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INTERVIEW WITH LAURA RODRIGUEZ (Feminist leader in Mairena del Aljarafe)

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Why did you start the feminist café?

Mainly because after becoming conscious of the necessity of us women to be organised to fight for our rights, and I realised that in Aljarafe there exist very few feminist collectives and I concretely wasn't capable of finding any that was specifically for young women. I knew some friends that were taking part in the Café of the University of Seville. And from there came the idea of creating our own collective in Aljarafe. Basically, the idea starts from there,, from the necessity of our own activity in Aljarafe concerning feminism and youth concerns.

What encouraged you to start taking part in the feminist movement?

I really wouldn't know what to say about that, I lived it more like a process. Since we are very little we have suffered every kind of sexism, from toys to comments that we have to put up with in the streets. The worst is that we are raised to be able to stand , shut up about and put up with this sort of things. But I suddenly started to read things about feminism and, over all, to share experiences with friends and I realised that the problem wasn't mine, that it wasn't my fault (which I had felt on many occasions) and that I wasn't alone. Because of this I believe that it's important that us women have our own territories, that we share experiences and that we organise together and also for this reason I thought that it was fundamental to create and bust a feminist café.

How do you feel when a young girl can't attend the café's meeting due to her parents believing that you're going to "brainwash" her?

Well, the feeling I think I would have would be helplessness. It's comprehensible that there's parents that have that idea of feminism because there's an attempt to generate the false idea that feminism is violent and generates confrontation, but not for that it stops being frustrating, and more when feminism's direction is the opposite. Against the current situation where being a woman means having to put up with being killed and controlled in toxic relationships, being told how to dress, behave and relate; feminism isn't anything else that our fight to be free.

Honestly, I would invite who thinks alike to a Café's meeting, or any other collective to see first-hand what we do, that precisely has a lot more to do with busting through our talks and activities that each woman can say, think and feel whatever she wants as long as she always respects others.

What encouraged you to go with this job?

It was more of a circumstantial issue, rather than a deliberate one. I started to take part in the political party because, apart from feminism, I was worried about other things such as the situation of scarcity that many youngsters in Andalusia live in or seeing how there are a few very rich people and many who are getting poorer, with no the most basic right and how the former was the cause of the latter. I felt that I had to try to do something to change the situation and I realised that the best way to do it was taking part in a common project, with more people who had my same worries, because alone it seems impossible, but when more people start to join, it looks like changing things is nearer.

That way I started to take part in the party, I assumed certain tasks that have led me to be responsible of feminism and LGBT on the Andalusian level, it's not considered a job as such, but a political responsibility.



Did you ever imagine yourself in that position?

Not at all and, as I said before, I feel that I've got here for an amount of circumstances. Actually, it's very evident for me that this is a temporary responsibility because I think that the healthiest policy for organisation is that responsibilities are rotating, collective and that no one is indispensable.

What's your experience as a political party member?

As I said before, it's not a job as such, but a political responsibility that means that there are no schedules, disponibility is complete and tasks are various and, in many cases, unexpected. Even so, I try to learn from everything, enjoy it and make the most of the experience. I feel it like an opportunity to live the current political situation from a very particular and interesting point of view.

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