

Sabina Carlos, Market Vendor, Lima, Peru

By Carmer Roca

Sabina is a market vendor at the *La Pampa* extension of the Huamantanga Market, in *Puente Piedra* - a highly populated district in the North end of Lima, Peru. She is the Organizing Officer of her local vendors' association, and also belongs to the leadership of the Lima Federation of Street Vendors, FEDEVAL. She sells creole food and fruit juices at a rented stall, which lacks a paved floor. She purchases her inputs at the wholesale market of *Puente Piedra*. She usually starts at 6am, together with her daughter - who studies computer science in the evenings and hopes to obtain a stable job in the near future.

Sabina is presently working 12-hour days, while before the crisis her work days were 9 hours long. The crisis has had a negative impact on her income, as she explains: "Last year I was making up to 20 soles per day (USD 6.5 approximately). Nowadays, I am only making 10 soles." This represents a survival income, considering that she has to pay 150 soles (USD 50 approximately) monthly rent for her market stall to an intermediary firm, which happens to belong to the mother of the current mayor of her district – who up to now has not been denounced. Sabina does not count on any social security benefit. She usually turns to traditional medicine for minor problems. If something severe happens, she could not afford it. She cares for two grandchildren from her eldest son, who is 34 and works as a casual microbus helper – a job of long hours and little pay.

More and more vendors compete with Sabina every month, which affects the volume of her sales. She has decreased the amount of product per serving to adjust to the price competition. She has also created new dishes to attract new customers and keeps the same price she used to sell for months ago in order to keep the *caseros*, her most loyal customers. On bad days, she adds a few hours of work at night, selling sweets on the street, where the income is not great and there are security risks, but it helps.



Sabina and her daughter, at the back of the room, right hand corner, attending a FEDEVAL training session.