

# THE PATH OF PEASANT AND POPULAR FEMINISM IN LA VIA CAMPESINA





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**THE PATH OF PEASANT  
AND POPULAR  
FEMINISM IN  
LA VIA CAMPESINA**

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# OUR JOURNEY THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE AND DIVERSE CONSTRUCTION OF PEASANT AND POPULAR FEMINISM IN VIA CAMPESINA

La Via Campesina promotes the participation of **women from rural areas at all levels of action, power and representation** in the building of an international movement **politically and socially committed** to the **defense of peasant agriculture, Food Sovereignty, the struggle for land, justice, equality** and to **eradicate all forms of gender discrimination and violence**.

Thanks to the collective debates and dialogues that have taken place in the history of the movement, organized mostly by **women**, much has been achieved:

- **Gender parity, equality and feminism**
- **Participation of women in spaces of coordination, representation and decision-making.**



1992

*“At first there was no participation of women. It was the beginning of a political project of peasant women, which would take some years to consolidate” -Francisca Rodríguez, ANAMURI, LVC Chile -*



1993

MONS. BELGIUM  
FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

A small number of women participated for the first time and spoke out to make the final declaration much more inclusive. Ten areas of work were defined, including **gender equality**. However, in this space, the coordination positions were only elected for men, and peasant women received no mention.

The **International Women Assemblies**, convened in the context of the **International Conferences**, are the spaces where the participation and action of women is strengthened. The decisions taken in these spaces are also taken on by the whole movement.



**1996**

**TLAXCALA, MÉXICO**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The first Women's Meeting is held and the International Women Commission (IWC), currently the Women Articulation of LVC, is consolidated. Nettie Wiebe, from the North American region was the first woman to become a member of the International Coordination Committee (ICC).

**2000**

**BANGALORE, INDIA**

**I WOMEN ASSEMBLY**

**III CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA**

The First Women's Assembly of LVC specifically emphasized that "gender issues" should be integrated into the right to Food Sovereignty and in the Agrarian Reform.

**Gender balance** was officially established: *"peasant women and men will share responsibilities equally in the movement."*



## 2004

BRASIL, SAO PAULO  
II INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ASSEMBLY OF  
LA VIA CAMPESINA  
IV CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

The main lines of action in this Assembly were to take measures against the **physical and sexual violence** experienced by women **throughout the world**, both in the **domestic and the geopolitical sphere**, and thus demand equal rights and enhance the training processes that make it possible to nourish the knowledge based on experiences with a gender perspective.

*"We demand that States implement measures that guarantee our economic autonomy, access to land, healthcare, education, and equal social status."*

**WOMEN ORGANIZE STRUGGLE, LAND, FOOD, DIGNITY AND LIFE!**



## 2008

MAPUTO, AFRICA  
III INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ASSEMBLY  
V INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LA  
VIA CAMPESINA

The Global Campaign "End Violence against Women" was launched in the III Assembly. This action wanted to highlight LVC's commitment to protect the right to a life free of domestic violence and repression. One of the most important commitments for LVC here was to build new and better human relations among diverse people as a necessary part of the construction of the new societies they seek and where the needs of women and children are prioritized.





2013

JAKARTA, INDONESIA

IV WOMEN ASSEMBLY

VI CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

Under the slogan “**Sowers of Struggles and Hopes for Feminism and Food Sovereignty**” women convened to set out a road map for the recognition of their rights and demands as rural women.

*“Encouraged by the debates of the women from Latin America and their process, we started working on the first elements of a political proposal to build the basis of a “**Peasant, Popular Feminism**”.*



2017

DERIO, EUSKAL HERRIA-BASQUE COUNTRY

V WOMEN ASSEMBLY

VII CONFERENCE OF LA VIA CAMPESINA

This assembly reaffirmed the need to increase the capacity to understand, accept, and create positive environments for the diversity of gender identities in organizations and/or alliances and their support for lesbian rights, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTI).

The Assembly called the women of LVC from all over the world to articulate strategies of action based on experiences at the global level to deepen the proposal for the construction of “**Peasant and Popular Feminism**” within the movement.

Since the I Women’s Conference and Assembly of LVC, women have contributed to significant achievements and collective reflections. These constructions, tools, languages and senses have helped increase awareness and organization in LVC, which today affirms itself as a feminist movement.

# PEASANT AND POPULAR FEMINISM IS BASED ON THE STRUGGLE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

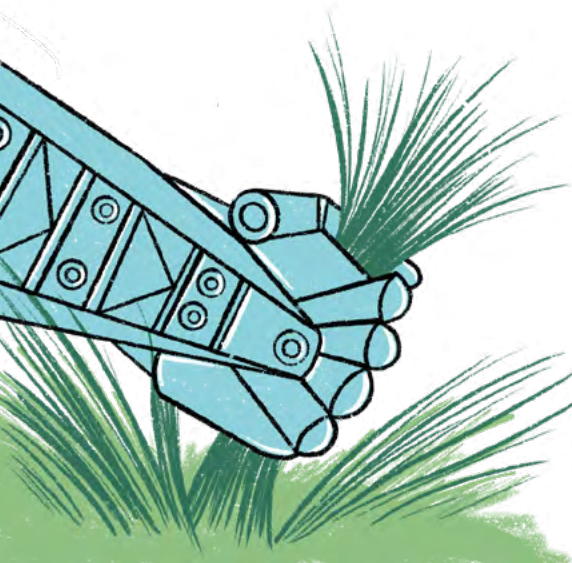
For peasant women, **Food Sovereignty** is **essential for their own existence**. They defend Food Sovereignty as an **important path** towards **Good Living** in society and as the **solution to the social and environmental problems** that threaten the **health of the earth**. However, there are still challenges ahead:



*“The current challenge to build Food Sovereignty is to leave behind sexist prejudices and that this new vision of the world includes women, vindicates them, and allows them the option of being peasants on an equal footing”.*

Lidia Senra, LVC Spain

The **patriarchal system** affects both **women and nature**. **Women** produce **labor**, and nature generates **resources**, both of which are **necessary sources to meet the needs of capitalism**.



**Agribusiness** and **multinationals** try to colonize **food production forms**. They aim to **impose how, what and when to produce**, without **respecting ancestral food knowledge** and by replacing it with monoculture and agrottoxics.

*“This is the reason why **Food Sovereignty** must include a **feminist perspective**, and this means **breaking not only with a capitalist agricultural model**, but also with a **patriarchal system that oppresses women**”. Esther Vivas*

It is **women** who historically **ensure food for the world** and they face a **triple battle**:



1

Against gender inequality, which keeps women in their homes and devoted exclusively for care giving tasks and domestic work.

2

Against the social guilt of devoting less time to their families as they participate in the struggles for the defense of their territories.

3

Against multinational corporations and governments, putting themselves on the front lines of defense against all threats and harassment from states and companies.

*“To talk about Food Sovereignty, to talk about Agrarian Reform requires talking about eliminating all the forms of violence against women; it requires talking about building new relationships among humans, about the defense of nature, of biodiversity, of seeds, of the possibility to build a different world”.*

Itelvina Masioli, MST, LVC Brasil



## WHAT ARE OUR DEMANDS FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE?



### AGAINST AGRIBUSINESS AND THE NEOLIBERAL AGRI-FOOD MODEL:

The **food production chain is monopolized by a handful of agribusiness multinationals**. The current problem is not the lack of food but the impossibility of accessing it.



### IMPACT OF NEOLIBERAL POLICIES:

The **privatization of resources and services has encouraged the collapse of labor in rural areas**. In the case of women, this has caused them to **leave and dismantle their families and the land**.



### ACCESS TO LAND:

In some countries, **laws forbid women from accessing this right**, and in those where they do have **legal access, traditions and practices prevent them from exercising that right**. Another challenge is that women face **more obstacles in obtaining credit, services and inputs**.



*"Food Sovereignty for La Via Campesina, yes, it is a vision of the food system we are fighting for, but most importantly, it is a rallying cry in continuous evolution".*

*María Canil LVC Guatemala*



### INVISIBILIZED PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK:

Women carry out a **double working day** including the **unrecognized work** dedicated to the **care and upbringing of their families** and the tasks of naturalized **domestic work** for women.



### RECOVERY OF NATIVE AND CREOLE SEEDS:

Seeds are the heritage of people and therefore cannot be thought of as commodities. They need the care of farmers, who are the ones who defend them and who, by sharing and growing them, keep them alive.

# PEASANT AND POPULAR FEMINISM IN LA VIA CAMPESINA



In the **early days of the movement**, peasant women did not consider themselves feminists but advocated for women's struggles. Working on gender in LVC has allowed us to move forward the debate and open spaces for women, and later, to talk about feminism.

In La Via Campesina, **feminism is a broad political strategy of structural transformation** because violence and inequality are structural problems.



*"Feminism remains an essential tool for women to be treated as human beings, a process that allows us to achieve a dignified place in society, to combat the violence we suffer, and also reclaim and demand our lands and save them from the hands of transnational and large corporations".*

Yoon Geum Soon, LVC Asia

LVC understands that the liberation of women **is not an individual process. It is a collective process.** It implies the freedom of peoples, which lies in the **approach of Peasant and Popular Feminism**, class feminism, feminism with identity, the identity given by the reality of living and working in the countryside.



Peasant and Popular Feminism is an ideological political construction that differs from other forms of feminism that are urban and conversational.

It is “peasant” because it is part of the reality of the countryside and not of the city, and “popular” because it is a feminism of the “popular classes” (peasants, workers, migrants, agricultural wage earners, indigenous people, people of African descent, etc.)



*“We are not inventing something that is new, but reaffirming and deepening our path, the historical political, social and cultural action from our identity, from the reality of life and work for the construction of a new society, rescuing and valuing our identity as rural women, indigenous people, people of African descent, fisherwomen, rural workers”.*

Iridiane Siebert, LVC Brasil



## CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULAR AND PEASANT FEMINISM:

The **struggle** of women is located in rural areas.



Women are aware of their oppressions under patriarchy based on their class, gender and race: rural women, fisher women, black and mixed race women, women from indigenous communities.



It has its own **identity (peasant)** and **emerges from a collective (popular) construction.**





It establishes **new relationships** between **human beings and nature**, one that **values peasant agriculture** and challenges the process of **exploitation of the Earth, land and water grabbing and extractivism.**

**With feminism, we build socialism!**

*Francisca Rodríguez,  
LVC Chile*



The struggle tries to **highlight the double productive and reproductive work** women carry out and which is left **unrecognized.**



Feminism is not just a struggle of women. We want women, men and LGBTQI people walk together as equals in the struggle for **more dignity and justice.**



# PEASANT WOMEN IN THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS

**La Via Campesina**, as an interlocutor of the rural peoples, **developed an instrument of struggle that is the Declaration on Peasant Rights**, which proposes to **influence the international organizations** so that the **governments taken on this legal instrument in defense of the rights** of the people who live and produce in the fields, in the mountains, in the prairies, in the banks of rivers.

The women of LVC, since the beginning of this long process that lasted over 17 years, have been present until the document's approval by the United Nations Assembly in 2018.

The Declaration has **articles that empower the role of peasant women** and its approval is a victory for humanity, since it is the **first time that an official document addresses the fight against violence suffered by peasant women and the recognition of their sexual and reproductive rights**.



**Article N°4** declares the responsibility of **states to implement** the measures it deems appropriate to: “**eliminate all forms of discrimination** against peasant women and other women working in rural areas and to promote their empowerment.”

There are many challenges to demand the implementation of the Declaration and also for it to be a political tool in the defense of rights throughout the world, such as:



- The advance of capitalism in the rural areas, the implementation of neoliberal policies in the territories. Many women are criminalized and murdered for demanding rights that are denied to us, especially land tenure.



- Peasant women have always been involved in all these processes, but they excluded from decision-making spaces, as has been the case with labor.

*"In these times of pandemic, we have not just stayed at home, waiting for the health crisis to end, but we have exercised the right to our ancestral knowledge, recovering the use of medicinal plants, the solidarity made popular pots with the women of the city. We have sown our seeds, exchanging them when we no longer have them. We have taken care of ourselves in the community. We come from the experience of sowing struggles and resistance to harvest rights!"*

Perla Álvarez Brítez  
LVC Paraguay



## PEASANT RIGHTS

Peasant Rights are a tool to advance, organize and spread the struggle, to guarantee rights that have been denied, to recover the oppressed territories, to produce food, and feed the world according to each region, according to seasons and according to cultures without denying the value of cultural exchanges.

Peasant rights are a tool for:

An **effective communication** that makes our demands and proposals visible.

The recognition and positioning of **women as subjects of rights** in rural areas.

**Prevent forced migration** of young people and create life and future in rural areas.

Guarantee **labor rights and social security** to all rural workers.



Organize and ally **to influence public policies**. Ensure the right of consumers to decolonize their food, which means to know the production process of the food they consume and how it arrives to them.

Carry out the **Popular Agrarian Reform** for the benefit of both rural and urban areas.

**Free our political prisoners** throughout the world.

A **communication tool** to declare that peasants are human beings with rights.

Recognize the struggles against criminalization and **denounce the deaths and imprisonment** of our comrades and organizations.



# GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!

At the **V International Conference** - in Maputo (Mozambique), in October 2008, La Via Campesina decided to **"break the silence"** and launched the global campaign against all forms of violence experienced by rural women.

In 2013, five years after the campaign began, some 300 rural women gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia, in the framework of the **IV Women's Assembly of La Via Campesina**. The meeting was about carrying on with the campaign to stop violence against women in each region.



## WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE CAMPAIGN?

This campaign was launched to **end all forms of violence against rural women, but it also aimed to make visible the violence against working-class women.**

The campaign aims to bring about social, cultural and political change, particularly in peoples, communities and organizations, in households and families, and to build a new culture to overcome unequal relations between men and women.

**Women against violence, against capital, against sexism, against neoliberal fascism!!**



## FEATURES OF THE CAMPAIGN

- 1 The campaign maintains its **autonomy** and addresses **specific and emerging problems** that accompany the movement's strategic plan.
- 2 It is a **massive tool** that can mobilize large crowds inside and outside La Via Campesina.
- 3 Each campaign seeks **broad and strong partnerships** with organizations that share common goals.
- 4 The campaign works through **forums, seminars and workshops** where problems are **reflected and discussed**.

## DAYS OF MOBILIZATION AND ACTION

The days of mobilization and action of LVC to bring visibility to the campaign "End Violence Against Women!" are **March 8** International Working Woman's Day and **November 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.



## ACTIONS AND REFLEXIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN “END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” FROM THE TERRITORIES AND IN THEIR OWN VOICES



Jeongyeol Kim,  
LVC KOREA

“In La Via Campesina, Asia Region, the proportion of women in agricultural work in Korea is 52%, meaning that **women contribute more to agricultural production than men**. However, the status of peasant men is much higher than that of peasant women.”

Making use of the campaign in our organizations has helped **draw social attention to the discrimination of women and make visible the violence** that many of them face.

To carry out actions within the Campaign framework, **we articulate with KWPA\* and KPL** (an organization of men farm workers affiliated with KWPA) **who we guide to support us**.

\* **KWPA** Korea Women Peasant Association





Sonia Vidal,  
LVC ESPAÑA

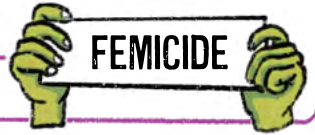
The “**End the Violence Against Women!**” campaign allows us to work in the territories from a global and peasant perspective.



“For the peasant women of Galicia, **the alliance** on this issue and others with the **WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN**, which we are part as the Women’s Secretariat of the Sindicato Labrego Galego, **is essential**”.



These actions are always laid out with the perspective of rural and peasant women. **The issues we work and denounce are the following:**



### 1 Recognizing the term

**2 GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSION**, which means that more and more women have no community networks.

**3 AGEING OF THE POPULATION:** There are areas and villages where a large part of the population is over 65 years of age (approximately 66 % of them are women).



**4 LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FEW PUBLIC SERVICES.**



**5 SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOR:** lack of co-responsibility in the reproductive work carried out mainly by women, which means that many of them have to work from dawn to dusk.



The “**End the Violence Against Women!**” campaign is a very useful tool for raising awareness, advocacy, and political impact.



The campaign, as a tool, **has not yet been fully used on the continent**. Few countries, including South Africa, have made progress in organizing campaigns to address various issues.

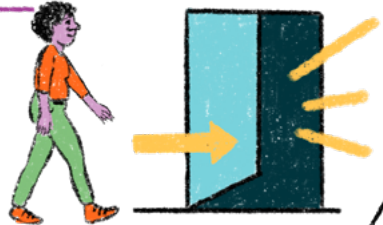


We face several challenges. It is our right **to care for and defend** our first territory, “**our body**”, our **sexual and reproductive rights**.

**Male leaders** must be willing to encourage **their own process with their masculinities** since their male leadership has a significant impact on the lives of female leaders.



In our organizations, the campaign has been crucial **to address different types of violence**. We have used it in training processes when adopting positions and articulating actions with the country’s feminist movement.



Wendy Cruz,  
LVC HONDURAS

“STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!”



Lina Andrew,  
LVC TANZANIA





Lucinéia Miranda de Freitas,  
LVC BRASIL

With the **coronavirus pandemic** and the need for quarantines, **the number of complaints on domestic violence had a 40% increase.**



Another element was the **increase in domestic and care tasks**, which impacted the participation of women in discussions, training and in the political activities of organizations.

“Our assessment in the MST is that there is a need to **broaden the debate** and focus on **producing materials to support actions of struggle.**”

The Campaign was then launched with the following **axes**:

**1 Violence:** Combating violence against women and the LGBT movement, children, and people with disabilities.



**2 Self, Work and Health - body, mind, relationships:** we set out the need to rethink the sexual division of labor.



**3 Active Resistance in the Popular Agrarian Reform:** healthy foods are not produced in unhealthy relationships.



“**Women leaders** are very clear about continuing to strengthen ourselves in knowledge and specific actions and to continue fighting for a **life free of violence.** Above all, to have **social organizations free of abusers and sexist men.** It is a difficult challenge, but we are aware that every day and every action we do allows us to defend our right to live free of violence.”



