El Laso  Women in Latin America

Women in Business:
By Lindsay Dudley

Field Reports:
Nicaragua and Brazil

International Women’s Day:
Nancy Compier and
Lindsay Dudley

Latin American Film Festival
April 13th-21st

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Women in Business: Latin American Female Microenterprise
by Lindsay Dudley: Outreach Staff

Many women in small rural villages in Latin American face difficulties looking for work outside of the home. A lot of families devote themselves to agriculture and make it a family practice where mothers, fathers, and children collectively work to plant and harvest throughout the year. Recently, many women in Ecuador have turned to forming small cooperative artisan businesses as a way to supplement family income. They devote themselves to making jams, weaving textiles, and fabricating jewelry. Additionally many women’s groups have started selling products made from recycled paper that they elaborate, fashion, and decorate into beautifully hand-crafted goods. In southern Ecuador, a microenterprise group of 9 female associates run a recycled paper business called “The Autonomous Association of Women 23 de Junio.” 23 de Junio, June 23rd, refers to the date when they were founded as a group, back in 1999. The 9 associates organize rotating work schedules throughout the week, host tourist visits to their workshop, and sell in multiple towns throughout Ecuador. The women collect used paper from within the community and surrounding areas that they later shred and then blend with water to make the pulp that they mold into their own rustic artisan paper. They use dyes to make different colors of paper and then fashion products that range from greeting cards, agendas, gift bags, picture frames, bookmarks, and much more. The products are adorned with dried leaves and flowers that the women collect in the mountains of their village, San Pedro de Vilcabamba in the southern province of Loja in Ecuador. The women say that they enjoy the work they do because it allows them to earn an income that is solely theirs, not having to be completely financially dependent upon their husbands for the total household income. Additionally, the type of work they do allows them to develop and showcase their artistic expression. This is revealed in the fact that no two products are ever the same and each reveals a signature that is unique to each of the 9 associates. This group empowers the women by reinforcing their self-esteem through artistic production as well as giving them a sense of economic autonomy. The women have no plans of quitting in the near future and are currently looking to take on more associates and expand their business, eventually with the hope of exporting products to the US. For more information and pictures of their products, please visit this website that showcases the 23 de Junio women’s group.
During the Summer of 2009 Stacey Burton conducted research on Indigenous Women in Nicaragua. She examined gendered violence on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, with a primary focus on the indigenous Miskitu and Afro-descent peoples. Her specific area of focus was on the multiple discourses in which gendered violence is performed. Western ideals of gendered violence takes on different forms, involving religion and spirituality, restriction to reproductive choice, economic limitations, and lack of access to education and healthcare. Living mainly in the large indigenous city of Puerto Cabezas in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), Stacey had access to resources at both of the local universities as well as access to regional and local government officials. During her time in Nicaragua she was able to visit several villages with populations ranging from 200 to 1000 people. Trips to the villages allowed her to access smaller populations as well as document the lack of financial support in the villages. She was able to understand how inter-familial sexual abuse takes place and the district connection to lack of education among young women. During her trip she interviewed female government officials, police officers, teachers, mothers, adolescent females, and Honduran leaders. Additionally, Stacey attended several different summits and understand to connection to land rights and land resources. Recently in 2010 Stacey conducted research in La Mosquita, Honduras continuing her research on gendered violence with a focus on rates of HIV/AIDS and the link to economic violence.

For more information about the Miskitu and Miskitu women please visit the following websites:
This link talks about the economic situation of the Nicaraguan Miskitu and how climate change is affecting their lives:
This link takes an in depth look at the lives and issues facing the Nicaraguan Miskitu. (In Spanish)

Field Report
Pedro Dos Santos: Phd Candidate in Political Science, University of Kansas
- Junior visiting researcher for the Research Center and Graduate Program on the Americas (CEPPAC) in Brasilia, Brazil.

Pedro has spent the last year in Brazil conducting interviews with Brazilian politicians at the local, state and federal level. As part of his dissertation, he has used the 2010 countrywide elections to survey some of the reality and reasoning behind women’s representation in the post-Lula state. On March 10, he presented at the Center’s Merienda Brown Bag Series. You can view that presentation, complete with multimedia resources, here:

"The Year of the Woman?" The 2010 Brazilian Elections from President to State assemblies" (under March 10, Pedro Dos Santos presentation)
International Women’s Day in its 100th Anniversary

By: Lindsay Dudley, Outreach Staff, and Nancy Compier, Outreach Coordinator

International Women’s Day is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year, marked be celebrations around the world. This celebration of women takes place every year on March 8th and gives women an opportunity to celebrate their triumphs and solidarity in advancing the feminine cause. International Women’s Day is historically “rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.”¹ The United Nations included gender equality and women empowerment as Millennium Goals and currently sponsors programs that work towards achieving these outcomes. In July 2010 the United Nations additionally created “UN Women” which focuses exclusively on women’s rights and provides education and resources to empower females across the globe. Recently former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet was appointed the Director of “UN Women” and addressed the importance of International Women’s Day.

Each year an increasing number of women in Latin America not only honor International Women’s Day with events, marches, and celebrations but also actively work towards gaining greater gender equality and female empowerment within their daily lives.

Here are some highlights of International Women’s Day Celebrations in Latin America:


Celebrating “El Dia de la Mujer” in Latin America:

LAS MUJERES DE JUÁREZ

In honor of International Woman’s Day in Mexico, the Mexican Congress proposed presenting a bill to place femicide in a separate penal code. Additionally, the United Nations coordinator in Mexico called on the national government to categorize and legally define femicide as a separate and “particularly intolerable” crime.

Femicide in Mexico has become a controversial issue, stemming from the estimated 400-5,000 women who have been killed or have disappeared around Ciudad Juárez from the early 90’s to present day. The victims have been predominantly young, between 12-22 years of age and most of them work in the maquiladora (sweat-shop) industry. The majority of these cases have never been solved and the issue has largely been ignored in recent years due to the drug wars afflicting the country. According to Human Rights Watch, the increased clandestine nature of the border and the growing role of women in the workforce are partially to blame for this tragic phenomenon.

On March 8th, families of the victims and activists alike took the opportunity to commemorate those who have died and to call on the Mexican government for action.
Las Madres y las Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo

In Argentina, women from the activist group “Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” took International Woman’s Day as an opportunity to honor their beloved female President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. They marched to the Pink House (similar to the White House in the United States) and presented her with a graphic in which she is depicted next to Evita Perón under the words “love and passion will lead us to triumph”.

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an activist organization made up of mothers and grandmother’s whose children disappeared during Argentina’s Dirty War between 1976 and 1983, the years of the military dictatorship. The children of those who were “disappeared” were often adopted by military families and never knew who their real parents were or had the opportunity to meet their biological relatives.

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo fight for the right to be reunited with their lost loved ones. For the past thirty years, the group has held demonstrations at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, wearing white headscarves bearing the names of their lost children. The group claims about 30,000 people who disappeared during the Dirty War still remain to be found, however the military officially places the number closer to 9,000.

Cristina Kirchner and her late husband and former President, Néstor Kirchner, have had a close relationship with the activist group. Néstor took office in 2003 and took several measures to decrease the influence of the military and punish those who had been accused or torture and other such crimes during the Dirty War. His wife, and current Argentinian president, Cristina is loved and respected by the group, as is demonstrated in the graphic they presented her.

**Graphic Presented to President Kirchner,**

### Youtube Links:

- Las Mujeres de Juarez
- Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo

### Sources:

- Agencia Oficial de Noticias en la Republica de Argentina (TELAM)
- The Christian Science Monitor
Lesson Plans: Women in Latin America
Compiled by Catherine Butel
Outreach Coordinator

Lesson Plans

From the Yale New Haven Teacher Institute lesson plan “Latin American Women: Finding New Heros” by D. Jill Savit speaks about the differences in males and females in Latin culture, tracing the differences back to the Iberian Peninsula with its Moorish-Islamic tradition, through the settling of Latin America, on the Hispanics in the U.S. After a somewhat historic summary of what being female in a Latin setting has meant and means today, three women are presented in biographical sketches: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (Mexico), Eva Peron (Argentina), and Julia de Burgos (Puerto Rico).

This lesson plan is recommended for Social Studies, History, and ESOL classes, grades 6 through 12; and Spanish classes, grades 9 through 12.

In the lesson plan series “Latin American literature” by DePaul University students will read some of the most important works of modern and contemporary writers from Latin America covering politics and women’s issues. The lessons are based on 75 minute sessions.

These lesson plans fit into a course on Latin American Literature for sophomore or junior English or Spanish majors at a community college as all texts are available in Spanish and English. It could easily be adapted for a high school setting for an English or Spanish class or for a cross-discipline Latin American Studies class for Social Studies.

Interactive Websites

This an interactive website that is a simple map quiz on the Americas targeted for grades 3-5.

El Laso next month: Spotlight on Argentina

Check out next month’s issue for articles on:
- Argentinian culture, music, movies, and food!
- Local Argentinian restaurant reviews
- “El Secreto de sus Ojos”, 2010 Academy Award Winner for Best Foreign Film, review

And as usual, check out our calendar of events, lesson plans, and electronic resources!

“El Secreto de Sus Ojos” will be shown at the University of Kansas, on Wednesday April 13th. For more information, see page 8!
Teacher’s Workshop: 
Music, the Arts, and 
Migration

KU Area Studies Centers will be hosting an international workshop, “Music, the Arts, and Migration” on April 16, 2011. This workshop will cover broad areas of the topic, such as human migration in connection to arts in both ancient and modern aspects and we will discuss how arts are transformed under the influence of new cultures, for how the arts migrate with the help of modern technology.

The workshop is free of charge and offers a chance to earn professional credit. In addition to earning professional credit, you may elect to be a “teacher-scholar” associated with our center and earn $100!

To qualify, you must: a) attend the workshop, b) create a lesson based on the workshop, and c) use the lesson in your classroom. We will feature your lesson plan on our website and share it with other teachers.

When: April 16th, 8:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Where: The Lawrence Arts Center,
940 New Hampshire St

TO REGISTER CONTACT:
creesoutreach@ku.edu

Meriendas!

The Center's Merienda lectures, provide an opportunity for students, faculty, community members and visiting scholars to share their experiences and research in Latin America. The speakers represent a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. Presentations typically last 40-45 minutes and allow for audience questions at the end. A simple lunch of rice and beans is served.

Bailey 318 12-1pm Free
April 7th: Clarice Amorim
April 14th: Veronica Garibotto
April 21st: Javier Valerio
April 28th: Silvia Gonzalez

Click here for a full Spring schedule of

INFORMATION ON OUR TEACHER REACH-OUT
“CELEBRATING CINCO DE MAYO
AND NETWORKING SESSION”

AND THE:
LATIN AMERICAN FEATURE FILM FESTIVAL
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KU Latin American Feature Film Festival!

Please join KU’s Latin Americanist community and come see these award winning, Latin American feature films. There will be a question and answer session after each film showing. Admission to all films is free.

**El Secreto de sus Ojos (The Secret in their Eyes)**:  
When: Wednesday April 13th, 7 p.m.  
Where: 100 Stauffer-Flint

**El Camino (The Path)**:  
When: Friday April 15th, 7 p.m.  
Where: 100 Stauffer-Flint

**O Ano em que Meus Pais Saiiram de Ferias (The Year My Parents Went on Vacation)**:  
When: Wednesday April 19th, 7 p.m.  
Where: 300 Strong

**Paraiso Travel**:  
When: Friday April 21st, 7 p.m.  
Where: 300 Strong

Click on the hyperlinks to view more information on each film!

Teacher’s Workshop  
When: Saturday April 30th, 10:00 a.m.-2:p.m  
Where: 318 Bailey Hall

Come and join us for this semester's “Teacher Reach-Out: Cinco de Mayo Workshop and Networking Session.”

The workshop will feature a lecture over the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Mexico by Jason Rapp, a PhD candidate in Spanish & Portuguese. This will be followed by featured lesson plans that can be used in the classroom to teach about Cinco de Mayo. The Latin American Studies Outreach Program will also be unveiling our new digital and physical resources that are available through our office. Teachers will learn about our cultural trunks, newly renovated interactive website, as well as have an opportunity to socialize and network with fellow area teachers.

Mark your calendars for the Teacher Reach-Out workshop and come to socialize and learn the REAL story behind Cinco de Mayo. Additionally, we will be providing authentic Mexican cuisine for lunch as well as sponsoring a raffle for teachers to win souvenirs and take back to the classroom.

To RSVP please contact: lindsay.dudley@ku.edu