENDER ACTIVISM AND
SCHOLARSHIP**

SITE: PERU

**Transcript of Lourdes Huanca Atencio
Interviewer: Karen Bernedo Morales**

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Lourdes Huanca Atencio, born in 1968, is founder and president of the National Federation of Female Peasants, Artisans, Indigenous, Native and Salaried Workers of Peru (FENMUCARINAP). The organization was founded in 2006 with the purpose of defending and fighting for the rights of women in Perú. Rooted in an ancestral cosmovisión (or worldview) of their indigenous communities, a central struggle has been the fight for their subsistence, in maintaining land, water and seed sovereignty. The main goals include: (1) control and defense of the territory of the female body, which is often violated; (2) the political, economic, social and cultural empowerment of women who sustain society, yet whose work and contributions are not recognized; (3) defending the sovereignty of indigenous women's subsistence, which is land, water and seeds, because a campesina (or rural woman) without those things has no choice but to move to city where she then becomes extremely impoverished. Lourdes is one of five women promoters of human rights who were recognized by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in Perú during a ceremony held in the framework of the commemoration of International Women's Day in March 2020. She has also participated in numerous UN initiatives (e.g., as a regular participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and is also a member of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous People of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC).

Karen Bernedo Morales is a curator and researcher of Visual Anthropology and Gender Studies. She is professor at Universidad Científica del Sur and a founding member of the award-winning peripatetic Museum of Art and Memory. She has directed documentaries on memory of the internal armed conflict of Peru: *Ludy D, women in the armed internal conflict*, *Mamaquilla, threads of war* and the series *Other memories, art and political violence in Peru*, and has curated visual arts projects with a gender perspective such as: *María Elena Moyano, texts of a women on the left* (2017), *Collaborative Carpet of Visual Resistance* (1992-2017), *Pedro Huilca, let's struggle for a cause that is superior to our lives* (2017), *Las Primeras, women encounter history* (2018, 2020), *Emancipadas y emancipadoras, the women of independence of Perú* (2019). She is currently completing the documentary *The invisible heritage*, which explores the few representations of women in monuments in the public space in Lima.

The interviews for the Peru country site were conducted in summer 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. These interviews were conducted over Zoom, and due to this format, there were some interruptions in the interview due to problems with connectivity. Many of these interviews discuss life and activism during the pandemic.

Karen Bernedo Morales: To begin, I know that you are often asked a lot about your work with the organization you belong to. Your work as an activist, but I would like to start by asking you about your personal history and what experiences have marked you, or that you remember that have to do with who you are now, with the work that you do now.

Lourdes Huanca Atencio: Mmm (pause). Yes, I believe that one of the things that marks you in life is... I believe that every woman wants to set out, wants to move forward, wants to walk. And many times, because of fear, because of the insecurity of oneself we close ourselves off and we block ourselves and we say, "I can't". For me I have always wanted to grow, as a person, I mean, to move forward. But it was also one of the challenges because I have children. So, for me it was hard, very hard, to detach from my children, but still, I did not hesitate because it was about how I would grow. Because if I had not left the house, the home, I don't think we would have advanced to where we are now as an organization in Cusco.¹ But I will also tell you as a woman, the satisfaction I have of having two children. I have two sons. And my two sons are now adults. It's not that, "ah mom, you've abandoned me", or "you've left me", no. On the contrary, my two sons say to me, "mom, go ahead, grow, go on." Because I also believe that we have to recognize that I could not have faced this alone, because my children were raised by their father. So, I would go, I would go out, not in a selfish way, but in a way of wanting to grow and saying, "not only thinking about myself, but how do I move forward with the support of other women too" then.

KBM: And from your childhood, from your early years, what do you remember? (pause) What might have been decisive for what you do now?

LHA: Having lived in freedom with autonomy. I can say this because of what my father taught me, who raised me until I was eight and after that I was with my mother. But it was not a quiet, good life, I can say that. So, because of the blows, because of my stepfather's beatings, my mother, then I decided to go to the streets to save my life. I can say that. So, I think that all of that marks one's daily life. When you live on the street, it's not like you live in your mom and dad's house together (pause). Both of them, my father had his own family, my mother had her own family, so one is left up in the air. Now I talk like this because every time you talk it is a deep pain in your soul because you always remember, don't you? Why didn't I have my mom and dad together, right? So as not to suffer, but that's the way life is, because we can't force our parents to live together either, while we're sure they didn't understand each other. But that pushed me because you will understand that living on the street, sometimes you have something to eat and sometimes you don't. And sometimes you have a roof over your head and sometimes you don't. And this is what has helped me to grow, to be able to move forward because you have already made a name for yourself, you

¹ Cusco is a city located in southeastern Peru. It serves as the capital of the Cusco region and province. ("Cusco." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cusco>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

have been hard at work on the street. So, what more fear can you have there if you have already had a journey since you were a child (pause).

So, for me to form a women's organization... to confront, because it's not easy to form an organization of farmer and indigenous women. And that's why, with that view, with that analysis, when I make a decision to grow because I've also been a national leader of the mixed organization, then that's what it is, learning from childhood that you have autonomy in your decisions. That is to say, you are not submissive to what you are told, to what, perhaps, I value today... my parents separated, well, but they taught me to be strong, to be this autonomous person of deciding, of making decisions. Of having my own financial independence because a fundamental point for a woman is to have your own autonomy of decision of yourself, of your territory, of your body, which we say and to have the financial independence to be able to resist and confront because if you don't have financial independence, then you can't move forward.

So, we, women have this, in terms of ingenuity, different ways of working and generating our income. Why? Because when you are a leader, you work ad honorem, you don't work for a salary. So, if you work ad honorem but at the same time, you have responsibility for yourself. So, these are things that mark you in life. These are things that you are taught in life, right? And the other fundamental point is to want to have a thirst to learn, to have a thirst to advance, right? Because as you will understand the idiosyncrasy of life, if you do not have economic resources, if you do not have stability, you cannot have an education. As much as I would have liked to enter a school, in having a profession, I would not have, it's not easy for me because of the same economic situation. But yes, we haven't lost heart, that is to say, I feel happy that I have the university of life, that I have a master's degree from the street, tell me, "Go block the street". I block roads without any fear. And I have my doctorate when they're going to take me to jail for defending my territory.

That is, I am not afraid of anything, nor am I a woman who resents anything. So, life So, life is like that, okay, very good, let's keep moving, I mean, without losing heart.

KBM: And is there any particular anecdote that you remember from those early years that you talk a lot about when you had to be on the streets? That is, of those life lessons, of those first years, some particular anecdotes that you remember?

LHA: There is an anecdote that I will never forget that (pause) sometimes we think that life, of the... children, the girls who live on the street, is easy. No. Those, on the street you have to take, I have had to take, I will tell you a very strong anecdote (pause) when I went out to the street, and I met a group of children. To be in their group you had to fight, you had to (sic) show that you are from the street. So, I remember my father a lot, my father has raised me from when I was six months to eight years old. During that time, my father is the one who forged me in a strong, forceful way, to defend myself. He used to say that I have to know how to defend myself, to fight. No, no, no, I'm not going to wait for my father to defend me when I'm beaten. When we are kids, we are terrible. I was very terrible. I mean, they wouldn't let me play soccer, I would bust the ball and you can imagine how they would run and beat me. When I would come home and say, "Dad they hit me" and cry, he grabbed

me and said, "wait a minute. You have feet, you have hands, you have teeth, you have a head to defend yourself. If you come back to the house complaining that you've been hit, I'm going to finish you off because you have to learn to defend yourself." That, to this day, stays in my brain. That's one of my father's examples, and that example has helped me to survive on the street, if there are moments that I've lived on the street.

In Moquegua when I entered from there because I had no choice but to be in the middle of the children, I had to fight to obtain a form of decision, a way to articulate with them.² So, since I was a child, it's a way of having to fight. That's my anecdote, that I've fought, that is, I've won. And I'm glad.

So, when one sees that you fight to win, then they also give you the role of sharing, of directing, of speaking, that is, since you were a child. And that is in the street. In the street you teach yourself (pause) to be strong, to direct, to speak, to coordinate. But something important that also shapes us is the education that we have as girls. An education of which (pause) stealing is bad, isn't that right? Lying is bad, right? To speak with clarity, to speak thus without holding back. With a force without fear, without fear, because if you talk around things, it's not like that either. That is, I have been taught since I was a child to speak directly. Directly, that is, if it hurts you, it hurts you because you are wrong, you are wrong, that is, those things.

KBM: And of those learnings, what do you consider to be your main life commitments now?

LHA: Look, they began to be my main life commitments when I took on the leadership of the Peasant Confederation of Peru, CCP.³ A mixed, macho, patriarchalist organization because that is the idiosyncrasy of the agrarian sector, the peasant sector of the indigenous peoples. So, it has helped me a lot to have that firmness of wanting to advance and learn because being in space as a national leader, you had a space to learn. But of course, it hasn't been easy because within that space of mixed organization, they tell you, "Hey, you're a woman. What are you going to run? What do you know? Go cook, go warm up, go get us some coffee." Right? In other words, in a way that was so (pause) discriminatory that I sometimes felt... but I think that we must also value, with great strength in those, in those times from 2000 to 2005, the strength of our feminist comrades. If I am in the capital, because one comes from the province to the capital, shoot, it's not easy, and still indigenous, peasant, even though you come in this space of the Confederation of Peasants of Peru was terrible. So, they even forbade us, that is to say, the subject, not to talk to the feminists because feminists are drunkards, lesbians. That's the version of the males, isn't it? So, I didn't say, "Hey, I'm going to the feminists." So, I would take and go to my colleague

² Moquegua is a Peruvian city located in southern Peru. It has a population of approximately 70,000 residents. ("Moquegua." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moquegua>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

³ CCP, La Confederación Campesina del Perú, is a farmer's movement founded in 1947. ("Confederación Campesina del Perú." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederaci%C3%B3n_Campesina_del_Per%C3%BA. Accessed 3 May 2021.)

Flora Tristan⁴ this Diana Miloslavich.⁵ In DEMUS⁶ María Ysabel Cedano.⁷

That is, and other colleagues. So, they were the ones who gave me strength and fortitude, because I was saying at one point, "I'm going to Moquegua, I'm done." Then I remember the colleagues, Diana Miloslavich, she would say, "one moment, you have started to learn. Learn and advance. You are not alone, come here if you need anything." And well it was like that, I resisted for five years in the CCP, with strength, courage, decision and position. Many times, the difference was that the advisors were making agreements for the leaders, and I was the leader of the National Board of Directors but however, since I was a woman, there was no respect. So, when I left, I was empowered by the Floras, by the feminists, and I returned more empowered to the CCP, in other words, Flora was my training as a woman of resistance. With the DEMUS sisters, with all of them. They taught me about resistance. I returned to the CCP with strength. I remember in an assembly where there were only men, and they had to take them away, and they wouldn't let me in, so I pushed them away and I said to the advisor, as if afraid of scaring him, I rolled up my sleeves like this, "Are you going to let me participate here or not? You are an advisor, and you go outside and we, the leaders, stay here." Then the comrades were cold, they didn't know whether to respond or not because I remember that I told them, "You are leaders and you better keep your pants tied, you have to lead and you are not going to kick me out because I am a national leader as well. And if you do, I'm going to sue, I'm going to sue you and I'm going to hold a press conference." I was armed like that because that's also how I was trained, so that's been useful for making decisions, that is, the next time they let me in. Do you understand me? I mean, the issue was also how to fight with them in order to get the space to make decisions. They held assemblies and there were very few women, and when I came to the CCP, for example, they didn't want to stay. But in life you have to be rebellious, very rebellious to endure a strong rebellion. So, we reiterate that in the street, you have the rebellion, the education to be able to resist in daily life.

KBM: And what do you consider your professional success to be? Or in this career that you've been... that you're involved in. You as a director, what do you consider to be the greatest achievement so far?

⁴ The Flora Tristán Peruvian Women's Center was founded in 1979 as a non-profit with the mission of empowering Peruvian women politically. The organization advocates for legal reforms, runs educational outreach programs, and more. ("Mission and vision." Flora Tristán. http://www.flora.org.pe/web2/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=198&Itemid=27. Accessed 1 May 2021.)

⁵ Diana Miloslavich Tupac is the coordinator of the Political Participation and Decentralization Program of the Flora Tristán Center. She is also the author of *The Autobiography of María Elena Moyano: The Life and Death of a Peruvian Activist*. ("Ms. Diana Miloslavich." The Nairobi Summit Commitments on ICPD25. <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/speaker/ss14diana-miloslavich>. Accessed 1 May 2021.)

⁶ DEMUS is a Peruvian women's rights organization that focuses on protecting the reproductive and sexual rights of women. ("Quiénes somos." DEMUS. <https://www.demus.org.pe/sobre-demus/quienes-somos/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

⁷ María Ysabel Cedano is a Peruvian lawyer and feminist activist. She has served as the director of DEMUS since 2014. ("María Ysabel Cedano García." DEMUS. <https://www.demus.org.pe/sobre-demus/nuestro-equipo/maria-ysabel-cedano-garcia/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

LHA: The fact that I founded the organization, the National Federation of Peasant, Artisan, Indigenous, Native and Wage Women of Peru, is very important.⁸ It's an accomplishment for me. This is the university of life, like when you all have to study for your master's, to get your bachelor's degree you have to turn in a final project. I have submitted this one, in that way, the doctorate. You have to be a teacher to teach, FENMUCARINAP is a university for your colleagues, where they enter, learn. Not only so that they can be part of FENMUCARINAP, but also so that they can prepare themselves, be trained, to make decisions in different instances, organizations, and we have sister-companions who are in the mixed organizations now. And they are there, and they are brave, that is, one says "dang, that's FENMUCARINAP". So, we also have sisters who have exercised this political right of participation. A colleague who has been a lieutenant mayor and other colleagues who are also counselors, and they are preparing to be congressmen, do you understand? So (pause) how not to feel good about these issues, right? And happy, right? Of course, of everything that you have been through during 2006-2007, they were two intense years, very intense years of history of struggle, but the years after August 18 we will be 14 years old, now on August 18. So, the years of life that are coming is not an organization that has been born, it has been a year of life, although the comrade leaders of the mixed organizations told us, "Mmm, this has no life to continue, in one year, you'll last for a year, there is not much there already." One year of life, increased, in the room we have 14 years of life and FENMUCARINAP will continue for eternity. That is the pride that, as a mother, as a woman, as a colleague, as a friend... is what we have moved so that no woman remains in the air, in the feeling. No person, for example. We respect the issue of sexual diversity, that is the issue too, FENMUCARINAP was born but born with this way of the spirit of solidarity, among us to be sisters, to defend human rights without discriminating against anyone. So, it is also that. We have to be strong, right? In saying this, this is the organization, do you understand? Then with that strength, we say we are popular feminist countrywoman.

KBM: And what inspired you to do that work?

LHA: (laughs)... I think more of the issue that in the Peasant Confederation of Peru, our colleagues did not have a voice, sometimes they did not have votes. We were only there to listen and sometimes if we had to say a word and if we made a mistake, they made fun of us. "That's why we don't want to give you the floor, because you can't speak well." Or because... there was a lot of discrimination. So, I didn't fall and didn't withdraw to my house, no. Very much the opposite, I gave myself up and I was stubborn and forced to resist. That's what inspired me to say that in my mind, "there has to be a women's organization in order to give us our own spaces." So that no one will tell us, "Hey you go, you don't go." For example, the Peasant Confederation of Peru belongs to the CLOC-Vía Campesina, the Latin American Coordinator of Rural Organizations, and to the Vía Campesina which is worldwide.⁹ They gave me the opportunity to travel. I traveled with

⁸ FENMUCARINAP is a Peruvian indigenous human rights organization that works to empower indigenous women socially, politically, and economically. The organization is working towards food sovereignty and environmental protections in indigenous communities. ("Quienes Somos." FENMUCARINAP. <http://fenmucarinap.org.pe/quienes-somos/mision-y-vision/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.)

⁹ Vía Campesina is an international organization of peasants, farmers, and indigenous peoples. It has 182 member organizations and supports 200 million farmers. Vía Campesina defends food sovereignty and

the strength also of the solidarity of the feminist comrades, because the CLOC-Vía Campesina gave tickets and all the men would go, and the women did not. We didn't have the tickets to travel, but since I wanted to learn... it is not that I am selfish, but I was the one who was there. I wanted to advance, to learn because in order to teach you had to learn more. So, I knocked on the doors, I would knock on the doors of my feminist companions... like Diana. Everybody, right? to help me with the tickets, because it cost 700 dollars for Mexico I remember, and they helped me. Blanca Merino and everybody helped me, but... that (pause) is also this (pause) what sometimes made me bitter, isn't it? Why was it only the men who got to get ready to go abroad, why can't the women go? So, I complained. So, I said, "ah no, we formed, I'm forming a women's organization. And in the face of this we are going to have a freedom of power, we are going to organize." That's it, comrade, in that all women have their own space to speak, to cry, to smile, to talk about subjects that sometimes we were forbidden to talk about in the CCP. In the CCP we could not talk about women's issues, how we suffer on the farm, how we are with our children, or sometimes the leaders themselves, how they abandon their wives, etc. But that's what FENMUCARINAP is like.

KBM: Lourdes, do you remember the first time you imagined that there could be an organization of country women, or is it the first time you wanted to create or found this organization?

LHA: Mmm... there is, I remember very well, when I stopped being the national leader of the CCP, in 2005. I went to Moquegua because... I was definitely tired. Even though at the congress they told me, "Lourdes, you have to take on the role of Secretary General, the Secretary of Women's Affairs. You can't leave the CCP," right? But I had already decided to leave the CCP because I had in mind that I had to form a women's organization. So, I had to form the women's organization and that was (pause) withdrawing from the CCP, wasn't it? To give the proposal. The first proposal that I made was to strengthen the Secretariat of Women's Affairs of the CCP, but with a strengthening, based on the whole of Peru, that was my dream. But when I put forward this proposal in the CCP, in the CCP, "you are crazy, you are going to empower women, women never leave their homes". It was always negative. I didn't want to leave the CCP, I wanted to strengthen the women there, but there was always negativity of saying, "no, this, no that", and you know that in Peru, if you don't have a position, you can't convene, you can't [inaudible]. I was no longer a leader then. So, who do you think I asked for support? Susan Portocarrero.¹⁰ I don't know if you remember the Secretary of Women's Affairs who was in the CGTP.¹¹ They had their union workshop. So, Susan is our partner, I said to her, "please" I say, "let's do one thing, I want to call the country women, but no, I don't know how." You, through the Secretary of Women's Affairs,

peasant rights internationally. ("The International Peasants' Voice." La Via Campesina. <https://viacampesina.org/en/international-peasants-voice/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

¹⁰ Susan Portocarrero is the secretary of the Department of Working Women for the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers. ("Departamento de la Mujer Trabajadora." CGTP. <http://www.cgtp.org.pe/departamento-de-la-mujer-trabajadora/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

¹¹ Founded in 1929, the General Confederation of Workers of Peru is an organization that works towards social reform and increased workers' rights in Peru. ("Antecedentes Históricos." CGTP. <http://www.cgtp.org.pe/2018/03/16/historia/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

convene the colleagues, the convocation, and I'll take care of finding them food, lodging, and I'll take care of finding them their tickets. But just summon them, we won't bother you at night, in the morning. We are going to work with women farmers at night. We'll be there in the morning, we'll be in your workshop all day, Susan, and at night from eight o'clock on, we go to work. Do we agree? We agree." So, that is how 2006 began, in the month of August. We knocked on doors, many of them, for example, the one I will always remember a lifetime ago when the FENMUCARINAP was formed (pause) when we knocked on the doors of different organizations, they told us, "No! how are you going to break the CCP? no! you are being a divisionist." So, when I went to Flora Tristan, she said, "yes, good comrade, now", Diana Miloslavich. That's why I respect her, I love Diana with much, much respect and love. She has her own character, that is, and that character is respected, but she is very supportive, very human. So, she did the following, "ya Lourdes". "Look," I said, "I'm here, my friend, and I've explained it to her. Susana is calling, Susan Portocarrero, but what I have to guarantee is that the companions will arrive, but with what money?" Conchuda, I'm also saying it directly to them, well, no way. Then Diana says, "yes, very well". She called Elena, from the rural area where Flora works, and said, "let's see, the colleague is going to be a meeting of indigenous peasant women, so we have to support her." So, they brought their partner from Ayacucho,¹² and their partners from Junín,¹³ right?

I'm going to Aurora Vivar,¹⁴ the companion Celia Mansilla¹⁵ on that date, at that time. At that time, Ana Díaz¹⁶ was still the director. I explained to her, I said, "please. Don't worry," she said, "we're going to help you, we'll give you a hand, but please help me by moving your directors." Comrade, this... Aurora Vivar moved comrade Gladys Campos Chirado current vice president of FENMUCARINAP.¹⁷ And so, I was asking different NGOs to convene their leaders, their cadres. And for my part, I also called the cadres, women who were within the CCP and we were eight regions that had joined together, and we have knocked on doors, to

¹² Ayacucho is the capital of the Ayacucho region and Huamanga Province. The city is in southern Peru and has a population of 180,000 people. ("Ayacucho." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayacucho>. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

¹³ Junín is a region located in central Peru. Its area is roughly 17,000 square miles. ("Department of Junín." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Jun%C3%ADn. Accessed 1 July 2021.)

¹⁴ Asociación Aurora Vivar is an organization that empowers working women in Peru by protecting workplace rights and providing access to jobs and training. ("Asociación Aurora Vivar." Empower. <https://empowerweb.org/global-reach/country/latin-america/asociacion-aurora-vivar>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

¹⁵ Celia Mansilla is a founder, board member, and regional coordinator of Asociación Aurora Vivar. ("Celia Mansilla Conza." LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/celia-mansilla-conza-829b144a/?originalSubdomain=pe>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

¹⁶ Ana Díaz is a project coordinator for Asociación Aurora Vivar. ("Ana María Díaz Gálvez." LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ana-mar%C3%ADa-d%C3%ADaz-g%C3%A1lvez-7328a48a/?originalSubdomain=cl>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

¹⁷ Gladys Campos Chirado is the current vice president of FENMUCARINAP. ("Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Artesanas, Indígenas, Nativas y Asalariadas del Perú." BDPI. <https://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/organizaciones/federacion-nacional-de-mujeres-campesinas-artesanas-indigenas-nativas-y-asalariadas>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

(pause) the Episcopal Center to help us with food.¹⁸ I remember Oxfam also through Episcopal, to get support for food, lodging, tickets, etc.¹⁹ So, we became the 16, we arrived for the workshop because it was the 16th, 17th, and 18th that we were closing. I think that remembering is how to knock on the doors where you also felt frustrated because... when you knocked on the door and those that were supposed to help you, would tell you that you are a divisionist, one who wanted to break up the CCP. You would crash like this and say, "dang, and that?", right? because in my dream I would say, "dang we already have" and even tell you, "I had already put it on the agenda," right? "Flora Tristán" And as she walked away, she was crossing out. I mean, I was becoming disappointed too, right? but I made sure to not lose hope, I was not discouraged because I am the kind of person that once I make a decision, nobody can make me stop, the decision has already been made, for better or for worse, there. Period. The thing is it gets done. That has helped me too, that decision because with so many snubs I would have said, "ah, no more, I'm going home!" No. On the contrary, it gave me more strength, because I said, "dang, and why are you so opposed? What's up? What's going on?" I mean, I was getting into that analysis myself. And so... with the strength, the support of the solidarity of the feminists, of the solidarity of the brother comrades of Episcopal, and other institutions that helped me, we made it beautiful. So, we worked from eight o'clock at night until two in the morning, we were working, the peasant comrades. In our day we were in the workshop and that's why on August 18th our organization was born in the early morning. I tell it openly and from the heart and I remember that I used to gather the colleagues like this and when we arrived later, I would say, "you know what colleagues? You have to elect a president so that you can help yourselves and I will help you." That was my word because I already knew, I already imagined, I suspected, that I was going to receive strong mistreatment from, during all that time with the mixed organizations. So, I said, "better, if there's another partner who takes over, then they won't hit the partner hard anymore, but I'll have the oxygen to help." But when the decision was made in Congress, they told me, "You called us together and you're taking over, and you have to do it." And they left me everything. We helped you, "now then" I said. I took it and assumed it. Dang, but I already knew it was that, I mean, terrible. It was very terrible, terrible. But there we are.

KBM: And just along those lines, I know you've already mentioned it a lot in this conversation, but (pause) what has your experience been as a woman working in those organizations? That is to say, if these difficulties of which you have already been commenting on, this, discrimination, not only of gender, but also for being Indigenous.

LHA: (pause) (sigh) Aaay, what are the difficulties? (pause) What are they? (pause) I think

¹⁸ There are several Episcopal Centers throughout Peru, which are religious centers of the Episcopalian sect of Christianity. ("About Us." Episcopal Church. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/about-us/>. Accessed 3 August 2021.)

¹⁹ Oxfam is an international organization that aims to eradicate poverty by addressing the systems that keep people in poverty. Oxfam works with organizations around the world to fund and support their missions. ("About Oxfam." Oxfam. <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/about/>. Accessed 19 May 2021.)

that I don't know if I know, for example, being in Lima has been a very big difficulty.²⁰ Very sad for me. (pause) Of course, when we had the CCP, one could arrive and could sleep. We could rest, I could walk all day, but... I didn't get discouraged. I still arrived, I went to the CCP, and I had formed the organization even though they were taking the dirt out of me, "how is it possible that you are a divisionist?" They insulted me within the CCP. And I continued because I didn't have anywhere to sleep (pause) because, of course, the colleagues chose. We have chosen Gladys Campos, Rosa Ojeda,²¹ the colleague Judith, who is in Venezuela who has had to leave the country. They were in their regions, the one who stayed here in Lima was me (laughs). I'm laughing now, aren't I? One day I arrived at the CCP, and they took me out at 11 at night. That was the greatest pain of my life I think I had felt. At 11 o'clock at night they take you out of the organization and you turn around and you can't, "cha, where am I going?" And I remember that the cab driver told me, "Lady I'm going in circles; I'm getting drunk without drinking beer." Because he had to go around the whole oval where the CCP is. And I told him, "Don't worry, I'm going to pay you, then you stop here, and we'll think, I'm going to think for a little while," because I was also afraid, I had to get into the car so that... and I left at two in the morning I think it was, three in the morning, I went to (pause) Rosa Dueñas' house, the refuge house.²² And I went to her house, and I knocked at that time, and I think her refuge house was full. I told her, "I don't know, take me in, it doesn't matter what you do, you are a house of refuge, you are going to take me in now." I went arrogantly and stayed there. I stayed there. So, she lives in the 10 of Argentina, in Planeta Reinoso. From Planeta Reinoso to the Congress, or to the meetings of institutions like Flora or DEMUS. You have to have economic resources, many times I have had to walk to get to the meetings, or like other times, like they threw me out of the CCP and I had, there in Rosa Dueñas' house, but I couldn't get there easily, because I didn't have any money, when I had nothing, because it wasn't about saying, "hey, give me a present" or that, no it was for me that, no I mean, no, I am not one to say that. So, on a street in Plaza Bolognesi, on the street España there are old cars, even now I think there are the old cars. I slept several times in those old cars. (pause) That's where my night came (long pause). I think that (long pause) the FENMUCARINAP (crying) (pause) has a history, because today it is a strong organization (pause) but during its creation, since the beginning it was difficult (pause) when I was thirsty, when I was hungry, when I wanted to rest... that was in 2006 (pause). But when you see that there, in the oval of the Plaza Bolognesi, there on the second floor, an internet booth, a little house (long pause. Drinks water). A house where, what I did was, I got out of the car that I slept in, I went to that house at 7 in the morning, which they opened very early. I would ask them to use their bathroom, I would wash my face, take a bath there. And that's where I worked, that's where I did my papers, that's where I went. And when there were meetings, I would go to the meeting in that little house,

²⁰ Lima is the capital of Peru. The city is located east of Callao, a port on the Pacific Ocean, and west of the Andes Mountains. Lima has a population of over eight million people. (Robinson, David. "Lima." Britannica. <https://britannica.com/place/Lima>. Accessed 28 April 2021.)

²¹ Rosa Ojeda is an advocate for rural women and a founder of FENMUCARINAP. ("Rosa Ojeda Chávez: Como mujeres rurales, tenemos sed y hambre de participar en la política." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <http://www.fao.org/peru/noticias/detail-events/en/c/448512/>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

²² Rosa Dueñas Morales is an indigenous activist and founder of the first women's shelter in Latin America. Her program provides shelter and support to female survivors of sexual and domestic violence. ("The House of Rosa (2019)." FilmFreeway. <https://filmfreeway.com/TheHouseofRosa>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

on that internet, they would lend me to clean up, to change, and I would go to the meeting of Flora Tristan because it was easier there, closer to the Plaza Bolognesi, three or four blocks away. It was more difficult to get to DEMUS because it was farther away and I had to walk because I was walking, my friend, I didn't have money to get into a car or a van, and when I had money, I would get in and save. Of the many things we have suffered. And after that, sometimes I was a little afraid because I had to fight with the thieves several times. I used to sleep in the cars, so what do you do, and it's good to mention it now. Because, for the girls who are going to read, to listen to this, it's not easy, but it's not difficult either. So, I would go to Flora Tristan because when I was hungry, it was 12:40 pm, with a colleague Guadalupe Hilaria, we would both go, "Dianita we are coming to do the documents", but in itself we were saying, "hey, invite us to lunch". And there, in Flora Tristán, there was the comrade Santosa,²³ Diana Miloslavich would say, "Santosita, two lunches for the comrades of the Femus", so we already knew. I'm telling you this because look, one has to see the strategy of survival as well. Sometimes Diana would also say, "come on, let's go to my house." I would go out at dusk, and I would not leave, and I would fall asleep on her furniture. There has been the solidarity among the women comrades when we have asked for it, they have never denied us either. On this journey, we met Celia Mansilla, in the process of the year - a colleague from the Aurora Vivar Association. We had a meeting of the World March of Women, and when we left the World March of Women, she told me, "You're invited to my house. There is good soup." And I tell her, "Today it's my turn, I'm going to check my agenda if I have to have dinner, lunch". I was joking. I arrived at Celia Mansilla's house and to this day I have stayed at Celia Mansilla's house (laughs). That's right, isn't it? We got a FENMUCARINAP office on August 6, but, in the house of our colleague Celia Mansilla, it is a house... communal house as I say, with much affection. She opened the doors for me, it already had a roof. It already had food, that is, I already had the basics, so I began to strengthen FENMUCARINAP more like that. That's it.

KBM: And in that sense, what is the importance of feminism for you?

LHA: Extremely important, the feminist colleagues who taught me and taught us all, that's why we are feminists too, to value, to understand, to respect the territory of your body, right? In other words, because you have to understand the life of indigenous women. They are always taught to sow, to take care of the farm, right? To value the whole world view, the culture, that's not bad, that's good. But nobody taught women that we have to take care of ourselves, do you understand? With the view, the woman is to give birth, the woman is to take care of the husband, the woman is to take care of the cattle, the farm, the seed, etc. All that, right? And if not, the common women of the city are to take care of the family, right? And, and work in what they can, but we never value ourselves as women. Feminists have the knowledge, the knowledge that we have as women to make ourselves respected, to value ourselves, how I have to value myself as a woman, mainly to know myself, after I know myself with that potential, who am I? What are my parts that I have to value and take care of? So, we are beginning to understand, and we are also beginning to understand, how

²³ Atencio may be referring to Santosa Layme Bejar, who is a health care worker in her community and was arrested for ties to the CCP in 1994. ("MLWA - Peru: Santosa Layme Bejar." Amnesty International. [HTTPS://WWW.AMNESTY.ORG/EN/DOCUMENTS/AMR46/017/1994/EN/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR46/017/1994/en/). Accessed 3 August 2021.)

these issues are that before in sectors, until now there is also the issue of a couple's sexual relationship, many times women in the countryside do not want to, but their husbands, as the husband is the owner and lord of the wife, beat them to have sexual relations with his wife and that is why there are unwanted children, that is why there are also femicides, because of all this. So that's why we love feminists because they have been clear and direct. They also taught us about respecting human rights, about the issue of sexual diversity. We have a Maria Ysabel Cedano, isn't that, right? who has always given us talks with Jessica all that area uh, so, that's (pause) what the value is. The solidarity between them, isn't it? To also demonstrate at all times, in every moment, isn't it? And we're not just talking about a solidarity of money or the project. We speak of a solidarity of word from woman to woman, of being listened to or a hug today comrade, "here we are you are not alone." This is comrade, this is feminism and popular peasant feminism, and we are also, with respect to women, defining the basic rights of their daily life, for example, in some indigenous peoples there is still the issue that... having sex with a very young girl is normal and common. That is not rape, and if it is with the family, it is normal, it is common. So, to understand that we have emerged to be able to reach those places, understanding, right? explaining, right? that women already have rights with laws, not with international conventions. That's right. That is to say, it is extremely important, I value feminists a lot, because of the teaching they give us by valuing us as women.

KBM: And, and do you consider yourself a feminist, Lourdes?

LHA: To the core.

KBM: (laughing)

LHA: I'm a popular peasant feminist to the core because that's where I learned who I am. Of course, I have always been a rebel. In advance I have been courageous, I have been, I am very frank, I say it without anesthesia. Did it hurt? It hurt. But I already told you. I don't like hypocrisy, you know? No, nor am I this one, my face is very clear when I'm upset, when I'm well. I think one has to walk with that transparency too and be known that way. That's it.

KBM: And now talking a little bit about your work in your organization, can you tell us how it has been, how is that experience, and what strategies are you using to work there?

LHA: Look, as FENMUCARINAP, when it was born, it was born with two main objectives. One is empowerment, the recognition of women, of who we are: we contribute to the country, we work, we fight for that recognition. And the other is in the defense of food sovereignty, which is to defend the land, which is to defend the water, the seeds, etc. So, with these two fundamental points that we have, we work within our proposal. But the first times of the day that we have had as FENMUCARINAP, crazy things always come. We are part of the CLOC-Vía Campesina now. And the CLOC-Vía Campesina holds its congresses, carries out its activities, and we are direct now. For example, the first strong action that we have done as FENMUCARINAP after two years of fighting to make ourselves visible, to respect FENMUCARINAP in Peru, we have made a strong impact in Ecuador. The biggest madness that we have had as FENMUCARINAP is to travel to Ecuador, one hundred women

from all over the country, from all regions. From where we are based and also from other areas. We have traveled with sons; we have traveled with daughters. We have gone with our rice. All our products are already there, but we arrived at the congress of the CLOC, the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations in 2010. In that year, traveling with 100 women from here, they didn't even believe us that we were going to travel, they thought we were lying, they told me, "Hey Lourdes, you are going to another country, don't be crazy, how are you going to take 100 women?" I mean, there are always, always situations that instead of, where people put you down, right? But we said, "we are going. And we're going to go," and we went. And they gave us the membership, 100 well-ordered women, there's a story to be told there, because there's discipline. One of the things we have to value is that there is always decentralization, there is a way to explain when there are projects, when we have them.

So would say, for example, we have with Entrepueblos²⁴ we have started a project with Clara Ruiz²⁵ with the partner who was in charge before. Then she saw us at a day of the fight for the indigenous peoples, and I don't know what year, I don't remember it very well right now. We had a meeting under a small staircase with a candle because we didn't have a place to bring her, because we didn't have a house, and we were in Lima more or less, 53 women too, in this participation of Indigenous peoples that took place in the school, in the university, in San Marcos, I think, if I'm not mistaken.²⁶ So, I think that this has helped us women to empower ourselves when we go out to other countries, when we participate in different workshops, that is, to have a thirst for learning, that our head is like a little sponge to learn. Now we have achieved a project, for example, the experience with Entrepueblos, first it was with ninety thousand euros. And of course, 90,000 euros for us for the first time was wow! So, we said, we planned, we planned with our partners. We said, "let's do this project." And we as FENMUCARINAP have learned to do this, macro, macro-south, macro-north, macro-center, macro-east, so that everyone can participate. That is the side, decentralized, this one that we make of the national one. So that's what the project was based on. When we got the news, Clara told us, "They approved the project! That's the good news," she says, "and the bad news is that they're only going to give us 30,000 euros. Can you imagine how much we had projected with 90,000 euros? At 30,000 euros, right? So, we, said, "I don't have a problem, but we are going to have a meeting with our partners", because Entrepueblos was telling us this so that we could only work on a macro project and we proposed that all the macros be done and they said, "we are not going to get the money". So, when we had the meeting with all the leaders who have been part of this project, we decided to give them the report, "this is what we have worked for, 90,000 euros, today they have only approved 30,000 euros. Now, according to the financier, according to the colleague, she doesn't say that we can make only one macro. What is your

²⁴ Entrepueblos is a Latin American feminist organization focused on creating social reform and a sustainable future. Entrepueblos is an international network with over 1,400 members. ("Quiénes Somos." Entrepueblos. <https://www.entrepueblos.org/quienes-somos/>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

²⁵ Clara Ruiz is the regional coordinator of Peru for Asociación Entrepueblos. ("Clara Ruiz." LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/clara-ruiz-b4594670/?originalSubdomain=es>. Accessed 2 July 2021.)

²⁶ Located in Lima, Peru, the National University of San Marcos is a public university with more than 35,000 students (including undergraduate and postgraduate students). ("National University of San Marcos." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_University_of_San_Marcos. Accessed 14 May 2021.)

opinion?" They all decided to do the four macros. So, very well. So, in one part we put the organization, the hosting, etc., what it can and the other part we put... so that's how it stayed and so we did our first, decentralized activity of the macros. There, even the cooperator was there, as we have made soup kitchens since we have also made soup kitchens. Sometimes we take the rooms we throw mattresses for the economic savings that we don't have. So that's an experience. And the other experience that we have as FENMUCARINAP after the four macros that we made was in October. We arrived... with a force to the capital of the whole country, where we arrived in 2011, I remember with fifteen hundred women, from all over the country, and we threw the dump truck of farmland in the Plaza de Armas with Ollanta.²⁷ We have already done a mystique with the farm, and we have also done political advocacy on the issue of food sovereignty. So, these are things of struggle that happen, they are things because they easily did not want us to enter the Plaza de Armas and I told them, "Let's see, don't make us enter, the bad way if you kill us on our cool day, then it will be so." In other words, we also have to position ourselves, all the moments we have to see are learning, every day we learn and teach. This is what is important within an organization to make it feel active. One of the differences of our organization, for example, is that the daughters... and the sons are part of our organization, we don't say, "there's nepotism, she's bringing her daughter." No. The colleague has been bringing her daughter since she was a child, since she was a girl, today she is 18 years old, she is 20 years old, and today she is FENMUCARINAPS, she is there, and she is young. That is the strategy, now the female daughters can take the leadership role, but the male children can prepare themselves, can train themselves, can learn, and even become advisors, but they cannot decide, that is, they do not make the decisions. That is, no. Just listen, prepare yourself, but the women are the ones who make the decisions, do you understand? The children spend their time being advisors. That is also important because that is how we move forward, because when I'm not here, my sons are men, they will continue the lineage of fighting, in their own style, in their own way, but they will continue to fight, and the daughters will continue in the FENMUCARINAP to continue forging. Today we are forging professionals, we have... scholarships in the house of FENMUCARINAP, young people who are preparing to be professionals because FENMUCARINAP also needs professionals to be able to advance. So that's what we've been doing, working, doing political advocacy. For example, in March we came to participate in the International Women's Day on March 8, but we did it the day before, two days after, with all our mysticism, the land, the water, the seed, our flags, and our typical clothes. And when we enter, we introduce ourselves. And that's what we've done, at the level of all the ministries so that they know who we are, because if we're going to send ourselves a letter, who will it be? But if they see us actively, then there's already a little more respect. They are strategies that also [inaudible] ...

KBM: Lourdes and your organization, which has been going through several governments and several different political and social contexts for more than a decade, how has your organization changed in that journey? How has it been modified?

²⁷ Ollanta Humala is a former president of Peru, having served in the position from 2011 to 2016. In 2017, he was arrested for his involvement in the Odebrecht scandal during his presidency. ("Ollanta Humala." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ollanta_Humala. Accessed 4 June 2021.)

LHA: I think that one of the fundamental points that we have in FENMUCARINAP, any president can come, any governor, is that we have a clear political position and what is it? We respect the government, and it is a right that they have to watch over. The government, regarding the original indigenous peoples, it's not that they give us a handout, a gift, but rather it's a right. And also, according to 169 of the ILO.²⁸ Right-wing, not right-wing, they are going to enter, but we, for example, have the participation of the candidacy. We are not going to participate with the APRA²⁹ with Fujimori,³⁰ do you understand me? With this clear body, governments, or right-wing parties, because there is a clear principle, for example, that is why the FENMUCARINAP is not a common and current organization: we already organize, we talk, that's it. But we also prepare ourselves to be able to decide at precise moments, if I say, "I am defending my territories," referring to my land, my water. Who are the people who have affected the land, for example? Who are the people who have affected our territories? Fujimori's time. Who violated women with forced sterilization? The governments. So, we would not fit in those governments. Know how to maintain the conversation, because we are quick to mess up our lives, to make dams, this isn't. We're here. But, yes, what we have learned in our journey with all these governments is that we know how to have conversations. But many times, it is difficult for us to maintain a dialogue with the authorities and to respect them because I believe that in life we have to learn. The officials who come in, or the officials who come in, are... government people. If there's a problem, it's people who have to go to the government. If you become an official of a ministry, let's say, you're not my enemy, and I'm not your enemy. You carry out your role as an official of that institution and I have to respect you, I cannot go against you, I have to go against this capitalist, neoliberal system, do you understand me? So, having this clarity, that's why we emerge, that is, one government comes, another government comes. So, we feel calm because the other theme, we also don't let ourselves be bought by this consciousness. We need to also be cautious. Or saying in quotation marks, "ah poor thing is a woman, you have to vote because she is a woman." No. If we don't also make the analysis, what kind of woman is she going to be, does she have the principles, is she taking up our proposals, or is she against our proposals? Do you understand me? That's what I mean.

KBM: And currently, what projects is FENMUCARINAP involved in?

LHA: Look, right now we are with the theme of preparation of the colleagues in political

²⁸ The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, named the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, is an international document that asserts indigenous people's economic, political, and land rights. This convention is law in states where it has been ratified. (Hanson, Erin. "ILO Convention 169." Indigenous Foundations. https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/ilo_convention_169/. Accessed 5 July 2021.)

²⁹ Founded as the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), the Peruvian Aprista Party (PAP), is a Peruvian political party associated with the Socialist International. ("American Popular Revolutionary Alliance." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Popular_Revolutionary_Alliance. Accessed 5 July 2021.)

³⁰ Alberto Fujimori is a former Peruvian president who served in the role from 1990 to 2000. His government is celebrated for ending the Shining Path conflict and improving the national economy. Since 2004 though, Fujimori has been tried and convicted on multiple cases of human rights violations that took place during his presidency. ("Alberto Fujimori." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Fujimori. Accessed 6 June 2021.)

participation. And we are also preparing the issue of sexual and reproductive health. Because there is too much femicide, there are too many rapes of girls and boys. And teenagers become mothers at a very young age. So, we have to walk also on the right of the territory of the woman's body. How do we make ourselves respected? In what way? In other words, because we have to move forward, we have to break taboos in the Indigenous peoples, it is not easy to go in and carve out these themes, but it is not difficult either, so we are breaking taboos. That is our job, and we are now preparing ourselves with the issue of the coronavirus, to handle this device that is called advanced technology.

KBM: (laughs)

LHA: Do you understand me?

KBM: We're the same (laughs).

LHA: Right? Then imagine that we are still a little bit, that we are not used to it. Then we understand that we are also preparing projects to be able to give a tool to women and what is the tool? It is the cell phone. Not because it is a luxury, but because it is a tool to be able to communicate, wherever we are, so we are on the hill with your cell phone, you can enter the meeting, do you understand me? Where there is the internet logically. So, we are in that preparation, also to empower ourselves to learn from *Zoom* programs, from other programs that are there to be able to communicate. It's preparation. And that doesn't mean that we are then these illiterate reverends that we don't know. Yes, we have to learn, we have to understand that there are more than three million Indigenous women. And of those three million of us, the issue is that half a million have never been to school. Half a million women have never been to school, haven't even stepped in a school, they aren't familiar. So how can we empower them? They can use a cell phone, they can learn to listen, one of which FENMUCARINAP is in different regions. They are not, I am not going to tell you that it's perfect, that everything is wonderful. There are always tensions, there are always problems, but we have to move forward. For example, now that there is the coronavirus, we have to listen to everyone. It's painful, there are women who have died, companions, their daughters, it's painful. But we have to face it. That's it. And we have to make the case that the President of the Republic has to understand, has to look, has to turn towards an economic investment for women's rights. Women in general. In the country and the city. I mean, there is not that view in the government. It is not enough to say, "yes, women's participation." It is not enough to say, "yes, we believe in women." It is not enough. You also have to give them money, economy, that is to say, not that we're asking for a handout, we say... a loan with low interest, with a year's grace, because it's almost been a year... now it's going to be a year since we've been locked down, how do we have to grow? How do we empower ourselves economically so that we don't have to ask our husbands for money? Do you understand me? That's the question.

KBM: I know that you have some reflections as well on the relationship between research and activism, right? that comes from academia, you are always talking about the university of life, what can you tell us about that?

LHA: Look, I respect this very much and I appreciate and value very much when the professionals understand and have that solidarity, that human quality. But there is also a lot of discrimination between men and women who discriminate or minimize the work, the strength that women who have never stepped foot in schools do. Do you understand? I mean, what I am saying is that we have to value, respect, if the university of life teaches us how to survive and we have faced up to this day, and we teach our sons and daughters. Many times, we are psychologists, many times we are communicators, etc., we are engineers even symbolically because to sow is not grabbing and throwing the earth, and that's it. You have to take care of it; you have to cultivate it. I'll give you an example, right? One (laughs) engineer, in those years, said, "I know everything I have to teach you, you have to listen to me" right? "You have to sow like this, you have to do like this." All arrogant, right? I was shocked by that. And so, I'm someone who goes against that. I know how to throw myself against something. So, when the engineer finished speaking in that community, (pause) "very good Mr. Engineer, perfect, you are the best, you have come from a university, we respect you. Now, listen to us." "I have already told you how it should be." "Just a moment," I said, "now let me finish." In other words, I said, "Let me finish what I want to tell you," And that's what I said. (pause) The lady, the companion who is there with her hoe and pickaxe, and you with your hoe and pickaxe, both of you are going to make a furrow," I said, "both of you" (pause) You, with all your professional engineering skills, and your partner, with all her skills, who lives here." "Ah, very well," he said, "but with a well-made furrow," I said. We made a bet. Who do you think won there? (pause) The partner (pause), the partner. Why? Because the partner lives here, that is her daily work, do you understand me? That is, and the engineer got halfway, because of course it was the high part, the altitude, the oxygen. Do you understand me? But the other teammate lives here, she has her normal oxygen, do you understand? So... when we finished doing that I said, "two things sir. When you go to a place, show humility and respect. You're not going to know everything just because you have your profession and you're an engineer. You have to know how to listen." We have to know how to listen, and that is very difficult sometimes, to know how to listen. We always believe that we know the truth, don't we? So that's one point. And on the subject of feminism, there are also women who, with just gestures. In other words, for the native indigenous peoples, it is not just looking at you to see if you are good, but we also look at the gestures that you make, the grimaces that you make, and it is worth a lot, do you understand? And every time we have participated in these events we have seen, and the good thing about FENMUCARINAP is that they say it to your face. "You know what partner, do I bother you? Do I annoy you?" "No, partner, that's my way." Well, that's perfect, that's his way, but we have to learn, because it seems that you (pause) are annoyed, if we are annoying, we will leave," do you understand? I mean, sometimes they tend to always want to impose on us. I mean, I know, what I do, right? They don't say it directly, but in different ways and sometimes what do we choose? We keep quiet, our partners keep quiet, right? Those who don't quiet down, you have to tell them the truth, right? And the other thing is that sometimes it's a little annoying. When they come out, you always have to make a statement, you have to be there for the indigenous women, you have to be there for the peasant women, and if not in the statement, they forget. That bothers me too. Why? Because when we say, "we are part of it too, we are, they are our allies, they are our colleagues", I mean, we need to understand that it is not necessary many times that you are present to be able to be there in that declaration (pause). Because that's also something

we have to do for ourselves, that's why we say, "we're feminists to the core!" Because we understand that, also, don't our professional colleagues suffer when they have a job? They don't say, "hey, you got this job because of your effort, your capacity, you have a good brain" instead, "You've been with the boss! That's why he gave you that position." Of course, it is like that, they also suffer. We are never valued as much in the country and in the city, as we deserve, but also among women we have to help each other, among women we have to support each other, among women we have to move forward, and sometimes it also happens that they're bitter because they see that charts are going up and up and instead of helping, pushing it to keep growing, they already know a lot so they leave it there. And if that colleague falls, instead of helping her get up, they add more wood to the fire. That's the reality, I'm talking about a whole reality, a clarification. And sometimes you really say, "Well, you have to keep swimming, you have to keep growing, you have to keep moving forward," right? Because when the colleagues come from different workshops that sometimes we had sent them to, "Partner! Look, this has happened, this has happened. Partner! We are in a process of advancing, of learning", both on their side and on ours, respecting us. Because our country is, well, multicultural. Every blood. Well, that's it. I mean, up to that point I say, if you feel something it is because of that, because sometimes we feel that (pause) look. Maybe you will say, "ah no! Lourdes is wrong or is (noises)." No, no that's it, isn't it? The thing is, you look, you see. Or the theme for example is, "you can participate, you can, you can't, you can." I mean, there are things that really happen, but that happens everywhere. That happens everywhere. Thanks to the organization of the CLOC-Vía campesina of FENMUCARINAP, I have been walking around, working in other countries where I have noticed the same thing. And we have always said that we have to change. That is, because we are people who have and can change.

KBM: Lourdes and what is your analysis, your evaluation of the feminist movement in Peru, in general, in your experience?

LHA: Look, in spite of the difficulties we may have, the subject of feminism is growing in Peru. For example, there is, there used to be a lot of talk about lesbians and feminists being pure lesbians. Feminists are macho, we are drunk, we are prostitutes, right? Because that's what they told you. I'm talking about 20 years ago, from the CCP, right? Now, I see young people who call themselves feminists because before they were afraid to call themselves feminists from fear, terror, right? I mean, you used to say, "hey, I'm not, I'm not a feminist!" And you had to say, "Hey, there's no harm in saying I'm a feminist." So now we also see, for example, Gina Vargas, I remember, you know Gina Vargas, right?³¹ Yes, they do. We went to I don't know what country, and we were doing the mystique, for example. The land, the water. Gina Vargas caught on and sat down and started doing it with us, grabbing the earth, grabbing the seed. Is that a gesture? Yes. It's a very good gesture that we value. And that's how it is, I mean, at this time, feminism is growing. There are young feminists, there are young feminists, and we, like the accumulated youth, are moving forward. No, we always

³¹ Virginia "Gina" Vargas is a Peruvian sociologist and a leading activist for women's rights in Peru. Vargas founded the Flora Tristán Center, a non-governmental organization that advocates for women's rights in Peru. Vargas has also campaigned for reproductive rights and run educational workshops on women's movement theory and practice. ("Virginia Vargas." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Vargas. Accessed 1 May 2021.)

shake hands, we are always aware of it, for example, the experience that there is a *WhatsApp of feminists* now, a *WhatsApp* is to learn technology logically, and there goes solidarity, and there they are acting quickly. And solidarity is not only from Peru, but also internationally. For example, when we've been, in trouble, in Ecuador, they imprisoned a colleague in Ecuador. And we joined forces, we went to the front of the embassy of Ecuador, a variety of organizations, and we said, "we are feminists, we want them to release our colleague". So that's also a sign of how we've been moving forward. Slowly, surely, we have been advancing with steps, slow steps, right? To achieve the objective, because if we had done a horse race and a donkey stop, it would not have gone well. So, we are also colleagues who are seeds, native seeds, creoles, who give hope, who give the light of life. So why would we be transgenic, three years of life, and we would be dead because that's what transgenic seeds are. But because we are indigenous, Creole seeds, we are like the river, the river you can put a stone in it, you can put a plate in it so that the water can't cross, but the river looks for its path and crosses. It crosses. Like us. We cross. And as we heard from our colleague from Ecuador, we are like a wasteland, which burns us, and we sprout again. It burns us and we grow back. Do you understand me? So that's what we are, partner. Strong, very strong. Like those wildflowers. We are beautiful and pretty, but we are very courageous, that's what being a feminist is.

KBM: And just as you mentioned the Ecuadorian colleague, what are your connections with other activists, researchers, organizations in other countries?

LHA: Look, we have direct contact with them, before we started. That's why I said 11:30 too, because from, let's see, the political team was coordinating since 5 in the morning to see because from 8 to 11 in the morning we had our meeting of the Articulation of Women of the CLOC-Vía Campesina. So, there is an articulation of women from all over the world, I'll tell you. In South America, Central America, right? We are in a relationship as Via Campesina, but there is also a strong feminist relationship. We have been getting to know each other in different places. So, there is also this dialogue. I will tell you a little bit about the Andean Region, for example, in Bolivia. It is not so easy to go in and say I am a feminist. I mean, there we are rural women and that's it. So, the women who are part of the Vía Campesina of the [inaudible] maybe, there is little understanding. In Ecuador, it's also like that, but there are feminists in Ecuador with strength, like in Bolivia, but we have to give them a push. But I think that in Latin America, the feminist struggle is strong, that steps are being taken, slowly but surely, as I say again. For example, today we were just talking about the theme of the feminist, that we are popular feminist farmers, because the struggle is also carried out within our organizations, that is to say, feminist women go out to confront men without fear, because we know that we have the same rights, we know that we have the same rights to advance in our daily lives.

KBM: How did these first contacts come about with organizations in other countries?

LHA: On my part it has been through the CCP, since I started in Mexico. I've been in the Confederacy for 20 years - in the CLOC-Vía Campesina, 20 years. I have participated throughout this 20-year process. And the colleagues of FENMUCARINAP are also part of them. That is, in the different spaces that have gone to Paraguay and other countries. I

stopped traveling because they had to start growing as well, so, I mean FENMUCARINAP is related to this, during these 20 years of existence that we have in the CCP that I have been, and FENMUCARINAP 14 years. And, truly sometimes, I don't believe it, there are arguments. For example, this issue of respect for sexual diversity is not easy at times in the peasant organizations, to understand Indigenous people, but we are there. We still push, we still talk, we still say, and today the CLOC-Vía Campesina says, "yes, the participation of sexual diversity." Do you understand me? I mean, it's like a drop of water, every day a drop of water falls on a stone and over time it makes a hole. It leaves its mark. Maybe we are like a little drop of water that we are pushing, we are pushing and there we go. There we are, the popular peasant feminism issue, the CLOC has assumed it, and in 2010 when we went with 100 women before they were not defining themselves as being feminists. There was a process of conversation, there was a process. So, when there were 100 women in this political space, we had a political meeting with the CLOC, Francisca Rodriguez, but the leaders said, "Why don't we go and mention that we are popular feminist peasants? Why don't we go to the front?" To the congress where all the men were.³² Of course, we have been very risky, but we launched in 2010, since 2010 for sure, we are popular feminist peasants. So, is this an advance? Yes, and so on with the issue of sexual diversity because we said, "Well, what are you? Man, lesbian, what are you?" And I was saying, "I'm a lesbian, are you going to throw me out? Let's see, throw me out if I'm part of this space. Tell me, throw me out, let's see." And I even grabbed them. "I'm grabbing you, have I infected you?" I mean, the fight, because I think that saying, "yes, partner, I support you, I support you. Yes, I'll shake your hand." It's not just hiding your hand behind your back, no. It is also to have his agenda, to fight. Be part of it. The feminist struggle is our part and the struggle of the sisters of sexual diversity is ours. We take it on ourselves too. So, you have to know how to differentiate between colleagues, because "yes I support you", they say, "yes my little partner!" They say, "yes, my little partner!", right? a slap on the wrist, right? (pause) Let's go to the streets with them. Now we can't, we won't be able to do it, but at least we can fight from our own spaces by means of mirrors, etc., like strategies. But I remember, for example, the issue of sexual diversity. I was in, I don't know in which country, and when I saw the news that they had beaten up all the comrades in the Plaza de Armas in Lima during Susana Villarán's time, which was, I don't know what date it was that they had received.³³ I came back from that country and I remembered saying, "we have to make another one, let them beat all of us up. Let's go." And I went to the square. And we did it again, they didn't hit us there. I even remember the policeman saying to me, "and you, peasant, what are you doing here? Peasant women are not macho." I remember the policeman telling me in the Plaza de Armas. I turned around, but you can imagine what I told the poor policeman that I think he regretted having told me that. So, it's good to be in those fights. What do I mean? When FENMUCARINAP has struggles, we also need the support of the feminists. We also need the

³² Francisca Rodriguez is a member of Chile's National Association of Rural and Indigenous Women (ANAMURI), La Vía Campesina, and Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo. Rodriguez was a founding member of ANAMURI and helped to grow its membership base. (Paget-Clarke, Nic. "Making Visible the Work and Participation of Women." In Motion Magazine. https://inmotionmagazine.com/global/fr-rodriguez-interview/francisca-rodriguez-intview_eng1.html. Accessed 5 July 2021.)

³³ Susana Villarán is a Peruvian politician and the first woman to be elected mayor of Lima, Peru (in 2010). She currently serves as vice president of the Decentralist Social Force Party. ("Susana Villarán." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susana_Villar%C3%A1n. Accessed 5 July 2021.)

support of sexual diversity and there they are, the colleagues are there. We held a sit-in last week. I don't remember when. We stood up this week, for example, we went to the health center and the hospital on the balcony. We had our sexual diversity partners come and support us; you know what I mean? That is to say, the struggle is like that, not only in words but in fact. And...

KBM: And on that very issue, how do you see the women's movement dealing with this diversity of struggle? Because it's not... you're saying it, they're not all the same. They're not... they're enunciated from different sides. Do you think that the oppression, the inequality, the different agendas, how do you think the women's movement in Peru is dealing with that?

LHA: Look, I think that right now, it's not easy because there is always this, "no, that can't be!" Like the last meeting, the last day that we have had, with all the women, diversity that we have gathered. FENMUCARINAP was there, I believe that about 10 colleagues from different regions were there (pause) and then there was a group, saying, "no, that cannot be like that! We cannot have sexual diversity, only women can be here". In other words, even now, there is still sometimes that. That is to say, and you stop and wonder. "If the partner is not a partner anymore, she is a partner, she feels like a partner, why are you going to say no? Who are we? Who are we to say put up that barrier? Nobody!" I mean, we can, or rather we have to put it together, so there's a little bit. And to make a document... my God, there has to be everything there. Of course, it's democracy, they say. I mean, we need to be more drastic, faster, I mean, enough of saying, "I think this is it, and this is not" No! We need to be able to reach a consensus, quickly, because we have to be clear about everything, that everything is a struggle, to achieve our rights. All struggles are to achieve our rights. So, that also means that we have to do it quickly, now! We delay... and we continue, and I reiterate that we have to tell you. If we know that this is a statement that has to be with the issue of women, then put the colleagues in general, let's not wait yet because if I put the FENMUCARINAP with the issue of the defense of women. Am I going to be bitter that they have put me? (long pause) Not but a *WhatsApp* it to, "look partner, look and this." And we move on. In other words, we need to be frank, sincere in the journey of life. With that, I'm not saying that all are like that. No. There are some that are like that, but most of them are like that too. Of course, inside. For example, yesterday it was, I think, one o'clock in the morning, for the companion's Ecuadorian theme. "Do you sign today, or tonight?" "Yes", I say, "of course" how can I not? There's my name and my ID, put it down. Because it has to be like that, solidarity is, as it was yesterday. Not for tomorrow. That is it comrade.

KBM: Lourdes and finally, how do you see the time of COVID? How is it changing your own work, your organization's work, and what has been the impact, specifically on women?

LHA: Look, 33 colleagues caught COVID in Lima. That is, we were locked up until June, 33 colleagues, in Lima. Can you imagine how 33 colleagues were having breakfast, lunch, and dinner and then breakfast, lunch and dinner? But we didn't lose heart, we faced it. Of course, sometimes some of us got sicker than the others, but we were there. We have knocked on the doors of other houses, to help us with colleagues because the 33 of them didn't fit at FENMUCARINAP. Because it is a small house (pause) the colleagues have been a

challenge for us too. What we are talking about right now, through *Zoom*, can you imagine? It was up in the air, I said, "And now how are we going to meet?" Because of course, they caught you, *suu* [signs with hands] they locked you up. If you didn't have money, you were screwed, many women don't have money, they don't have it, but they're surviving. However, the colleagues, the FENMUCARINAP, had a meeting of the political committee, and we had to begin because then we looked for a little money to buy the *Zoom* program. And we learned. And today we hold our meetings, our assemblies through *Zoom*. We have also held events. Yesterday we had a beautiful event, also there with the participation of the sisters from all over the country. So, I think also, the coronavirus definitely has unequal impacts on the government and the country. Totally unequal. There are loans for large companies, and we know that. But if we women ask for loans, there aren't any. If we ask for loans in the agricultural sectors, now they say, "yes, there is a loan so that it can be done", but the words come out blurry. So, what's the point? What good is it if they know that we won't be able to present these papers this time, so ask a woman for a title deed. No peasant woman has a title deed. Some may have, but not all. So, the coronavirus is fatal for our country. Right now, there is a (pause), a hard reality that there is no oxygen in our country, there are no beds in our country. No matter how much they make the effort to ask, for example in Moquegua they say now there are no doctors, there aren't. So, it's terrible, isn't it? Without money, without oxygen, what awaits you? Death. On Saturday, the daughter of a fellow leader who has coronavirus died: Primitiva Rojas Campos.³⁴ She has coronavirus, they have had to move to another house, her two daughters have been taking care of her, both daughters had coronavirus, one died on Saturday. Today the whole family has the coronavirus. Since one o'clock in the morning when the young man asked us for help, we have been calling the numbers they had given us to call, do you think we have been attended to? Not one. The patrol went and said, "I can't go in because I don't have protection. It's gone," says the ambulance, "we had to go." "Are they police?" "No." "Ah we can't help." I'm saying what's happening in Lima. Then another one went, an institution that is not... it is not the insurance, it was of itself I don't know, but it was all a problem. So (laughs) all morning we have suffered, and at noon the girl died. Do you realize what situation we are in? We are in an intense situation, but women are the most affected. It's not because we victimize ourselves, but because we can't tell our children, "We don't have any food," my friend. We have to keep giving, it doesn't matter if you don't eat, but you have to keep giving. So, what we want in this issue of coronavirus is for them to see that. That they see it, that they analyze it, how much the women in the country and the city are facing the coronavirus. Sometimes we are already being burdened. The partners come out whether they want to or not. They have to go out and sell their things there, to be able to bring bread home, if not they don't have food. There is no food to eat. So, I think it's a view too. Our children, the big pain is that our children have lost a year. (pause) They have lost. And this shows us that our country has been totally excluded, the situation of women and in the countryside, the city. Education, health, right? I mean, we have been excluded, so I hear other people saying, "we have to return to normality." "No, gentlemen, we cannot return to normality. Normality excluded us and what the coronavirus has done is open the

³⁴ Primitiva Rojas Campos served on FENMUCARINAP's board of directors as the Employee Secretary. ("Consejo Directivo." FENMUCARINAP. <http://fenmucarinap.org.pe/quienes-somos/consejo-directivo/>. Accessed 5 July 2021.)

curtain and say, "This is the reality that we are in. There are no more hospitals. There are the rural indigenous areas, there are empty health centers," do you understand me? So, that's the coronavirus. We have to prepare ourselves so that we can be ready for the next pandemic.

KBM: That's right. Well thank you very much Lourdes for your time, for sharing these stories of struggle, much admiration, and respect for your work of course. I think that this testimony gives an account of how difficult it has been. But at the same time, it is a story of courage, of value, so nothing but to thank you for your time, for your life, for the work you do and to tell you, well the interview will be placed on a website I imagine when all the interviews that have been done here in Peru have been finished. On the website there will be the opportunity to put a photo and a small biography of you. I don't know if you would like to... the photo is optional if you have a photo maybe that you would like to share. You can send it to me, and I will send it to those who are going to do this part of the project and a short bio. If you also have it done, we can also use that.

LHA: Very good. Thanks also to you for this space that is given to us. I mean, I think we have the opportunities, we have to give ourselves the opportunities. We ourselves have to make an effort. Today we are preparing ourselves because the political elections are coming, we are saying, "how are we going to do it? In what way are we going to do it?" But we are not going to lose heart. We are going to continue and just keep this word. For those who are going to listen. We never have to give up, my friends, never. You can fall a thousand times but get up a thousand times. Each fall serves to reflect and serves to advance. When you fall, don't feel bad, now that you're not dead. On the contrary, I fell for something, analyze it, why am I falling and what do I have to improve? And yes, we must also learn to unlearn bad habits, right? [inaudible], authoritarianism, right? I mean, for example, it's hard for me, I'm very messed up. I recognize who I am, but maybe because of the messed-up life I've had, I don't excuse myself, because I've always had to be rebellious, but sometimes we have to change something at times. Thank you, my friend.

KBM: That's right, thank you very much Lourdes again. It has been an honor, all a pleasure to talk with you.

LHA: (laughs) Thank you partner.

KBM: Success in all the projects you are doing and hopefully things will get better for everyone.

LHA: Yes! They will improve, thank you very much.

KBM: Sure, thanks. Bye Lourdes dear.

LHA: Bye, partner.