

Final Report

"Women's Spirituality of Non-Violence and Healing"

Mercy Weaver of Dreams Program

The purpose of the project was to conduct three workshops on nonviolence and two on trauma healing with young women 14 to 21 years of age in the Rivera Hernandez Sector, one of the most violent and impoverished neighborhoods of San Pedro Sula, the industrial capital of northern Honduras. The workshops were also to be held with the indigenous Tolupan women of Piedra Gorda from the community of San Francisco, Locomapa.

In conducting this project, we formed alliances with the social educational program Step by Step which is a violence prevention program for youth of the Rivera Hernandez Sector. The workshops of Piedra Gorda were held in cooperation with the Broad Movement for the Dignity and Justice, a movement that works in defense of the human rights of indigenous communities that are defending their land. The Christian Catholic community of Piedra Gorda provided the location to hold the workshops.



Women of San Francisco, Locomapa. From left to Right: Iris, Angela, Nelly, Martha, Roxana, Wendy, Johana y Ela.

Changes to the Original Project

Originally, the project was designed for indigenous Lenca women but for reasons of proximity and having made contact with the indigenous Tolupan women, we opted to have the project for the Tolupan women.

Three workshops were planned for the Tolupan women but because of violent incidents which occurred, we had to suspend the other two workshops. Armed men who were taking lumber and antimony from the territory of the tribe of San Francisco and Punta Gorda murdered three tribe members: two men and a woman. Nonetheless, as soon as this occurred, we went to support them and held a session on Post-Traumatic Stress. In that visit, we re-scheduled the workshops for February of 2014. However, we made the decision to redirect our resources to another group of women in the Choloma Sector in the state of Cortez.

The workshops programmed for the youth of the Rivera Hernandez Sector were opened to boys at the request of our partner Step by Step, so one of the workshops was with boys as well as girls.

Due to the political instability and violence, some of the workshop dates changed and we could not finish in August as planned. We had the final workshop on Dec. 11th with the women of the colony Lopez Arellano.

Impact of the Project:

1. The young people learned conflict resolution and communication skills that allow them to face and deal with the violence in their families and community. They also developed a spirit of fellowship and affirmation they could use in the different places where they could relate to other young people. At the same time, the workshops allowed them to recognize their pain and sadness as well as the power they have to transform it.
2. The workshops in Locomapa with the Tolupanes women allowed them to address the situation the community faces when they defend their lands through a perspective of spiritual power which called them to seek conflict resolution in a non-violent way.
3. The women of Tolupan had to face very violent events so what they learned has helped them to work together to face their fears and the distrust they experience living in their community. They have managed to agree and make decisions to take care of themselves and to support the relatives of the people who were killed while defending their lands.