



Dorotea Wilson

Dorotea Wilson, is a prominent leader in Nicaragua's "Atlantic Coast Autonomous Region" and a member of the Sandinista National Executive. The region was established in 1986, granting land rights and self-government to members of Nicaragua's Indigenous and Creole peoples in the ethnically distinct Atlantic Coast area. The region is now recognized as a semi-autonomous under the Nicaraguan constitution.

Ms Wilson played a prominent role in the establishment of the region and in fighting for the rights of the country's indigenous population. She has also served as the Mayor of Puerto Cabezas, one of the major cities on the Atlantic Coast, a member of the National Parliament and the government of the Autonomous Region. She joined the Sandinistas in 1975 and was active in the underground movement against the Somoza dictatorship. She advocates for the rights of women of color in general and those from rural areas in particular. She has written articles on the history of Nicaragua from the point of view of the oppressed.



Epsy Campbell Barr

Epsy Campbell Barr is a human rights activist, who has dedicated herself to public service and is also a university professor and an economist.

Ms. Campbell Barr ran for Vice-President in the February Costa Rican national elections as a candidate of the Accion Ciudadana political party. Epsy has devoted herself to promoting the rights of women and people of African descent. She has been responsible for guaranteeing the dialogue between the enterprising, social, political, and the civil society sectors within the Accion Ciudadana political party (PAC).

Ms. Campbell Barr was named the best legislator of the national congress in Costa Rica in a recent public opinion poll. She is a member of the forum for social equity of the Inter-American Development Bank and of the continental organization of the Inter-American Dialogue of the Center for Afro-descendent Women (Centro de Mujeres Afro-descendientes) and of the Organization of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American women (Red de Mujeres Afro-caribenas y Afro-Latinoamericanas). She participated in the regional conference against racism and racial discrimination (Santiago, Chile, December 2000) and in the UN World Conference Against Racism and Racial Discrimination (Durban, South Africa, 2002).



Yvette Sacramento
UNEB- Magnifica Reitora

Professor Sacramento has a Master's Degree in Education from Rio de Janeiro's Olavo Bilac University in conjunction with the Université de Québec, Canada [1990], and an Undergraduate Degree in Portuguese and Literature from the Universidade Federal da Bahia [UFBa] 1975. From 1980-1984, Professor Sacramento was Supervising Director for the Bahian Higher Education Institute, an institution that would be replaced by the Bahian State University, (UNEB).

As a professor of Portuguese language and literature, Professor Sacramento started her teaching career in Bahia by passing a series of competitive examinations in 1972. Early in her teaching career, Professor Sacramento demonstrated an active interest in extension courses for teachers living and working outside of the municipal state capital of Salvador, Bahia. This interest in rural education and extension campuses would become the hallmark of her directorship at the Bahian State University, where she established satellite campuses throughout Bahia State, and implemented the widest affirmative action and quotas campaign in the history of Brazilian higher education. Her courage as an educator, innovator, and social activist has earned her international support and recognition, particularly among African Descendant populations throughout the Americas, Africa, and Europe.



Sergia Galván

Ms. Galvan is the director of the Collective for Women and Health [Colectiva Mujer y Salud] in the Dominican Republic. She and her organization work towards raising awareness among women's organizations, networks, groups and associations regarding the key elements of the law on social security and health from a rights-based perspective. She also worked to define strategies for social and political mobilization in order to lobby for adequate basic health care policies.

Ms. Galvan is the recipient of a bachelors degree in education from the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo (UASD), with a specialization in Women's Studies from the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana de Mexico. She has taken various courses in as human rights and evaluation and formulation of projects, among others. Currently she is the director of public policy of the Secretary of State of Women in the Dominican Republic. Her experience includes representing the Dominican Republic before several international organisms (OAS, the UN's Commission for the social condition of women and the inter-American executive commission for women's issues (CIM/OAS). Ms. Galvan has also participated in several conferences in different parts of the world from Chile to China.



Angelica Beatriz Ramirez Abella

Mrs. Ramirez Abella has been very involved with the black population in Uruguay for over thirty years. Beginning in 1972 she became involved in different youth movements and in 1984 she was the director of the Social and Cultural Association of Uruguay. She founded programs for street children and co-founded Mundo Afro. In 1996 she was given the responsibility to manage Red de Mujeres (women's network) in the Latin American region.

In 1997 Mrs. Ramirez Abella founded and led the first cooperative for women of African descent in Uruguay. Another of her most notable endeavors was an evaluation of the condition of the Afro Uruguayan women, the first one ever. She also co-founded Alianza Estrategica ("Strategic Alliance") in Costa Rica. Since the year 2000 she has been part of a network of teachers of the Instituto Superior de Formacion Afro which also teaches about issues pertaining to gender, ethnicity, and class. This network extends to Chile as well. She participated in preparatory delegations of the CMR in various Latin American countries as well as in Geneva and Durban, Africa. She also participated in a political mission to Bogota, Colombia where she met with the displaced communities of that country. She was responsible for the thematic unification of Afro-descendants which was achieved in September 26, 2003. She has also been part of anti-discriminatory campaigns in Montevideo, Uruguay.



Maria Elisa Velazquez Gutierrez

Mrs. Velazquez Gutierrez is a recipient of a bachelor's degree in sociology from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. She obtained her Doctorate in Anthropology from the Escuela Nacional de Antropologia e Historia. She is a full time researcher in the Direccion de Etnologia y Antropologia Social (Social Anthropology and Ethnology Center), which is within the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia. She has been the coordinator of its permanent curriculum "Poblaciones y Culturas de Origen Africano en Mexico" (Cultures and Communities of African Origin in Mexico) since 1997. She is also a Graduate school professor at the Maestria en Museos de la Universidad Iberoamericana.

She has participated in lectures, conferences and several courses within Mexico and abroad focusing on the topic of the population of African descent in Mexico. She has also published a book on the life of a Mexican mulato painter of the seventeenth century. She has authored other books such as "Poblaciones y Culturas de Origen Africano en Mexico" and the prize winner "Mujeres de la Capital Novohispana, siglos XVII y XVIII" She also organized an international Congress in April of this year on the topic of Mexicans of African descent.



Zulia Mena García

Ms. Mena García was born in Quibdó, in the Chocó region of Colombia. She received a degree in Social Work from the Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó and specialized in social management at the INDES in Washington D.C. Ms. Mena García is the founder of the Consejo Colombiano de Mujeres Negras, COMUN, (The Colombian Council of Black Women), and co-founder of the Ethnic Movement of Black Women. She has served as advisor of the Territorial Afro- Chocó Collective and as a consultant for ethnic and social projects. She has also served as advisor to Chocó's governor on issues of ethnicity and culture. In addition, Ms. Mena García has participated intensively in national and international forums and conferences on race and ethnicity and the rights of afro descendant women, and has published extensively on issues related to women's rights, ethnicity, culture, territorial rights, racism and the Colombian armed conflict. Ms. Mena García has been recognized widely for her community activism and her professional achievements.

Nirva Rosa Camacho Parra

Nirva Rosa Camacho Parra was born in La Sabana, State of Vargas, Venezuela. She received a degree in Clinical Psychology from the Universidad Nacional Experimental Simón Rodríguez, in Caracas. She is a specialist in family counseling and education, and works as a Psychologist at the Centro de Desarrollo Infantil (Center for child development) at La Guaira. Prior to this position she served as Executive Secretary at the Fundación Instituto La Mujer (Women Institute Foundation) in the State of Vargas. Ms. Camacho- Parra has participated extensively in workshops and women's forums addressing the situation of Afro-Venezuelans and issues such as economy and women; human relations, leadership and authority, and issues related to genre and politics. She is a member of the Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres Afrodescendientes and of the Red de Mujeres de Vargas and has served as coordinator of the network of Afro-Venezuelan organizations and as organizer and presenter of the National Conference of Afro-descendant Women, from 2001 through 2005. Ms. Camacho Parra has also participated in international conferences and conventions including the Third World Conference against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia in Durban-South Africa in 2001, and the Americas Conference in Chile in 2000. She has also co authored various articles and books on race, ethnicity and culture, including Afrovenezolanidad, Racismo e Interculturalidad.