

Overcoming Challenges to Providing Shelter in a Mexican Border City

12th Annual IVAT Conference
San Diego, CA
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Ciudad Juárez, MX

- Located on the US-Mexico border
- Adjacent to El Paso, TX
- Within 50 miles of Las Cruces, NM



Ciudad Juárez, MX



Ciudad Juárez, MX

- Population: 1,300,000 in 2005
- Is a gateway to the north but also a destination for many looking for jobs
- Large *maquila* (manufacturing) industry requires a large labor force
- Population is very transitory and with many who have recently migrated to the area
- Much of the population is from another area or foreign

Incidence of IPV

- “Some studies have estimated that between 30% and 60% of Mexican women have suffered from some type of violence from their partner.”
 - Source: Rivera-Rivera, et al. (2004). *Prevalence and determinants of male partner violence against Mexican women: A population-based study.*
- Higher rates of family violence may exist along the border.
 - Suggests that there may be higher levels of stress in transition areas.
 - Protective factors may no longer be in place.

Gender-Based Violence in Juárez

- High levels of gender-based violence, including many homicides, over the last 10 years.
- According to a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2003, there have been 268 femicides since 1993.
- Estimates as to the number of femicides vary by source, but the numbers do not vary substantially.
- These murders remained largely unsolved, though there are many theories.
- An additional 250 women were reporting missing.

Gender-Based Violence in Juárez

- Approximately 76 of the killings appear to be serial in nature.
- The report noted a link to an overall climate of violence and intimidation of women, including domestic violence and sexual assault.
- “A common denominator with respect to most of these crimes is the inability of the victims or their families to obtain prompt access to effective judicial protection.”
 - Source: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. 2003. *The Situation of the Rights of Women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico: The Right to be Free from Violence and Discrimination.*

Gender-Based Violence in Juárez

- Homicides rates for women have risen at double the rate for those of men, and is “disproportionately higher than similarly situated border cities.”
 - Source: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. 2003. *The Situation of the Rights of Women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico: The Right to be Free from Violence and Discrimination.*
- 2000 morbidity data on family violence:
 - Ciudad Juárez (164)
 - Tijuana (86)
 - Source: General Directorate of Information and Performance Evaluation. SSA 2000

Gender-Based Violence in Juárez

- Problems with the investigations that were identified by the study:
 - Delay in initiating investigations
 - Response that was not comprehensive
 - Lack of care in handling evidence
 - Disrespect towards the victims' families:
 - Suggestions that victims were prostitutes or somehow incited the violence through provocative behavior
 - Delay in DNA testing
 - Lack of information provided to victims' families

Centro de Protección "de Mujer a Mujer"



Challenges Faced

- Culture that minimizes family violence
- Lack of awareness of family violence
- Minimal support from government and law enforcement
- Lack of resources for victims
- Lack of financial support
- Minimal net-working with other service providers

Culture that Minimizes Family Violence

- Societal Attitudes
 - Single and working mothers
 - Are seen as crazy or prostitutes
 - Towards female gender
 - Gender-based violence on the border
- Familial Attitudes
 - Family is seen as a “chain that should not be broken”
 - Victims are often encouraged to be better wives
 - Frequently minimize family violence
 - May be unwilling (or unable) to intervene or provide assistance
 - Blame victim for not being able to make the relationship work

Culture that Minimizes Family Violence

- Church
 - *La Sufrida* (see next slide)
 - Victims are encouraged to stay in the relationship
 - Victims are rarely told that abuse is wrong
- Medical providers
 - May minimize injuries related to family violence
 - Are required to report cases of family violence
 - This can lead to retribution by the abuser
 - This is especially dangerous in a system where there is inadequate protection for victims

Some Important Concepts

- *La Sufrida*
 - Abuse is often seen as a trial or tribulation which must be endured for religious reasons (as payment for past sins)
- Consequence is that victims are less likely to leave abusive relationships

Lack of Awareness of Family Violence

- Little exposure to educational or other information on domestic violence
- Lack of awareness of resources, such as shelters, for victims of family violence

Minimal Support by the Criminal Justice System

- Police
 - The victim may receive little support from the police
 - Includes lack of response and minimizing
 - Lack of effectiveness in police response
 - "He spent a night in jail and then returned home the next day angrier than ever."
- Legal System
 - Guilty until proven innocent
 - *Abandono del Hogar* (see next slide)

Some Important Concepts

● *Abandono del Hogar*

- Mexican law which states that abandoning one's family is a crime
- Leaving the home for more than 15 days is considered abandoning the family
- Penalty includes jail time
- Frequently used as a threat by abusive husbands
- Wives fear that they will lose the right to their children

Few Resources for Victims

● *Employment*

- There are not many opportunities for employment
 - Even fewer are available for women
- Some employment options may involve risk, such as leaving an isolated work place late at night
- Victims may have few job skills

● *Other services*

- Few other services, such as housing, welfare support, or child care assistance are available
- Lack of awareness of those resources that do exist

Minimal Net-working With Other Services Providers

- Few other domestic violence providers in the area
- Shelter frequently operates in isolation



Centro de Protección

"de Mujer a Mujer" A. C.

Calle Tomochic # 1455 Col. M. Valdez C.P. 32590
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PRESENTACION DE LA VIOLENCIA CONTRA LAS MUJERES EN JUAREZ MEXICO

TRABAJO QUE REALIZA EL REFUGIO DE MUJER A MUJER

*PRESENTATION ON THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN
JUAREZ MEXICO*

INCLUDING WORK THAT IS BEING DONE BY "MUJER A MUJER"

Información general/ General information

- Este refugio fue creado para mujeres y sus hij@s sobrevivientes de violencia familiar o domestica.
- **The shelter was created for women and their children who are survivors of domestic or family violence.**

Información general/ General information

- Iniciamos el mes de octubre del año 2001, por un grupo de personas que se identificaban con las mujeres maltratadas de nuestra ciudad.
- **The shelter was founded in 2001 by a group of persons who identified with the abused women of our city.**
- Aunque la visión nació en el corazón de su fundadora la Sra. Angela Fierro Sandoval.
- **The vision for the shelter was born in the heart of its founder, Angela Fierro Sandoval.**

Datos/Statistics

- Se les brinda servicio a un numero de 45 a 55 mujeres por mes con un promedio de 2 niños por mujer.
- **Services are provided to 45 to 55 women per month with an average of 2 children per woman.**
- Anualmente se atiende de 1300 a 1500 casos entre mujeres y menores.
- **Annually between 1300 and 1550 women and children are provided assistance.**

Personal/Staff

- Contamos con un personal especialmente mujeres que han salido del ciclo de violencia, incluyendo la directora general.
- **We depend on our staff, many of whom are women who have exited the cycle of violence, including the director.**

Personal/Staff

- De igual manera contamos con personal profesional voluntario para las diversas terapias y servicios.
- **We also depend on professional volunteers for various services, including therapy and other services.**

Personal/Staff

- Se ha creado un cuerpo o comité ejecutivo para la asistencia a los servicios que ofrece nuestra institución.
- **An executive committee has been created to oversee the services that are offered by the institution.**

Características/ Characteristics

- En primer lugar se les brinda la protección debida para proteger su integridad física y la de sus hij@s.
- **The shelter first and foremost offers protection in order to protect the physical safety of the woman and her children.**

Características/ Characteristics

- La mayoría de las ocasiones estas victimas son canalizadas por dependencias gubernamentales de los tres niveles de gobierno y por supuesto trasladadas por unidades de seguridad publica municipal.
- **Most of the time the victims are identified by government employees and of course by law enforcement.**
- La mayoría de nuestras usuarias proceden de / **the majority of our clients come from:**
 - La Sec. De Seguridad Publica Municipal = 50%
 - La Subprocuraduría de Justicia, etc. = 20%
 - Casa Amiga (otra institución de la ciudad/another shelter in the city) = 20%
 - Publico en general/General public = 10%

Beneficios/Benefits

- Al momento de ingresar a nuestro refugio nos hacemos responsables de que se sientan bien, de que se les de la atención debida, de asegurar que reciban los beneficios de nuestro centro.
- **Upon entering the shelter the staff makes sure that clients are feeling well and gives them the necessary attention to assure that they receive the benefits of the center.**
- Por ejemplo brindamos un espacio digno y seguro.
- **For example, we provide an appropriate and secure space.**

Beneficios/Benefits

- Alimento, vestido, calzado y todo lo básico mientras permanece con nosotros.
- **Food, clothing, shoes, and all basic necessities are provided.**
- Diversos servicios como: terapia psicológica, asistencia legal, asistencia Medica, consejería de mujer a mujer etc.
- **Other services include therapy, legal and medical assistance, and peer counseling**

Especificaciones/Specifications

- Sobre nuestro servicio es de manera gratuita y muy humana, ya que son mayormente atendidas por otras mujeres que han salido del ciclo de violencia.
- **Our services are free and humanitarian, in that the woman are attended primarily by other women who have left the cycle of violence.**

Especificaciones/Specifications

- El centro les ofrece de manera complementaria localizarles un empleo.
- **The center offers assistance in finding employment.**
- Las señoras tienen la opción de tener un empleo y reunir fondos para el momento de su egreso.
- **The women have the option of having employment and saving funds for when they depart.**

Otros detalles/Other details

- Los niños de las usuarias que trabajan son atendidos por otras usuarias que por su misma situación legal y de riesgo no pueden salir del refugio.
- **The children of the clients who work are cared for by other women who, due to their legal situation or the level of risk, cannot leave the shelter.**

Otros detalles/Other details

- A pesar de que en la mayoría de las ocasiones siempre nuestro refugio se encuentra a su máxima capacidad, no le negamos el ingreso a las usuarias que necesitan de nosotros, aunque mayormente tenemos hacinamiento.
- **In spite of the fact that most of the time our shelter is at maximum capacity, we do not deny entry to clients who are in need of us, even though we often experience overcrowding.**

Costo de Operación/ Costs of Operation

- El costo de operación es alto, y desafortunadamente el Gobierno no da la aportación necesaria para cubrir los gastos, razón por la cual no tenemos personal remunerado, solo voluntarios.
- **The cost of operation is high, and unfortunately the government does not provide enough to cover costs. For this reason we do not have paid staff members, only volunteers.**

Costo de Operación/ Costs of Operation

- De antemano se requiere un presupuesto de \$3,000,000.00 mexicanos para operar de manera digna y responsable
- **The shelter requires a budget of \$3,000,000 pesos (approximately US\$270,000) to operate in an appropriate and responsible manner.**

Costo de Operación/ Costs of Operation

- Con un deseo que no ha muerto esperamos que se cruce en nuestro camino esa persona o personas que se sientan comprometidas con esta problemática en nuestra querida Ciudad Juárez.
- **With the hopes of avoiding a tragic outcome, we hope to cross paths with those persons who are committed to resolving this problem in our beloved city of Ciudad Juárez.**

Disponibilidad/Availability

- Las 24 horas del día los 365 días del año
- **Available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year**
- **Números de teléfonos disponibles las 24 hrs. del día/24 hour telephone numbers:**
 - (656)647-1792
 - Cel. (656)222-1690
- **Dirección/Address:**
 - Calle Tomochic #1455
 - Col. Manuel Valdez
 - C.P. 32590 Ciudad Juárez, Mex.



“Con nuestros mejores deseos y a nombre de todas las mujeres maltratadas que atendemos muchas gracias.”

-Atte: Angela Fierro Sandoval y Comité Ejecutivo

“With our best wishes and in the name of all abused women whom we assist, many thanks.”

-Angela Fierro Sandoval and the Executive Board

Presenters

Angela Fierro de Bustillos

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Questions?