

In memoriam, care and love  
April 14, 2021



Illustration by Vidushi Yadav

The UAF Sister Funds are deeply saddened by the news that our Sister, Tatiana Cordero Velásquez, the Executive Director of Urgent Action Fund - Latin America & Caribbean, has passed away due to complications while undergoing medical treatment. Tatiana's legacy for feminist movements and funders across the globe is profound and will continue to shape our analysis and action.

"We feel honoured to have had the chance to share paths with Tati. Her presence has transformed our lives, especially regarding the importance of care for ourselves, for each other and for life (...) Tati has been a loving, generous reference of collective work for many social movements in Latin America and the world. Her departure is a huge loss. However, her legacy will be present in each of our actions." – UAF-LAC team and Board

Tatiana brought a deep spirituality to her lifelong work as a feminist activist, scholar, mother, and leader of Urgent Action Fund-LAC. Throughout her career, she advocated for the values and practices of care and protection of frontline defenders.

“Tatiana would insist that, ‘At the centre of feminism is collective care. Taking care of ourselves and each other is political!’” – Ndana

The care she led with she also demonstrated in an end-of-year appreciation for all UAF staff globally (a space she held with sister co-lead, Viri, from UAF A&P, on behalf of the Sisters) where Tatiana and all danced and swayed and listened to music together. Tatiana also took care to co-create a Colectivo de Dirección at UAF-LAC, a collective leadership body that she cultivated and supported long before her break began to undergo treatment. Our hearts are with Laura, Terry, Lorena and the UAF-LAC Board and Staff Team.

From her work with feminist collectives to ensure the inclusion of women’s rights in the Ecuadorian constitution to her advocacy for LBT rights with Taller de Comunicación Mujer, Tatiana demonstrated an unwavering commitment to ensuring each person’s right to live in freedom and full expression.

“Tatiana was a sister in the deepest sense. Guiding, supporting, pushing our political imaginations, and caring deeply. I miss her already and also feel her love, knowing it will guide our journey for years to come.” – Kate

Tatiana, embracing her own Indigenous heritage, had a profound political commitment to Indigenous communities defending land, territory, and traditions. Her belief in the fundamental dignity of every being and her love for Mother Earth guided her every step. She loved nature, poetry, healing traditions and her roots, as well as music, dance, cigarettes, fine drinks and good food consumed in community and celebration. She had a deep sense of humour and would shake her hand in the air and snap her fingers when she found something particularly funny, which was often.

“Tatiana’s spirituality and her strong connection to mother earth and all living beings was inspiring. She inspired me to embrace my own spirituality and tap into my indigenous identity and ancestors for strength and guidance. I miss her calm, her humour and beauty. Vinaka vakalevu na veikawataki. Gole ena vakacegu Tatiana. Tawaguilecavi.” – Viri

Tatiana recently said, “without a doubt our ancestors and guiding spirits are caring and looking after us.” She reminded us often that this is a time to be grateful, even as we mourn loss. We are grateful for you, Tatiana.

As Tatiana joins the ancestral world, we know she is caring for us. With her, we send care to the countless defenders, comrades and sisters who were touched by her life.

Laura Carvajal, Terry de Vries, Lorena Medina, Colectivo de Dirección, Urgent Action Fund Latin America and the Caribbean

Virisila Buadromo, Co-Lead, Urgent Action Fund Asia & Pacific

Ndana Bofu-Tawamba, Executive Director, Urgent Action Fund Africa

Kate Kroeger, Executive Director, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights



UAF Sister Funds in March 2020 (NYC)

Pictured from left to right, top to bottom: Virisila Buadromo, Ndana Bofu-Tawamba, Tatiana Cordero Velásquez, Kate Kroeger, Ava Danlog, Mary Jane Real  
(photo by: Lisa Garrett)

Song shared recently by Tatiana as she held space with Viri (sister co-lead from A&P, on behalf of the Sisters) at the end of the year to appreciate all sister funds' staff:

Cuatro Vientos, by Danit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pclv31cDTTc>