Participatory Action Research - Feminist Trailblazers & Good Troublemakers

Wardarin and Vernie Yocogan-Diano: Feminist PAR - A Tool for Movement Building with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

 # 20 (Season 2 Episode 8) - Host Patricia Maguire with Guests Wardarina and Vernie Yocogan-Diano **https://www.parfemtrailblazers.net/season-2-episode-8-with-wardarina-vernice-yacogan-diano-feminist-par-a-tool-for-movement-build/**

Recorded March 12, 2024, Streamed May 6, 2024

[00:00:00] **Patricia:** Welcome to Participatory Action Research, Feminist Trailblazers and Good Troublemakers. I'm your host, Patricia Maguire, and our guests today are Wardarina and Vernie Yocogan-Diano, and they're with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, known as APWLD.

So Rina, welcome.

Rina: Hello, hello. I'm so happy to be here.

[00:00:33] **Patricia:** And Vernie, welcome to you.

Vernie: Thank you, Patricia.

Patricia: Since 1986, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development has been a leading network of feminist organizations and individual activists in Asia and the Pacific, and your work advances women's rights and development justice. And Rina and Vernie are leaders in APWLD's groundbreaking organizational commitment to feminist PAR.

[00:01:00] **Patricia:** So we're going to talk about APWLD's approach to feminist participatory action research for knowledge creation, and also for building autonomous feminist movements and organizations. So let me introduce our guests briefly.

Patricia: Rina is an activist, feminist, and feminist participatory action research enthusiast. Originally from Indonesia, she moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand 12 years ago to work with APWLD. She's currently the deputy regional coordinator of APWLD, which is a network of 265 plus organizations and diverse women's groups from 30 countries in Asia and Pacific. And she said, I was lucky enough to be one of the right people at the right time to build, conceptualize, and experiment with APWLD's current FPAR program.

[00:01:58] **Patricia:** Vernie is an indigenous women's human rights defender. She's been an activist for over 30 decades in her home region, Cordillera, Philippines, and she's also an activist at the national level in the Philippines and the Asia Pacific region. She's a training

facilitator for APWLD, which she says is an integral part of her work, leading, igniting, organizing, and mobilizing women.

[00:02:24] **Patricia:** And she joined APWLD as a mentor and trainer facilitator in 2012. So it sounds like 2012 is kind of the nexus year for the two of you joining APWLD. So, before we dive into Feminist PAR, I want to get started with a little bit of background on the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. Rina, you're the Regional Deputy Coordinator. Tell us a little bit more about the membership and the mission.

[00:02:54] **Rina:** Sure, sure. Thank you so much, Patricia, for that question. I think that you mentioned most of it. We are a feminist membership driven organization. Our scope is regional. We work in Asia and the Pacific region. And I put the number there, which is like 265 members in 33 countries and territories, not only country, but also territories in Asia Pacific.

[00:03:21] **Rina:** And then when we are saying that we are membership driven, it means that our member was the one that really drive and implement and plan our direction where we want to. And our members mostly comprised of a organizational membership, right? We also have an individual membership, but most of them is really, really grassroots local movement and also organizations in the region. Right.

[00:03:50] **Rina:** So imagine a network that also have the indigenous women's organization, trade union, and workers organization. We have the urban poor women organization really look into the issue of the constituencies and making sure that we have that intersectionality analysis in our, you know, in our approach.

[00:04:10] **Rina:** Yeah. And then also analysis in APWLD. Just maybe I think that one important point that I want to highlight is that how our membership from the very beginning is really, really clear on how do we see what are the root, structural causes of women's oppression. That become our political unity because, yes, we are APWLD, we are a feminist organization, we are very political.

[00:04:39] **Rina:** And then the way that we see it is not only patriarchy that is actually the root structural causes of women's oppression, but also how patriarchy manifests and also reinforced by different power structures such as globalization and it's, you know, legacy of the imperialism and colonialism, also militarisms and fundamentalism. So that is how APWLD sees it.

[00:05:06] **Patricia:** I think it helps our listeners see what a robust mission and an in-depth structural analysis that you have of women's rights and development justice. Vernie, you've been an activist for over thirty years in your Indigenous community, and I think it's fair to say your activism has been both bold and at times dangerous.

[00:05:32] **Patricia:** So tell us about your community and a little bit about the activist work you did that brought you to APWLD.

[00:05:42] **Vernie:** I started working with the regional Indigenous Peoples Organizations and particularly Indigenous women's organizations here in the Cordillera. Working with Indigenous women's organizations, so there are two. One is the Alliance of Indigenous Women's Organizations in the Cordillera. That is called INNABUYOG, essentially a movement of Indigenous women in the Cordillera fighting for land rights and then working a lot on self- determination to have control over the land as well as on the resources, natural resources within the ancestral territory or ancestral homelands of indigenous peoples.

[00:06:29] **Vernie:** So, so it was during that time, it was when I was leading INNABUYOG, so from the spokesperson until I was elected as a chairperson of the organization that we were invited to be part of APWLD. I was representing APWLD already through my organization as early as 2005. Yeah. So, 2005, during that time, APWLD was organizing its programs through task forces.

[00:07:02] **Vernie:** I was the co-convenor actually of the task force women and environment during that time. And then as early 2006, I met already Rina and she was, she was translating for the member of their organization in Indonesia to the task force women and environment of Asia Pacific Forum and Women, Law and Development.

[00:07:26] **Vernie:** Yeah. So from then on 2007 until 2011, I was a member of the Regional Council of APWLD. So the regional council is the governance body, does decision, policy making and decision making in between general assembly. General assembly happens during that time.

Vernie: It was happening every three years, but there was already a change. Like in 2008, there was some reprogramming and reorganizing done in APWLD. So in addition to the structures that it had before 2008, like during the time that I came in as a member to APWLD, it was the program that changed. So instead of organizing the programs as task forces, the programs of APWLD were organized into different programs.

[00:08:23] **Vernie:** The most grassroots-based program, which is *BOOM*, *Breaking Out Of Marginalization*. It was BOOM, actually, that pioneered with the feminist participatory action research in its, as an approach to its program. Yeah, it began in 2012. So that was also the year that Rina entered APWLD as a member of the Secretariat.

[00:08:49] **Vernie:** So aside from the *Breaking Out Of Marginalization*, we also have Women in Power, we have Climate Justice, we have Feminist Development Justice. We have Women in Labor, and then we have Women, Human Rights, and Migration. And then we also have Women Interrogating Trade. And then we have Grounding the Global.

[00:09:12] **Vernie:** Yeah. So that was how I got in, into APWLD. So I think the leadership that I applied in my own, own organization. So in the Cordillera, but also, coordinated national organizations, for instance, the National Network of Indigenous Women's Organizations in the Philippines.

Vernie: And then eventually when I finished my term in the two huge Cordillera organizations that I served as a program manager of a national women human rights defenders program, which I was sharing to you a while ago Patricia, that unfortunately the Canadian government listen more to the, uh, to the pressure of the Filipino government during the time 2018 to 2019. So instead of having the program for five years, it only lasted for one and a half year in the Philippines. And then during that time, most human rights organizations, including women's human rights organizations were already facing various levels of attack. But the opportunity of that was I was able to focus more in serving as a trainer facilitator for feminist participatory action research.

[00:10:26] **Patricia:** I've been reading the APWLD Herstory 1986-2017, which Rina, I know you helped co-write and co-edit with others, including Trimita Chakma, who has been a guest on our podcast. And that document, you divide up the organizational history into three waves, and it looks like FPAR was introduced in 2010 in the third wave with a community-led participatory initiative on climate change. Could you tell us how did APWLD's commitment to FPAR begin?

[00:11:01] **Rina:** Before we go to APWLD commitment, can I also tell a personal story? Because it's really related to APWLD commitment, right? So I remember it was 2006, like right after I decided to quit my media job and then work in the feminist organization in Indonesia called Solidaritas Perempuan (SP), my first feminist organization and also APWLD member.

[00:11:24] **Rina:** And then I remember that time when I was at the office of SP and I stumbled into this APWLD first FPAR research together with members in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand on the impacts of Indian Ocean tsunami that happened that time on December 26, 2004, right? And then I remember that time was reading the, it's an annex of the report.

[00:11:52] **Rina:** The annex has this researcher diary and then really tells vividly the experience of the researcher when they go to the shelter, right? And then until now I can still remember reading it and then feeling very amazed with it. Yeah. So actually APWLD's story journey of FPAR did not necessarily start in 2012.

[00:12:17] **Rina:** It was started in 2012 in the way it's formed now with our three trainings, you know, program curriculum, you know, with all the capacity building, you know, that

impact. But before that, we have several, you know, FPAR that have been done. So one is the tsunami on the impact of the women's human rights.

[00:12:42] **Rina:** And then the second one, we actually have a lot of participatory and documentation kind of approach, you know, we, we, we've done a lot of fact-finding missions. Yeah, and that time it was Vernie. I was together with Vernie in Mongolia and also in Loei Province in Thailand to really learn and study and then do a fact-finding mission on mining, the impact of mining for the women in the communities, right?

[00:13:10] **Rina:** And then it was like comparative studies of fact-finding mission in five different countries. And then also in 2009, we also again, look at the, the climate justice, feminist participatory action research. And then, doing the documentation of women's human rights violations.

[00:13:32] **Rina:** So I think that on all of those experiences, our members also have a lot of things to say, a lot of things to improve, a lot of things that they felt that needs to be supported fully. For instance, they said that you cannot have an FPAR that only lasts for six months. It's impossible, right? It is not something that can be done, right? So we learned from our members saying that that it needs to be to be a long-term kind of program, which also gives some core support for the organization to be able to do the work, right?

[00:14:08] **Rina:** So that was like when we actually tried to conceptualize this feminist participatory action research in 2012. We are conceptualizing it with different experiments, right? So, for instance, that we are combining different trainings. We have our long-standing feminist legal theory and practices program that put a lot of focus on intersectionality analysis.

[00:14:36] **Rina:** You know, the different feminist school of thoughts, and then how we use them in our feminist analysis, you know. We also learn a lot from the feminist legal analysis that, that training have done. And then also combining it with our own understanding on feminist learning methods, right? And how the feminist learning is actually, the core of it is how to challenge the very notion of who has the knowledge. And where collective learning relationship should be articulated from the start of the process.

[00:15:09] **Rina:** So I think 2012, it's the time for us when we are immediately say, we're not the one who is actually kind of creating FPAR. Of course not. FPAR has been there and then we learn a lot from it, right? But I think our needs as APWLD is how we use FPAR as a tool for movement building. And then for us, what is important then if we're wanting it to become the tool of movement building is defining the clear idea on why we do FPAR.

[00:15:39] **Rina:** And then, of course, it's all about the principal purpose of it is all about changing or dismantling the system and structure of oppression to improve the lives of

marginalized women. And then, of course, like I said, when we said change of the structure, it's really clear how we want to dismantle, you know, structural power that I mentioned before, but also how the women themselves are the ones who's driving the change towards the women's human rights and development justice.

[00:16:09] **Rina:** So that is our commitment of FPAR. We, back in 2012, we only have two programs that are doing FPAR, which is climate justice program, and then *Breaking Out Of Marginalization* program. And then afterwards, in 2015, we actually have a very good external evaluation, recommendation, you know, that based from their interview and conversation with our member, it is important for us to actually do the FPAR in and, you know, other program of APWLD.

[00:16:47] **Rina:** Yeah, so we start doing it for the Trade and Corporate Hegemony program. We're looking into the impact of trade agreements, you know, in specific countries. We look at into the issue of digitalization and future of work. We look at the issue also on food sovereignty. We look at the issue of the climate fall solution, so it's become more spread in APWLD and then I think, yeah, so that is, that is the commitment that we have until now.

[00:17:15] **Rina:** And then until now, it's always like a very, you know, vibrant, you know, discussion and then always try to improve ourselves. And then, of course, we call it a journey. This is a journey of effort that we are doing not only from 2012, but how we actually making sure that our FPAR can really serve the women and the people that we are trying to support.

[00:17:42] **Patricia:** From that, you show how your commitment to FPAR is nested in the overall commitment of the organization to women's voices, to participatory democracy and the way that APWLD governs itself, commitment to essentially knowledge is power and who gets a say in it, whose voices are heard. And your commitment then to use that knowledge, the whole process, if you will, for building autonomous women's movements I think something very unique and important to APWLD.

[00:18:22] **Patricia:** Vernie, is there anything that you want to hop on here in terms of this discussion in APWLD's commitment over time to FPAR?

[00:18:33] **Vernie:** We do the FPAR in three trainings, so usually a program can have from six to ten partners. So the first training is, it's a five day training talking about what is FPAR and why do we do FPAR.

[00:18:48] **Vernie:** So basically, this is providing the tools for analysis, like the structural analysis of the issue that they are going to work with in their feminist participatory action research. How is that connected with the structural barriers or the systemic barriers of

globalization, militarism, fundamentalisms, and how these systems are reinforcing, perpetrating, and perpetuating patriarchy.

[00:19:15] **Vernie:** And then the vision for solutions, the feminist vision for solutions, which is human rights as well as development justice. When we talk of development justice, it is speaking about how wealth, power, resources, and opportunities, which are in the control of minute or tiny global reach, should be distributed.

[00:19:40] **Vernie:** That's why we have the fundamental shifts of development justice, which is redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental and climate justice and accountability to peoples. So those are the shifts wherein we are, we are enabling the partner women's organization or the women or the member, member organization that is part of the feminist participatory action research journey.

[00:20:16] **Vernie:** And then, of course, because I'm talking how we create the shift from the structural barriers to the feminist vision of solution is through strong autonomous feminist movements. And it's not actually APWLD or who has that strategy or vision, but a lot of women's organizations.

[00:20:38] **Vernie:** So even the women's organization that formed me to the indigenous women's organizations where I came from in the Cordillera as well as the national level has that like approach by which we build autonomous, women's movements or feminist movements. And so, we make use of the theory of change, which we would look into the of how changes are happening in the domain of capacity building, in production of knowledge, tools, and resources, in advocacy to be able to change policies, laws, and, practices, as well as attitudes, and also movement architecture.

[00:21:22] **Vernie:** So this is the domain where in the women's organizations or the women in the communities are if they or ignite activism and then organize women's organization because that is the way by which autonomous feminist movements are created. We cannot be creating feminist movements by scattered individuals, but those individuals has to be grouped or organized as formations, organizations, associations, and so on.

[00:21:55] **Vernie:** So the theory of change is also used as aside from looking into the changes in these four domains, we also look into how the changes are enabling the strengthening of the culture of solidarity as well as the culture of accountability, which will eventually lead into facilitating movement building.

[00:22:19] **Vernie:** And then, of course, the FPAR tools are already introduced in the first regional training. And when we say FPAR tools, this would mean the impact objective, and that is where organization is follow up in the conduct of their feminist participatory action

research. And then the power map, which is looking into the different actors that they will be engaging with, strengthen the support as well as the influence.

[00:22:50] **Vernie:** So this includes not only those who are very supportive to their impact objective of their effort, but even those who are, you know, causing trouble. So the bad troublemakers, the real troublemakers, they will have to identify who these are in their power map. And then, of course, building the theory of change, and then the critical pathway, which actually puts together all these FPAR tools as one, so that is, in effect, the big plan, or the FPAR plan.

[00:23:25] **Vernie:** Being participatory and feminist, these tools will not just be done by the organization, which has committed to be in this journey with APWLD, but then these tools has to be built with the community, with the women in the communities who have committed also to be part of this FPAR journey.

[00:23:48] **Vernie:** And then using the tools, then each organization will be coming up with their FPAR design, yeah. And then from here, from the first regional training, ready with their FPAR design, then we move to the next regional training, which will be about three months to allow them to have their FPAR design finalized with the communities or the women in the communities.

[00:24:22] **Vernie:** We always emphasize that they are the women co- researchers. So those who are attending the trainings are the co-researchers, one, a younger one who is supposed to be trained in this journey, and then somebody from their organization who is serving as a mentor, but both of them are still co researchers.

[00:24:41] **Vernie:** And then we call the, the women in the communities involved in the research as a community co-researchers. So moving on to the second regional training that is already talking about how we do FPAR. So it's more talking about the feminist and participatory methods of data collection or data gathering.

[00:25:02] **Vernie:** And we are really encouraging the use of creative methods such as timeline, goings, community mapping, resource mapping or social mapping, or a combination of the social and resource mapping. Are there creative methods that fit for the FPAR for instance? There are more suitable creative methods for, for the labor that can also be adapted by the women in migration or women migrants.

[00:25:33] **Vernie:** The methods are identified or developed based on the suitability and how fit these are with the situation or the context of the women who are involved in the FPAR. Of course, the third regional training will be talking about how they, they are going to advocate or make use, utilize the evidence that they have produced.

[00:26:00] **Vernie:** Because after the second regional training, they will go back to the field and then conduct a PAR process with their community co-researchers within around a minimum of six months. And then usually it extends until eight and then sometimes nine, even 10 months. So it depends on the situation of all the partners or the women's organizations involved in the FPAR.

[00:26:26] **Vernie:** So there's an agreement on what will be a workable timetable as well for them. But normally after we do the second regional training talking about how they will collect the data, then they will go to the field and then collect the data and then come back with their initial findings, and then discuss it in the third regional training, and then talk about how that evidence will become a tool for advocacy, as well for other movement building activities that each organization is, thinking about or is planning to, to do.

[00:27:03] **Vernie:** So that is it.

[00:27:05] **Patricia:** I was going to say the very robust trainings that you've described over time. I think, Rina, that goes back to what you were saying earlier about APWLD realizing, look, this is, we're going to support at least a two-year process. And it, and there's a lot of organizational support to these autonomous women's groups over this two year period, which I think is an incredible commitment of funds and personnel and support and advocacy that increases the possibility that it produces local knowledge and evidence that they can then be used as, as Vernie, you were saying to actually impact action, impact, uh, movements.

[00:27:52] **Patricia:** Rina, anything else you would like to add on to this description of this two plus year process of how you're supporting women's groups to do FPAR?

[00:28:02] **Rina:** One of the very important contributions and our addition to FPAR is, you know, like, try to use our own theory of change, you know, on how our belief that only movements, especially the local autonomous feminist movement that work with other movements.

[00:28:24] **Rina:** So it's not elite this movement that actually can create and sustain change. And then that theory of change that we have is actually try to frame the way why we want to do FPAR. Because we want to build movement. And then from what? Through FPAR. How? Ensuring that movement of capacity, right, to actually able to do their work right, to actually claim for their and then also advocate for their issues, to make sure that movements have the new knowledge, new resources and new tools, and then also to ensure that movements have the advocacy opportunities to claim and occupy spaces in different level, right, and also how to strengthen the movement architecture itself.

[00:29:17] **Rina:** How they do networking, how they do fundraising and all of those, right? So we always use that framing. And then we always say that because this is theory of change, when we plan this, it's not about what activities to be done in each of that capacity building, but what is actually the change you want to see, right?

[00:29:42] **Rina:** And then that is actually kind of challenging, you know. A lot of us is actually used to thinking about output-based kind of discussion or result based management or the donor driven quantitative, you know, way of, you know, like how to measure change. But this time using a feminist, feminist monitoring evaluation and learning, we actually try to learn and then try to see the qualitative, you know, stories and impact, right?

[00:30:18] **Rina:** And then how this one capacity building story actually leads to another, right? So, yeah, it's one of the things that is quite challenging in terms of that, how to shift the mindset from activity-based to change-based kind of, you know, because again, at the end of the day, FPAR is about change, right?

[00:30:41] **Rina:** So that's what we've been trying to actually emphasize.

[00:30:46] **Patricia:** Well, and what you're describing is that it isn't just the content, the sort of evidence, the data that comes out of it. It's the process that the women, the co-researchers use together to build skills, solidarity, a different lens, if you will, for looking, a more structural lens for looking at the issues in their community and across time then building more participatory organizations that, value their voice, their vision, their knowledge. So as you were saying, Rena, that's a different thing to measure, so to speak, when you have, you know, donors that are focused more on the outputs as opposed to how do you measure, so to speak, this process where people across time develop the skills and awareness and a new understanding of their community issues. A few particular stories you might tell us, a few of the specific FPAR projects of what women learned, gained, and did as a result of these two, three-year FPAR projects.

[00:32:00] **Vernie:** We go back actually to the FPAR principles and then see how the process is responding to the purpose of FPAR which is structural change, and then how the FPAR is also facilitating or fostering, uh, movement building, how FPAR is building their capacities. So in the capacities it's mostly, well, of course how to improve the documentation skills and then the application of FPAR, knowing about learning about the FPAR framework and then applying that in their own FPAR. And also looking into the leadership, how the process have built their leadership, leadership of community co-researchers, as well as even for the young women researchers.

[00:32:55] **Vernie:** Yeah, it's also very important because many times co-researchers, a lot have developed their leadership. And then another important thing that usually comes out as change also is the formation of organizations. Like originally or before there was no organization. There can be like women that are actively participating in the concerns of the community, but there is no clear women's organization or feminist organization.

[00:33:29] **Vernie:** Or there can be like a multi sectoral organization or a community organization where the women are integrated, but not able to have, you know, enough space, yeah, enough space and aren't able to amplify their voices because of, you know, it's a mixed composition. Whereas, like, after they have done the FPAR, and then they came up, they organized their own organization, that was a big change. And then they can count on the leaders, not just on themselves, but also coming from the community.

[00:34:08] **Vernie:** From the community co-researchers who participated in the process and then they are able to count themselves and see and claim to be leaders because they are able to lead the advocacy and other, uh, and other activities of their organization. Those are what we always hear actually from the organizations that have participated in the FPAR.

[00:34:37] **Vernie:** So, aside from the application of the FPAR principles, we also try to see how the theory of change has actually helped them in determining already the change that have happened in the domain of capacity building. Building in production of knowledge, tools, and resources in creating advocacy spaces to challenge or change policies, laws, and, practices, as well as the movement architecture that is in place, which wasn't there before the FPAR process.

[00:35:17] **Vernie:** And also, looking into how the solidarity, the culture of solidarity had been strengthened as well as the culture of accountability. So those are the areas that, you know, that the co-researchers and their organizations share upon and whatever changes in there, then that is, what we see.

[00:35:45] **Vernie:** It's usually the capacity for leadership and then the building of organizations and then networking, uh, networks as well as broadening also their reach. So, for instance, they, they are already working or operating as an organization, but then they are able to broaden their, their reach in terms of what they can do, but in terms of organizations or networks that they need their work or their services that they are able to do as well.

[00:36:22] **Patricia:** The issues that you're, these projects are dealing with, you have powerful foes. There are powerful backlashes to, whether it's, you know, climate, land, violence, militarization. So how do you help your women's groups, co-researchers, deal

with the danger that is often involved in being a community activist who uses FPAR and organizational solidarity to go up against some very powerful foes?

[00:36:59] **Rina:** I think that you know, the issue of safety, security, abiding with the principle of do no harm and do good, right? It's something that we actually already integrate in the FPAR ethics and FPAR principles. The first time we talk about the feminist participatory action research in the first training, when we have that nine principles shared.

[00:37:24] **Rina:** So that is one, and then to have an understanding about that, What does it mean in the way that you know, the way that we conduct ourselves, the way that we actually ensuring the safety and security of the community, the way that we also need to actually ensuring our own safety and community and all of that, right? It's also part of that.

[00:37:45] **Rina:** The second one is that on the first and the second training, we usually also have this exercise of us trying to look at the risks, yeah, of this particular FPAR and then how we look at risk in the way that yeah, in terms of the safety and security and then we identify it together and then try to discuss on how to mitigate that. Right.

[00:38:11] **Rina:** And then we, we actually have a session in the first training when we are talking really specifically on this issue and APWLD, for instance, we are also part of the, Women Human Rights Defender International Committee, right, where we'll be able to actually immediately make an urgent response whenever that is something happen with our FPAR partner.

[00:38:36] **Rina:** So we're trying to also be supportive on that sense. We have cases, you know, like a lot of times, sometimes, some of our researcher, you know, they also got some intimidation, backlash coming from the military for instance, we immediately gather, you know, solidarity statement together with the other human rights organization in the region and also outside of the region internationally.

[00:39:06] **Rina:** There are cases also when we need to actually report it to the special So you, we use, because APWLD, we, our mandate is actually, you know, bridging between the global processes with the UN Human Rights Mechanism and the reality in the ground. We have a very good relationship with the OHCHR and then special rapporteurs and mandate holders.

[00:39:33] **Rina:** And then that's also enabled us to make an urgent action whenever, you know, there's things like this happen, but of course it is a very difficult situation. Sometimes it's something very, very unexpected, you know, and then, and then, so that's why that kind of urgent response is really, really needed.

[00:39:52] **Vernie:** Yeah.

[00:39:53] **Vernie:** So, as Rina already mentioned, one of the FPAR principles is safety, security and solidarity. So, if a FPAR, because it is challenging, it's challenging the systems or structures of globalization, military, fundamentalism, and then, which are these systems that are reinforcing perpetrating and perpetuating patriarchy.

[00:40:24] **Vernie:** And then you expect, you know, the harm or danger, the danger is and harm is expected. The threats to safety and security is given. So I think all of the partners that we had worked with or that we have had journey in the FPAR since 2012 and until now have that acknowledgement that it is this is we're not going to a party, right?

[00:40:55] **Vernie:** We're doing a part to change a situation and to change the system. To change the system and therefore, there is this, will be facing different levels of threats and intimidation or danger, harm, and that the co-researchers, their organizations have to be prepared as well as APWLD. Of course, APWLD also has to be prepared in responding to calls for support should it happen.

[00:41:30] **Vernie:** I think the, the way that we are doing it is really first, like during the first regional training, it is them reading what kind of threats or what kind of dangers that they will be facing when they begin with the pre research consultation until the time that they will be working on doing their data collection.

[00:41:51] **Vernie:** So once they come, so they have like, okay, these are what we are assuming. These are our assumptions, or these are what we think might happen. And then when they will be doing their, the actual engagements or the data collection, then, they encounter danger or harm. So, at least from what they have prepared and then what, from what they are actually experiencing on field, they will not find it very difficult because more or less they have that preparation.

[00:42:30] **Vernie:** And we always encourage all the co-researchers like when they are in the communities that they will build or they will co-create a system of care and safety and security with their community co-researchers or with the communities because the community would know better what kind of dangers are there and then what kind of management measures will be done.

[00:42:56] **Vernie:** They know better than the co-researchers who are just like new. That is also the purpose of having the young woman researcher to be coming from the community. So more or less, she knows better the security landscape or situation in the community. And so it'll be easier to facilitate that process with the community of building the safety and the security, uh, system.

[00:43:27] **Rina:** One thing that we also see as a threat is on digital security. Nowadays, and then a lot of like activists, they now see a threat of a lot of policy or laws in relation with

digitalization and that information and technology in countries, especially in Asia Pacific is actually very repressive. Right. And then really threatening the woman human rights defender.

[00:43:53] **Rina:** So, we actually have a session also on digital security and how to protect themselves, how to do with the data, how they hide the data, how to actually have the data hidden in the mobile phone if somehow their mobile phone got confiscated during the action and rally, you know, so we try to also give that kind of support.

[00:44:15] **Patricia:** Yeah, I see that you have - there's a project coming up, an FPAR project that you're starting to build towards organizing women's workers and striving women's labor rights in an era of digitalization. I think that's quite cutting edge of having to, the things that women organizers and women activists have to consider now about digitalization.

[00:44:39] **Rina:** Yeah, and then it's, it's one of the very big issue that our members really want us to focus also in the next five years, because we see digitalization in different streams, right? And then it's impact to women, it's also in different arena. So one is about digitalization and the future of work, when we are looking into the issue of labor rights, and then how, like, for instance, like, platform workers, gig workers, you know, they use the notion of, oh, this is good for women because it's more flexible, but it's actually more exploitation of women, we call it, right.

[00:45:17] **Rina:** And then all of those, but we also see digitalization in other. Looking at the issue of digitalization and as the space for women, gender- based violence and digitalization is also part of it. And also now, digitalization and surveillance is also a very scary part of the issue, right? So, yeah, it is one of our FPAR, which is very exciting.

[00:45:43] **Patricia:** So, let's start to wrap this up. For the two of you who have been doing this work now for quite some time, let's do a little reflexivity, if you will, and what have been, for yourselves, some of the powerful insights, learning, growth that the two of you have had as feminist participatory researchers and people who support that work.

[00:46:11] **Vernie:** As I see co-researchers, those who are attending the trainings, and then as we are providing them the guidance as well, how they are able to do it, it's just so inspiring and empowering. And it helps in grounding me on the real issues that, you know, different women - be they in the labor, they be working on climate justice, on migration, on land rights, on food sovereignty, pushing for participatory democracy, building a transformative leadership.

[00:46:45] **Vernie:** FPAR. FPAR is just so, I find it so fulfilling for me personally, as I see the fellow feminist, women leaders and, women activists getting empowered as well in the process, and how the process is building their leadership, and then their capacity to

advocate, as well as amplify, you know, the voices, voices that which would be the, the evidence that have generated from the course of data collection.

[00:47:29] **Vernie:** Putting all these, you know, having, seeing them, empowered, using all the tools that have been provided and hearing their stories of how they have, you know, aside from building the leadership and then building organizations and then fostering that movement, building that FPAR was supposed to contribute in their movement building. Being part of the process also is just so inspiring and empowering for me.

[00:48:10] **Rina:** Yeah, I think from my end, why, why I feel like, oh, okay, this is going to be deep question because this is also the question that we usually ask every time that we finish one batch of FPAR, you know, and then we just imagine that we're just like in the circle, you know, and then just really talk about our FPAR journey and how life changing it was and it is for many of us, you know.

[00:48:33] **Rina:** And then like what Vernie said, I think for me, like FPAR like really grounded the way I think about what is knowledge and who has the knowledge, right? FPAR make me grounded in terms of relationship on how to make sure that the, you know, you, to challenge always the notion of the power asymmetries and then how we can actually have, you know, ensuring that when we are talking about power is about not power over, but power within, power to empower with, you know, so FPAR really makes me in my internal, everyday life to actually really try to look at that.

[00:49:29] **Rina:** And then also FPAR teach me how to be disruptive. Sometimes it's good. You know, disruptive act, you know, for women to set their own agenda to set what they want you know, and then it's, it's important to be disruptive sometimes in this world. I don't think it's sometimes most of the time in this world, in this patriarchal world and break down hierarchies.

[00:49:55] **Rina:** And whenever it’s possible that ensuring that we have gendered and class power relation interrogated when we are, you know, talking or, or be in the situation. And I do agree with Vernie. I think that all of those is actually to really see together, growing together. And then understanding things together and learning things together is the most exciting part of FPAR.

[00:50:27] **Rina:** I never got bored. Yeah, we've been doing this together in almost 12 years. And I think that one thing that I really want though, like for us to be able to strengthen our FPAR alumni, because we have a lot of very, very you know, strong feminist, you know, young women researcher from FPAR that we actually need to make sure that we have some level of continuity and sustainability with them together.

[00:51:04] **Rina:** We do have it, but we want to systematize it a little bit more and ensuring that it's not only Vernie and I, you know, but also there's a generation of FPAR facilitators, FPAR troublemakers, FPAR trailblazers that goes along the way.

[00:51:23] **Patricia:** All right, before we wrap this up, is there anything else that you came today hoping to talk about in terms of APWLD's commitment to FPAR? Your projects, anything else that we haven't hit that, that you think is important to share with our listeners?

[00:51:42] **Rina:** I think for me, what is important and then we always need to improve, you know, is how we build participatory interactive tools to make sure that FPAR can be done. So it's not only about participatory data gathering methods or analysis, but also how we be able to make a fun participatory planning with the community, for instance, in terms of FPAR, right?

[00:52:06] **Rina:** How do we define what change do you want to see? Like sometimes in, in, in APWLD, we use the tools of, you know, deeply felt, widely felt and winnable, you know? So it's something like that, that, you know, like listing all these tools participatory planning, identifying the impact objective, identifying the actors that can, you know, the power and then mapping the power for them to be able to have that exercise is already empowering because they will have that conversation, you know, identifying themself on.

[00:52:56] **Rina:** If this is what the change they want to achieve, then what are the milestone of change that they need to have step by step, you know, and again, it is it is very important that it is done together with the community. So I think that I want to say that it's not only about research tools, you know, it's everything, advocacy tools, campaigning tools, planning tools, um, understanding what is, what is feminism and intersectionality, right? And also part of it, part of a big, big important part of our APWLD FPAR.

[00:53:39] **Patricia:** Vernie?

[00:53:40] **Vernie:** FPAR needs to be supported because it's really facilitating the leadership of women building their confidence. It is enabling the formation of women or feminist organizations and them towards growing as movements. And then be able to work with other movements as well. So that is how important the FPAR is and this needs to be supported.

[00:54:11] **Patricia:** Well, thank you so much to the two of you for sharing your journeys, sharing the work of APWLD and your work in that FPAR journey. I want to thank our listeners. You can help expand our audience by sharing the episode link with your colleagues and networks. We'll have a transcript of today's podcast and additional information about our guests on our companion website parfemtrailblazers.net. So that's

it, folks, for this episode of Participatory Action Research, Feminist Trailblazers and Good Troublemakers. And as civil rights icon John Lewis urged us, go make some good trouble of your own.