



**EXCHANGE BETWEEN AFRO-DESCENDANT  
ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA**



**APRIL 26 AND 27, 2021**

## CONTENTS

Preamble.....	3
Excerpts from the presentation, Black organizational processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, given by Prof. Matilde Ribeiro (UNILAB).....	4
Reflecting and weaving with the words of Matilde.....	6
Challenges, experiences and learning about institutional strengthening in the context of the pandemic.....	8
Miriam Miranda, Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH).....	8
Givania María da Silva, National Coordination of Articulation of Rural Black Communities and Quilombolas (CONAQ).....	9
Fire! Poem by Antonio Bispo de Santos (Negro Bispo), Quilombola poet and Master of Wisdom & Knowledges.....	10
Charo Mina Rojas, Afro-Colombian National Peace Council (CONPA) and Black Communities Process (PCN).....	11
Sandra Regina Monteiro, Interstate Movement of the Babasú Coco Breakers (MIQCB).....	13
Paola Yáñez Inofuentes. Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (La Red).....	14
Daniel Teixeira, Center for the Study of Labor Relations and Inequalities (CEERT). .....	15
Exchange of knowledges, ideas and proposals between organizations.....	16
Drawing conclusions.....	18
Shared realities between organizations.....	18
General proposals for the discussion.....	18



## PREAMBLE



The exchange between Afro, Quilombolas, Garífuna and Palanquero organizations and movements was facilitated by Giselle dos Anjos Santos, (CEERT) who outlined the main elements to generate participatory action, share experiences, diagnoses, stories and knowledges on the issue of institutional strengthening of the Afro-descendant organizations in Latin America. The virtual exchange was held on April 26 and 27, 2021. The participating organizations were:



**OFRANEH**

Honduran Black Fraternal Organization, (OFRANEH)



National Coordination of Articulation of Rural Black Communities and Quilombolas, (CONAQ)



National Council for Afro-Colombian Peace, (CONPA).



Interstate Movement of Quebradoras del Coco Babasú, (MIQCB).



Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (RMAAD).



Center for the Study of Labor Relations and Inequalities, (CEERT).

The agenda began with the presentation of Matilde Ribeiro; “At a time of considerable uncertainty, mainly to seek ways to reverse this crisis situation, which is not only health, but deeply humanitarian.” Going back to the Durban Conference, she made a historical journey to clarify how progress has been made in matters of affirmative action policies and the promotion of racial equality, thereby creating a convergence of the agenda of promoting racial equality with the cultural pluralism of the afrodescendant peoples. Next, the participating organizations made their interventions in order to share their learnings, the challenges they experienced and the resilience that each organization generated to face the crisis that the pandemic has left in its wake. This allowed knowing the elements that each of the participant organizations had implemented, discussing common points and convergences that could arise over time.

Poetry was present in that space of opportunities for having a joint dialogue and celebration of our resilience, to learn and listen to each other; and to generate inputs for a second Encounter, knowing that even with the similarities, each society has its own differences. The meeting ended with a plenary session on the priorities for joint collaboration and the next steps to follow.





## EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESENTATION: BLACK ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

by Prof. Matilde Ribeiro (UNILAB)

Matilde Ribeiro is an academic with long experience in public management issues, mainly in gender and race policies. Since 2014 she has been an adjunct professor at the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony, based in Redenção, Ceará. She was the first Minister for the Promotion of Racial Equality in Brazil, in the government of President Lula (from 2003 to 2008) and later Deputy Secretary of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality of the municipality of São Paulo from 2013 to 2014.

In 16 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, policies began to be developed based on the structures of their governments, mainly affirmative actions and promotion of racial equality. This generated a recognition of institutional legal instruments, formulated and harmonized from national legislation, thereby guaranteeing interculturality, care for opportunities and the collective rights of Afro-descendants. With a special emphasis on overcoming racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; "The results are far from satisfactory, since we are talking about structural racism."

The second most relevant mention that she made was that of the value of the censuses. Their usefulness lies in collecting data more in line with the reality of the black and Afro-descendant peoples of the region. The data disaggregated by "race" and "ethnicity" enables us to see, at different stages, the way in which countries are moving towards an adjustment of accounts with the rights of Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, when seeking information on their ways of life; access to health, education and sanitation; job, employment and income opportunities; housing, quality of life, as well as the degree of violation of their fundamental rights. This allows action in various areas of public policy.

A third urgent aspect to highlight is the way in which the pandemic has increased the gap in access to public health, both physically and mentally. In addition to the new problems that access to information and communication technologies represents. For example, even for those who do have this access, there is greater pressure for the time that has to be invested in front of technological devices. From the digital divide, we move to the divide for the right and access to lands and territories. "Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have been resorting to justice to demand the application of equity policies, highlighting the right to territory. The territory, in this sense, is seen as a locus for the manifestation of identity and culture. In the case of the Quilombola communities, territorial rights are characterized by a relationship of power and the search for autonomy through which it is possible to establish their way of life and give continuity to the material and symbolic reproduction of their way of life."

Fourth, it points out the relevance of black women and youth. "Black women have been the most vulnerable sector of the Afro-descendant population in all countries. Living in situations beyond racism, coinciding with concurrent situations such as machismo and a lack of recognition of their own abilities". Nonetheless, at the same time, the spaces that they have managed to generate and the topics on the agenda that they have opened, allow the qualified participation and leadership of black women to become a perceptible and positive "blackening of the feminist movement." In the case of black youths, it complicates the way in which they have reacted to the historical invisibility to which they have been relegated for a long time. This struggle has allowed us to see spaces of lobbying and advocacy that were previously difficult to access.

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In the organizing process of black youth, the issues of the fight against police and urban violence, affirmative actions in education, especially in university fees and at work stand out. Actions are also developed for the visibility of the culture considered peripheral, as is the case of Hip-Hop and other manifestations ... with this, the national public policy has changed, focused on the youth, and with regard to ethnic and racial issues. , there was a new focus of attention for the traditional peoples and communities: young black men and women.

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Finally, she pointed out that

“

these have been our challenges, and the new agendas can be seen as unfolding, even of our ancestral knowledge, with many things linked to our lives as Afro-descendants or as indigenous people, to continue surviving and resisting until today. These aspects are not known to society in general: our beliefs, our cultural manifestations, our forms of organization. We do not need to invent the wheel, we have to be present, from the point of view of our relationship with the state and with governments. We have to act increasingly so that State policies become permanent. From the point of view of society, as a whole, we have to achieve that we are respected as citizens.

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I particularly believe that the best path we have to follow is the issue of State policies, guaranteed through affirmative actions along with universal policies. I also believe that the path must be the one described, and in practice we also have to work so that legal conquests, norms, indicators for human rights, have to reach more and more the population that needs it.

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When the government is open and favorable to our forms of organization, the type of strategy is one: dialogue and negotiation. When the government is adverse to our form of organization, the strategy is one of greater confrontation and conflict.

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I understand that when you discuss " Institutional Strengthening "and the needs for alliances and strategies to combat its challenges, it is precisely with the objective of seeking to strengthen more and more policies for a population that lives in conditions of poverty and racism, always through a dialogue with the structures of the State and the government.

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## REFLECTING AND WEAVING WITH THE WORDS OF MATILDE



**Givannia Mara da Silva, (CONAQ)**

She argued that

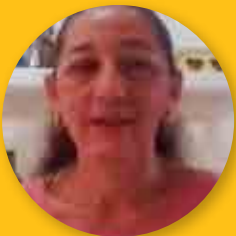
“ in Brazil, the earth is a symbol of power, it is a symbol of life and death at the same time. While she serves our lives, she also takes them away from us ... We crossed that with the policy of territorial regularization and it agrees with the peak of deaths of Quilombola leaders. Territorial regularization in urban areas is the great problem of territorial non-regularization in our country ”



**Miriam Miranda, General Coordinator (OFRANEH)**

She questioned the institutional vision of affirmative action policies for the Afro-descendant population, because there is a very biased view in relation to cases of reparation of damage.

“ When we talk about affirmative action policies, many times they are framed within the issue of repairs, and that’s when I ask, repair what? What is it intended to repair? The issue is that, for some governments and states, reparation is understood as pouring out a little resources and funds for organizations that can carry out activities or projects that end up being a simulation for what the state is interested in. ”



**Sandra Regina Monteiro, (MIQCB)**

What has changed in Brazil and Latin America after ILO Convention 169 and what is the contribution of census data disaggregated by “race”, ethnicity, for organizations and governments?





## MATILDE RIBEIRO

With the ILO Convention 169, begins making some progress regarding the regularization of land, although there will always be problems of various kinds in this regard. "With this I do not mean that governments have come to recognize and legalize the lands of the Quilombos and indigenous people, in a large proportion. There are always contradictory questions, which have to be resolved from a cartographic, historical, etc. point of view. A statement made by the economist Carlos Lopes says:

“ There is no democracy without agrarian reform, ” and has to be an agrarian reform from the point of view and voice of the workers. It is necessary to have laws that provide these rights ”

The great problem of relocations is also, she argues, that they are totally decontextualized from the historical and ancestral practices that the communities had already been living in their own spaces. The census issue, having reliable numbers and data, is very important. Otherwise, each party, organizations, public actors and governments, would have any number of figures, without ever reaching a consensus. The number leads us to think,

how many people are starving?

How many people are dying of preventable diseases?

How many people do not have access to school?

How many people need cultural spaces?

How many people need of technology?

Obviously these answers with the number in hand, do not come immediately, but they bring us a possibility ”.

Affirmative policies,

“ are instruments at hand that make us dialogue with the ruling class, to require and make effective our rights. I particularly believe that the best path we have to follow is the question of State policies, guaranteed through affirmative actions along with universal policies. I also believe that the path should be that, and in practice, we also have to work so that the legal conquests, of norms, of indicators for human rights, have to reach more and more the population that needs it ”

On the subject of institutional strengthening, alliances and strategies that could be generated through such process, it is also necessary to seek to reinforce policies for the population living in poverty and racism, always through dialogue with the structures of the State and the government. For achieving that goal, laws and changes, from an institutional point of view, are very important. We are currently experiencing the reaction of fascist governments, which do not consider the forms of organization of each of their civil societies, coupled with the loss of social rights in all areas. For that reason, it is

“ important when thinking about 'Institutional Strengthening', and its action strategies, to think about how to act in adverse terrains? When the government is favorable to our form of organization, the type of strategy is one of dialogue and negotiation. When the government is adverse to our form of organization, the strategy is one of greater confrontation and conflict ”



## CHALLENGES, EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC.

Miriam Miranda, Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH)

She presented the risk situations that Honduras has been experiencing, particularly the threats against the Garífuna people. A situation never seen before, there is a total destruction of the institutionality: a failed state, a president being identified and judged as narco, in short, Honduras is living in a Narco State and narco government. In this sense, in the last 3 years, the Garífuna community has faced 40 murders of leaders, along with the kidnapping of 5 fellow brothers in 2020 in the community of Triunfo de la Cruz. "We have to face a genocidal plan unleashed on us by the government, and in that context we must continue working.

The situation of the pandemic has generated changes in spaces and scenarios. "The pandemic calls us to reconsider and make some changes in our work. Taking into account, not only the fact that we cannot meet physically, but what the collapse of a health system means; From OFRANEH, we began the installation of 33 community health centers. We envision community health as: territory, identity, right to have clean air, all the integral sense of health and with a fundamental motto: save our elderly, our grandmothers and grandparents. Convinced that, in them, the memory and identity of the Garífuna people is deposited, which is fundamental for Garífuna future generations". Ancestral Health Houses of the Garífuna People have been installed and an Independent Investigation Committee has been created to search for missing persons. Above all, in cases of kidnapping by the police, during the period of confinement.

### Nahum Lalin, (OFRANEH)

The pandemic has allowed us to think about the usefulness and relevance of ancestral medicine.

“ We believe in a better world. But the situation in our country has worsened. We advance based on our organization, spirituality and ancestral wisdom. ”

### Melissa Martínez, (OFRANEH)

“ With the pandemic, we were forced to organize health centers, from the perspective of ancestral medicine. These centers are located where there is no hospital infrastructure. This has allowed us to save the lives of our people, even those who come from other communities. ”

They also made "communal pots", which have made it possible to address the issue of food shortages

### César Bermúdez, (OFRANEH)

“ The pandemic has taught us that we have to recover ancestral medicine, plants, herbs, the sea, herbal teas, the organization, which Western medicine would like to have. OFRANEH is a school that, through our connection with the ancestors, tells us what is the path to follow. This allows us to search for the essence of the Garífuna people. ”





**Givania María da Silva, National Coordination of Articulation of Rural Black Communities and Quilombolas (CONAQ).**

CONAQ is represented in almost the entire national territory. Only in Acre and Roraima there are still no identified Quilombola communities. With the pandemic, "one of the issues that most concerned us was that in our town, not everyone is able to access the internet. So the initial work was to translate into simpler language: what was this pandemic? Thus arises the first intervention in terms of reducing the digital divide and access to health services. "In places where there is no electricity or internet, obviously even less will you have a cellular device to download an application and have access to a service. This aspect caused many people to move to other cities and, consequently, they became infected with COVID-19.

There are problems related to food sovereignty and security. There are communities that still do not produce their own food. For those communities, mobilization and orientation campaigns had to be carried out, seeking agreements for the donation of food. On the other hand, in the communities where they could produce their food, the spaces to be able to market it were lost. "So, on the one hand, we had those who did not have food, and we had to think about how to get it. And on the other side, we had those who did have food, and who lived by selling at fairs and markets, and that stopped happening. At the beginning, dealing with this problem was very difficult ". Fortunately, the channels for production, distribution and consumption were improved.

CONAQ, together with the Socio-Environmental Institute, built "a monitoring system to be able to map the Quilombola people who were infected with COVID-19. Our data shows 5,329 confirmed COVID cases. Although this number can be two or three times more, it is the data that as a civil society we were able to produce. With the racist and genocidal Brazilian government, this whole process has been very complicated ". This system also allowed us to recognize the number of deaths from COVID-19, identifying so far 260 deaths of people from Quilombolas. "Our history is not written, our history is in orality, so when people leave, they take a piece of our lives, because they take a piece of our stories."



**Selma Dealdina, (CONAQ)**

"The Brazilian State, as Givania María Da Silva already said, when it doesn't kill, it lets us die. And contrasting this question, as Conceição Evaristo already said, they determined to kill us and we determined not to die "

On September 9, CONAQ filed before the Supreme Federal Court (STF), the Argument of Breach due to Prejudice (ADPF for its acronym in Portuguese), which is to demand from the Brazilian State to fulfill its obligations. Forcing it to reduce the gap in terms of access to health: do the testing, obtain medical equipment and guarantee the vaccine for the Quilombola population. "We had to wait 5 months to advance on this proposal. We are waiting for some progress in judicial matters, and for the Brazilian State to comply with the resolution of the ADPF Quilombola. Let us remember that we are facing a racist judicial system. We are waiting for the State ' s response".

We have lost many lives. Let us remember that the first COVID victim, in Brazil, was a black woman, a domestic worker. Concurrently, the dispossession of our land and agrarian conflicts that occur in the Quilombola territories are encompassed with a number of growing threats in the midst of the pandemic. The Brazilian government has not generated a prior, free and informed consultation. And the current development project of the Brazilian government is an exclusionary project that runs over and violates the Quilombola territories.





## Fire!

Poem by Antonio Bispo de Santos (Negro Bispo), Quilombola poet and Master of Knowledges

Fire! ... They burned Palmares,  
Canudos was born

Fire! They burned Canudos,  
Caldeirões was born

Fire! They burned Caldeirões  
Pau de Colher was born

Fire! They burned Pau de Colher  
And they were born, and so many other communities were born,  
that they will tire them if they continue burning them.

Because even if they burn the writing  
They will not burn orality.  
Shabby that they burn our symbols,  
They will not burn the meanings.  
Even burning our people  
They will not burn our ancestry.

In the poem "Palmares is the great reference of our Quilombos and the other names as well. This poem defines that, even if they burn or kill or destroy everything that they think will destroy our people, they will not be able to burn our ancestry" (Givania María, CONAQ).



### Charo Mina Rojas, Afro-Colombian National Peace Council (CONPA) and Black Communities Process (PCN).

Racialized and engendered communities such as those in Colombia have had to go through important challenges as a result of the pandemic, especially due to the war situation in the territories. This adverse scenario created the opportunity to join forces between various organizations, for example, with the Center for Afrodiasporic Studies (CAEF) of the ICESI University, with whom the initiative was achieved: Pacifico Task Force (PTF).

The pandemic came to “exacerbate the generated impoverishment, the structural racism, in which we do not exist humanly, between the war that feeds on that racism and those economic interests in a value system where human rights are the least of it.” Therefore, the challenge for CONPA was to think about this issue in a more strategic, collective, critical and structural way.

One of the most important issues was to have maintained a focus from and for the region, thus allowing to dismantle the racist imaginary that communities are disorganized, negligent and incapable. That led to proposing initiatives that made visible the existence of a culture of care that is practiced constantly in the region. The challenges of the pandemic have left several lessons, perhaps the main one has been working together and cooperatively. “When a coherence in purposes and commitments is achieved, and the heart is put before those particular and selfish interests, to issues that are common and general and collective, it is possible to do things more effectively.

We were able to distribute 1,395 markets (groceries/food pantries) with our own products, bought from local producers and suppliers. 2,025 hygiene and self-care kits were also distributed, which included products of traditional medicine that we acquired directly from the Wise women and men in our communities. We had to combat the stigmatization of the use of traditional medicine, with which people were treating the complications of COVID-19. A diploma program was developed that strengthened capacities of 26 women leaders and 10 leaders. With this, 12 initiatives were formulated to continue confronting the structural situation of the pandemic. Mainly on issues of connectivity, economic autonomy and food sovereignty. Issues of inter-institutional relations with municipal administration authorities were addressed. Epidemiological analysis with an ethnic approach was promoted, with specific statistics of the black and Afro-descendant population, which did not exist. 150 volunteers were mobilized to support those who did not have access to virtual education.

The great learning for women has been to be able to exercise pedagogical and political development, as well as the use of their local organizational dynamics. “Every time we are gaining more capacity, more knowledge, more strength, more agency. Women have been recreating that political narrative, which is based on our rights as women, but also based on the right to be part of the black and Afro-descendant people. From these experiences we developed educational processes based on our own thinking and the conviction of our capabilities”. The key has been to develop a process of autonomy so as not to depend on the Colombian government. Strengthening the competencies of the communities and their authorities is essential. “We are certain that it is from below that it works best.”



Carlos Rosero, (PCN and CONPA)

When we speak of institutional strengthening we think of two things: the strengthening of organizations and the black movement; and, secondly, also that of our own authorities and the issues related to governance in the territories where the communities live. Based on this, in a very specific way, we have reconsidered the issue of institutional strengthening, " Therefore we consider that institutional strengthening is:



To be organized.



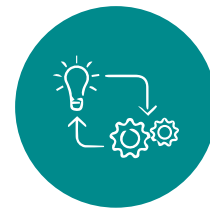
To have proposals.



To have strategies to promote these proposals.



To strengthen our own thinking as an organization, as a community or as a people.



To have the means and resources to implement those proposals.

Those are the five things we mean, when we refer to organizational strengthening. All that is possible if you have the right people. That assumes that the people are trained and that there are enough people to do the different activities that we have to do ".

Finally, Rosero mentions three aspects that must be considered as part of the resistance process. The first are the lessons learned from the pandemic itself. "The denial of affirmative actions and the affirmation that we are in a post-racial state and clearly in the case of Colombia, the dominant elites are not interested in the discourse of cultural diversity, racial diversity and that we are subjects of special protection. This is an issue we have to work on more ". Second, the danger of "the economic reactivation that everyone is talking about. For Latin America it is more extractivism, more pressure on the territories, more violations of the rights of participation and previous consultation. This point is one of the ones that would most interest us to work with other black organizations in the region ". Third, the organization. The treatment that has been received in the pandemic is null. But faced with this scenario, "What do we have as black people to endure this moment? We have knowledge, we have territory and we have people ".





## Sandra Regina Monteiro, Interstate Movement of the Coco Babasú Breakers (MIQCB)

MIQCB is an association of women, farm workers, family farmers, indigenous people, Quilombolas, fisherwomen and poets. Our actions, in the context of the pandemic, have been to ensure food and nutritional security for the communities and for the families of the women who make up the association. Many women were left without work and had to adapt. New mechanisms for digital participation emerged with governments and civil society; dialogue with municipal and state education secretariats to generate a basic food basket for families within the school community. Also we created registries for women, in order to receive government grants.

Finally, on the issue of institutional strengthening, the MIQCB, generated several alliances in order to collect donations of basic baskets. "More than 4,000 basic baskets were acquired and distributed. Also more than 2,000 hygiene kits made with local products".



## Maria Antonia dos Santos, (MIQCB)

Work has been done to increase Quilombola education, especially with adults and distance education for youth. They also work very directly with producers of cassava flour, rice and they fight against the large estates that try to take away their territory. They "fight for a dignified life, for life in the countryside, against large ranches and major latifundios. We have needs to eat, drink. We need decent and safe water and food. Our work is for a dignified life and the welfare of the people".



## Cledeneuza María Bezerra, (MIQCB)

"What we have worked the most, is on issues related to distribution of the basic basket. We managed to do it for our sisters and companions. Each one of us have our difficulties. In this basket we also put the products of the coconut breakers". In relation to the great lessons learned from the pandemic, she points out that "something different was being able to sell at once, a greater amount of our production. Our products were sold more in this period. It is not easy for us, but we are in the struggle. Of course we have suffered all the impacts that have affected the whole world, but we are in this part of the world, and the coconut breakers are enduring and feeling that impact".





**Paola Yáñez Inofuentes. Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (La Red)**

The Network is regional, and monitors the incidence of human rights for the countries in the continent. There is a regional observatory in 13 countries, monitoring the Agenda for the Decade. In addition to the follow-up to a political platform that was approved in Managua, Nicaragua in 2015, at the first summit of Afro-descendant women leaders.

“ The historical and structural conditions of racism have determined the ways in which we have lived and are living. These inequalities that we have pointed out for years have been very evident this year. We have found that ethnic, racial and gender discrimination has forced us in a totally disproportionate way, towards the effects of the pandemic ”

The Network identifies that the Afro-descendant population of the region is located in the informal sector, salaried work and the housekeeping. In the case of salaried domestic workers, a sector very affected by the pandemic, they consider that “there is still no very precise data, but only in Bolivia, 9 out of 10 domestic workers have lost their sources of work. As a Network we have been addressing that issues from the coordination. In the short term, yes, think about issues of regulation and respect for human rights, but in the long term we would have to think about the abolition of salaried work in the home, because we cannot continue to perpetuate Afro-descendant women in the conditions of this work

“ As a Network, we view with great concern the issue of the persecution of Afro-descendant leaders. We have collected information through regional documents on the subject of violence. In these cases, we can show the lack of statistical information, or how the administrative records have not incorporated the ethnic-racial category that allows us to make visible the situation faced by women and Afro-descendant populations ”

One of the lessons learned during the pandemic has been to strengthen ties with other organizations. An important window of opportunity looms on the horizon to participate in the mid-term assessment of the Afro Decade and the 20 Years of Durban. The members of the Network are aware that many of these works do not reach the territories, but the opportunity to be able to point out these gaps in these forums is of the utmost relevance. For example, it would be very important to “take advantage of these two evaluative processes to put the issue of ethnic-racial inequalities, as well as racism, on the table in the regional discussion. And to be able to say: racism in Latin America not only takes away your rights such as the right to health, education, it also assassinates, it takes away your right to life, to exercise social leadership. You have to think about this evaluation contextualizing this situation.

“ It is urgent to think of strategies and actions that can be promoted jointly to accompany the processes carried out by the other organizations in each of the countries. “When we speak of human rights as universal rights, it is more of a goal than a reality. We have to work on the right to have rights. To enjoy them, to achieve that universality ”





**Daniel Teixeira, Center for the Study of Labor Relations and Inequalities (CEERT).**

He makes a very specific account of the historical difficulties to approach the institutionality from the perspective of the black organizations, especially Quilombolas and indigenous organizations, departing from a scheme proper of white organizations, which work with other codes, another logic, other motivations and other completely different expectations when it is about institutional strengthening. "And that is nothing more than institutional racism. Racism in another dimension of action. Our organizations are black, they are indigenous, they are quilombolas. And that has many repercussions on the hierarchization that racism does, even to be able to discuss the institutionality".

Teixeira invited the participants to think about the implications of racism in the institutional life of organizations. "We have to think about ourselves, as Carlos Rosero said: 'We have ourselves.' That many times impacts our performance, because we do not have the institutional conditions to do everything that is urgent to do. When we say, for example, that every 23 minutes a young black man is murdered, we are talking about genocide. This is the great recurring theme that all Afro-descendant organizations have to grapple with.

“ The first time we were able to think about institutional strengthening, it happened within the framework of the BUILD program of the Ford Foundation. This program allowed us to problematize the institutional violence that we face every day. But even with all those tools, moving forward has been difficult. And it is difficult, because we are faced with an enormous number of emergencies: the murder of activists, the murder of the black population, of our youth, of the quilombos. And the murder is not only physical, it is the killing of our rights ”

For CEERT, the issue of institutional strengthening crosses the issues of communication, resources mobilization and financial resilience. The questions that have had to be asked have an impact on how to improve the institutionality of the organization. How to generate better strategic communication with other organizations to combat racism. In a context where articulation is essential to be heard nationally and internationally. It is necessary that we could be able to discuss, internally and externally, how to become a sustainable organization from the point of view of various types of articulations. These considerations have naturally led to the issue of financial resilience as an element to expand institutional strengthening..

It has been possible to develop a project under these three elements. It is located on the outskirts of Sao Paulo to strengthen food security. It has been done in association with the communities of Terrero de Candomblé. Very important institutions for social actions in the territory “



### EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGES, IDEAS AND PROPOSALS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS

The concerns were outlining the elements that between each organization were being susceptible to mutual collaboration and exchange of knowledges and experiences. Among the elements to highlight are the changes generated in each organization as a result of the pandemic, new ways of working, new communication tools, political advocacy, partnership strategies and new ways of reading the political contexts during the health emergency. The mechanisms implemented for the recovery of knowledge as a result of the loss of people and important stories for the communities. International alliances and reactions to the murders and disappearances of people within the communities. The leading role of women and youth. Faced with this multiplicity of concerns and urgencies, each organization expressed their common points, as well as their tensions and confluences:

In the case of Honduras, the lack of political will on the part of the State to recognize the work of the organization is very emphatically pointed out. On the contrary, there are smear campaigns against OFRANEH's initiatives. Territories are being militarized, under the pretext of other issues that are not necessarily related to the crisis of the pandemic. The government's position has forced OFRANEH to turn outward and look to international allies for ties that help it continue to resist. Nahun Lalin pointed out that "what keeps us moving forward a little is that hubbub, that noise, which are those contacts at the international level that we have to be able to put a little pressure on the government."

In the Brazilian case, CONAQ recognizes that they are very similar to what happens in Honduras. For example, the government has already openly stated that it would not regularize any land situation for any Quilombola community. And that, was precisely presented as a government program. Regarding the internal and external communication of CONAQ, spaces for dialogue on territorial rights have been built. Here the relevance of global forums is highlighted. Givania María Da Silva points out that "alliances have been expanded, both in the legal and communicational fields, especially with other social movements that struggle for land. Alliances with indigenous peoples have been strengthened. Generating new advocacy processes for thinking about new laws. The problem with new laws is that they suffer the presidential veto. "Another strategy in terms of communication and knowledges, is to be able to reach unequivocally to rural communities and to the peoples of the Rivers and Forests. For that reason, an initiative has been generated to bring together "our Teachers of Wisdom and our elders in a Conference that we organized in 2020, the First National Conference of Ritual Quilombola Education."

Cledeneuza María Bizerra (MIQCB) spoke about the way in which young women have been involved in the work of the organization. With the Pandemic, all the people involved had to do the work together. Even teenage girls. The great current concern is the transfer of knowledges to the youth "the work that we have done for many years must pass in transition towards young people. But that also depends on the regional participation of the men and women actors".

Daniel Teixeira from (CEERT) points out that, in the Brazilian case, the federal government also attacks "... the institutions that support our agendas. For example, a historical financial reduction has been done to the budget of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in charge of preparing and conducting censuses at the national level. Such a measure will have repercussions that we cannot yet imagine. There is a clear sabotage of public policies of racial equality and affirmative actions. For that reason, it is important to consider how to establish a network of strategic institutions within the country, that would enable us to have another narrative on human rights, development and society through the disappearance of racism. This has to involve white-led institutions, which we need to involve in this debate. What is it to be white, in a racist society? It is important to allow them to question the role they play, within a racist society. Hence the importance of a stronger and more constant international articulation. Not only for visibility, but for accompaniment, collaborative work and organization. Institutional strengthening is also political, therefore, it is important to have an international articulation with strategic instances, that would enable at the same time to strengthen the cause we are fighting for".





## EXCHANGE BETWEEN AFRO-DESCENDANT ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

In Colombia, Charo Mina Rojas, mentions there were two forms of intervention by women: one, totally autonomous. She describes that "when the pandemic occurred, the first to react, organize, define strategies and seek solutions, were women. They immediately organized themselves to go to look for and collect food, to generate measures from traditional medicine and provide special care ". From there, alternative communication models were generated, through recipe books, orientations and guides to take care of oneself. Black women mobilized and distributed themselves throughout the territory.

The second form, was with the organization of the Pacific Task Force, where part of the strategy was to interact with other organizations, with the ethnic-territorial authorities, to find out how they were working, what were the main needs, priorities, and who were the most vulnerable people.

"At all times, women were at the forefront or carried most of the participation. Women were the ones who were making agreements with different sectors, agriculture, fishing, Wise women who knew about cultivation of medicinal plants, etc.. to be able to complement the basic food baskets that the government was providing. In Chocó, Tumaco and Buenaventura, the youths identified suppliers, helped with logistics, and have been very active looking for distribution channels. For this reason the diploma program was very important, since these initiatives that were taking place in an organic way, could be strengthened to be maintained over time ".

Carlos Rosero (CONPA), pointed out that, the Constitution of Colombia, includes the concept of social State. A social state, which did not exist for the majority of black people in displacement conditions, in cities like Bogotá, Cali and Medellín. "Recently that same social state of rights, refused to approve a vital minimum for people in the current conditions. This State says that it recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation. However on August 27th of last year, for example, the Minister of Government said `` the pandemic is affecting everyone equally, therefore, here we are not going to device specific plans to attend specially to anybody ´. In addition her declaration ignores what the Constitution states in its article 13, where it establishes that we are all born equal and measures will be provided to ensure that equality is real and effective, especially for those groups whose conditions do not allow it. When the minister says what she said, she is clearly denying the affirmative action issue. What we can actually analyze from these statements and these actions is that what the elite is basically telling us is that racism does not exist here. If the Pandemic is treating us all the same, it is because there was no enslavement process, and then there is no racial inequality. Consequently, there is no need for affirmative action, since they recognize the obvious inequalities in the country. In practice, what is denied in such discourse is what is lived on a day-to-day basis. This is one of the main implications of the post-racial state. This debate comes from the United States, where with the arrival of Obama to power, it was assumed that racism no longer existed ".

Regarding the strategies to face the attacks of the governments. In Colombia, for us is very clear, as Charo Mina (PCN / COMPA) pointed out, that "it is important to underpin awareness of identity and knowledge production that contribute to institutional strengthening." For that reason, the idea of combating and making genocide visible is highlighted. "What happens against the Afro-descendant people is a premeditated strategy to destroy us. Even in the cases where there is no physical extermination, there is a cultural and political one".

For the Women's Network, the issues of resilience and economic recovery have been the most prominent in times of the Pandemic. Seed funds are being sought for other Afro-descendant women and their ventures. COVID-19 is forcing us to rethink the current development model. "Care must be taken not to deepen an extractive development model that is totally hostile to our populations. Partnerships need to be deepened. It will be important because sometimes the Afro theme is very circumscribed to Afro spaces and is not carried over to others. The Network is betting on making visible the necropolitics implanted in the territories ". Likewise, the issue of the lack of data and indicators disaggregated by racial ethnic group is addressed. Several organizations are working on the issue of statistical information, strengthening the absence of census data through exchange networks.



### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Giselle dos Anjos Santos (CEERT) stated: "We have several points to guide us, in our effort to continue reflecting and thinking about a possibility of joint action that can add and strengthen our struggle in a general way in the region, and also consequently, strengthen our organizations in an institutional sense".

After two days of dialogue, an aspect that is transversal in the context of the Pandemic is that of taking care of the most basic thing: life. The persecution and the danger increased, instead of having receded, this is also connected with the problems that are addressed in an institutional way. The similarities between Honduras, Colombia, Bolivia and Brazil were tangible and evident.

#### Shared realities between organizations:

- ▶ Assassination of community leaders and criminalization of the territory by governments, which by omission or direct action generate exclusionary policies and extermination of Afro-descendant populations.
- ▶ Active participation of black women in all organizational aspects of institutional life.
- ▶ Combat racist justice systems. Mainly in relation to access to decent and universal health.
- ▶ Frontal combat to the loss of social rights deepened as a result of the Pandemic.
- ▶ The Pandemic is generating a loss of ancestral knowledges, mainly with the death of older adults.
- ▶ Innovation in institutional practices is very important to face the Pandemic. Mainly in relation to food sovereignty and security.

#### Propuestas generales de la discusión:

- ▶ Expansion of alliances based on international solidarity (sharing experiences, institutional strengthening and self-managed sustainability). Losing the fear of alliances between Afro-descendant organizations. Generate National and international alliances in legal and communicational issues. Also develop alliances with other social movements in the struggle for land; advocacy processes for the generation of new and better legislation; and exchange of institutional processes and knowledge in the face of the Pandemic.
- ▶ Think about these alliances from a thematic scheme of challenges:
  - Territorial and environmental rights.
  - Civil and political rights: strengthening of organizations, autonomies and self-government, guaranteeing equal participation conditions for women, youth, generation and family.
  - Right to prior and informed consultation.
  - Economic, social and cultural rights.
  - The right to inclusive development.
  - The right to life in a context of racism: surviving as a challenge.
- ▶ Exchange experiences on how to regain territorial and political control based on the experiences of the ethnic-territorial authorities, under peaceful principles, in the face of armed groups and the deliberate absence of the State.
- ▶ Share the strategies they have to combat the invisibility of black people by each organization.
- ▶ In the absence of statistical data, generate strategies to make black women visible. Emphasize their work and contributions in terms of innovation to the practices they develop in the territory and the various contributions to institutional strengthening.
- ▶ Participate jointly to strengthen legal strategies that allow the safeguarding of life, on the subject of territorial rights and prior consultation with extractivist projects.
- ▶ Share proposals to strengthen the value chain in the production, distribution and consumption of the communities.
- ▶ Convincing other donors, and the Philanthropic community to participate and support Afro descendant and Indigenous organizations to contribute to their financial sustainability.



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