

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS A SOLUTION  
TO INEQUALITY AMONGST RURAL WOMEN  
OF EL SALVADOR: AN EXPLORATORY  
CASE STUDY**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study examines the importance of implementing projects that bring about economic sustainability into the lives of rural women in El Salvador e.g., micro development, micro finance, livelihood projects. Furthermore, this research looks at the importance of equality of genders and how equal opportunity of employment can help economies improve their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to the impact of implementing all available work forces (men and women workers versus only male workers).

#### **Preview of Chapters**

Chapter two will begin with the review of the literature. This review will discuss the various agencies and organizations that have contributed to aiding rural women in El Salvador through their humanitarian assistance efforts e.g., micro development, micro finance, livelihood and/or gender equality rights projects. The Literature Review is divided into two distinct segments: Agencies in El Salvador and Non-Profit Organizations in El Salvador. Both agencies and organizations have similar focuses and goals regarding the wellbeing and development of rural women. Their assistance towards rural women has been documented by professional scholars, supporting aid groups and by their public relations department. Each author expresses how aid groups accomplish

their tasks, overcome their limitations and struggles and the methods they choose to implement in order to best aid rural women of El Salvador e.g., micro development, micro finance, livelihood and/or gender equality rights projects.

Furthermore, chapter three describes the procedures and methodology that were implemented in order to understand rural women's actions, thoughts, concerns and life patterns. This chapter will also explain how the researcher went about in depth interviews with the selected agencies and organizations concerning their methods, plans, goals and limitations.

Both qualitative and quantitative research were implemented in order to grasp a full understanding of how aid groups operate and the reasons why Salvadoran rural women struggle to make ends meet. In this section, the reader will learn how the field notes were implemented and how the questions from both the Rural Women's Survey and Agency/NGO Personal Interview were prepared. In addition, this chapter will explain how the transcription records were completed and translated along with the Women's Survey and Agency/NGO Personal Interview results; both settings were explained along with how the investigators gained entry. In addition, examinations of both positive and negative aspects of the procedures were implemented. Moreover, the method of choice chosen for the selection of subjects will also be discussed along with the validity and reliability of the participants' interviews and procedures.

The Findings section will determine if rural women who had the opportunity to implement sustainable development projects into their daily routine also had improved living conditions and if they had a more positive outlook on life when compared to women who had no exposure to sustainable development projects. The results will also

demonstrate that marriage or cohabitation brings about additional children and more responsibilities in the home. The Aid Group Personal Interview results will determine how agencies and organizations see their efforts and if they are effective in assisting rural women achieve economic sustainability and equality.

Both Findings and Summary/Conclusions chapters examine all results and stipulate what future research should be conducted in order to best assist rural women. The purpose of this research is not only to help Salvadoran rural women but also to assist agencies and organizations all over the world best aid women who are struggling to achieve equality and economic sustainability.

### **Background Information**

Women in developed nations have had a positive affect on trade and economic growth with their contribution of skills and services; this in turn has helped improve the global economy. Nevertheless, developing nations like El Salvador have faced gender inequality which consequently created a wall between men and women in the workforce. Rural women in developing nations are more then capable of achieving economic sustainability, but a change of thought from the locals (machismo societies), plus full support in the area of sustainable development is needed from their governments, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in order to help women climb up on the economic ladder. This can be achieved by creating projects that help reach economic sustainability such as: micro-finance, micro-development and projects that promote women rights and equality.

It is important to understand the roots of poverty so we can understand why women continually struggle to sustain themselves and their young. Inequality amongst the poor is a crucial factor that helps us understand the force behind poverty and the effect the poor have on policy changes and on the market. Statistics show that 70% of the 1.2 billion people living in poverty are women and girls as oppose to 30% of men and boys (United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, 2008). President Reagan once said, “We declared war on poverty and poverty won” (Dixon and Macarov, 1998, p. 1). As far as history dates back, poverty has been present in our societies. Our governments and humanitarian aid organizations have devoted much of its resources and funding to help diminish this problem. However, have their methods been successful and is their targeted group (men, women and/or families) helping sustain developing nations?

*109<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session, H.R. 3605: A Bill “...More than one billion people worldwide live on less than \$1 per day, and another 1.6 billion people struggle to survive on less than \$2 per day, according to the World Bank. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the United States joined more than 180 other countries in committing to work towards goals to improve life for the world’s poorest people by 2015” (Global Poverty Act of 2007/HR 1302 IH).*

Poverty, “... a basic lack of the means of survival; the poor are those who, even in normal circumstances, are unable to feed and clothe themselves properly and risk death as a consequence” (Dixon and Macarov, 1998). As United Nation world leaders meet to discuss ways on how to better the lives of the poor and needy they understand that every nation’s framework is different and unique because its people, culture and belief systems differ. Nevertheless, those who are considered to be of need lack the basics to survive within their environment.

In developing nations like El Salvador, rural women are the primary caregivers and are limited in their opportunities for advancement. It can be assumed that many are expected to take care of the household as well as take care of their young but not contribute by generating income. It is important to note that an increase in the standard of living in developing countries cannot be attained if nation states neglect women by not incorporating them into the work force.

Rural women of developing nations typically lack schooling and training, which in turn limits what they are able to offer to the economy because their skills and abilities are restricted. King and Hill (1993) reaffirm that educational gender gap exists in developing countries; which indicates that women's educational level in developing nations are farther behind than men. Based on the knowledge of the culture by the investigator, it can be presumed that Salvadoran rural women are part of that educational gap. King and Hill also affirm that education improves people's health and their productivity. Therefore, if education is implemented into the lives of the poorest citizens', then it can be concluded that this group receives a larger gain by implementing education into their lives.

The United States Agency for International Development (2005) realizes that not having access to land, credit, and loans are a limitation to women in developing nations. On the other hand, if they are able to obtain formal land title, credit and loans then they still may face restrictions and their say in financial matters may be negligible. Furthermore, it is important to note that when women lack access to power they may also be dealing with violence within the home. Across the world, gender-based violence

causes more deaths and disability amongst women between the ages of 15 to 44 as oppose to cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war put together (Waterfront Online, 2007).

Rural women of El Salvador are at the highest levels of risk due to female inequality because they are at the lowest income bracket. Their lack of education and their lack of training in a specific trade labels them as the most vulnerable and indecisive female group in the nation. El Salvador is ranked as the second country with the most femicide cases in all of Central America (United Nations, 2007). According to the United States, Department of State, Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights and Labor (2001), women of El Salvador suffer from cultural and social discrimination and have minimal economic opportunities.

El Salvador continues to be a highly populated country along with its informal economy and diminishing foreign aid (due to the nation's annual GDP increase). This can be alluring to micro enterprise lending programs (Cosgrove, 2002) as well as maquila settlements in rural areas of El Salvador. Maquilas have been controversial debates amongst women's rights groups and NGOs concerning how to aid women who work long days in the maquilas and receive a wage that may or may not amount to more than \$2.00 per day. According to Kathy Bougher (2003), maquila factories prefer to employ young women because it is believed that they are easier to manipulate and unlikely to unionize.

Throughout the centuries, women have been viewed in their socio-cultural environment as inferiors to men. Their access to education, employment, political and household decisions have been monitored by the male head of the household (machismo

outlook); which in turn places women in low-skilled, labor-intensive employment that outputs lower earning wages. “Gender bias may reduce economic growth rates...gender discrimination may discourage workers from entering a job to which they are best suited, thereby lowering the value of output” (Busse and Spieldmann, 2006, p. 362). Women in developing nations struggle to have a say in their communities and households because they are expected to stay at home to take care of the children and the house chores (machismo outlook). Based on my knowledge of the culture, many Salvadoran rural women are not allowed to contribute financially towards the family unit, which in turn, limits their authority in the home.

Furthermore, Cosgrove (2002) explains that many Salvadoran rural women are not allowed to manage their own income (if they work outside the home); spending decisions are made solely by their husbands or in some cases by a male relative. For that reason, Cosgrove suggests that an increase in income for a family (due to additional income from the women) does not necessarily indicate an increased spending power for a rural woman. In addition, if rural women were given the opportunity to generate income that does not imply that they are given a greater chance to prepare for the futures, or participate in decisions making strategies that affect their lives and the lives of their children. Therefore, an increase in family income does not imply that rural women have a say in how they choose to approach community issues that could lead to achieving personal goals and economic sustainability.

Another issue Salvadoran women face is their lack of education and literacy abilities due to the decade-long Civil War of El Salvador (1980-1992). During this period, most children (now adults) were not attending school. According to Castillo

(2001) only 20% of school age children were attending secondary school and 45% of the population (15 years of age and older) were documented as illiterate. Many of the Civil War survivors are rural women. This in turn implies that most rural women did not receive a secondary education; and it is highly probable that they are also illiterate. Both secondary education and reading skills are important factors that allow individuals to be successful in their economy.

### **Problem Statement**

As economic hardships continue to trouble Latin America, El Salvador finds itself stuck in an economic slump. In 2007, the World Food Program (WFP) assessed El Salvador and concluded that not only are they the most densely populated country in Central America (approximately 6.6 million inhabitants) but they are also ranked as the 103<sup>rd</sup> country in the United Nation Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). The WFP also announced that El Salvador is a poverty stricken country with poor education and poor health care which affects the Salvadoran population. In particular, it affects the rural regions where water and electricity are harder to access.

Furthermore, it is important to note that El Salvador is a country that has faced multiple natural disasters which decrease the improvement of an individuals' standard of living (in specific: rural women who are of the lowest class rank and who find themselves to be dominated by a machismo society). The WFP (2007) sees few options remaining for projects in the area of livelihood, due to the limitations (in particular, natural disasters) El Salvador continues to face. Salvadorans who have been traumatized by

these natural forces (in specific, rural citizens) are left with minimal hope and much distress. Nevertheless, if agencies and organizations were able to work together to help increase an individual's standard of living (focusing on rural women, which will utilize all available workers due to limiting exclusion of gender or class) then improvements will become visible (even if it is only seen at a low scale).

For all the reason previously explained, this research will focus on examining the extent of the relationship between the status of rural women and social inequality by gender through sustainable development. Could inequality of gender be alleviated through the implementation of micro-credit, micro-development and livelihood projects that bring about economic sustainability and income generation for all rural women? As noted before, a key element that will aid in answering these questions is by obtaining each government's (of developing nations) full support, which in the past, has neglected and rejected the positive influence rural women could have on their economy. If nations such as El Salvador would place the issue of equality at the forefront of their agenda, then economic growth could increase at a higher rate and sustainable development could be viewed as a feasible task.

This research will discuss issues that concern women's rights; as well as, how sustainable development could assist rural women in achieving economic stability. Projects prepared by agencies and organizations that are currently active and are positively impacting lives of rural women of El Salvador will also be examined. Moreover, this research will attempt to illustrate how projects that lead to economic sustainability are alleviating poverty and inequality issues amongst rural women of El Salvador.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between the status of women and social inequality by gender through sustainable development; as well as by examining the extent researchers, governments and NGOs have advocated and promoted equality among rural women of El Salvador. Since this is a topic of interest in governments and NGOs agendas, researchers are being funded specifically to help find ways to diminish inequality amongst women in the workforce across developing nations.

A multi-method research study (qualitative and quantitative) was conducted for both rural women and agencies/organizations. An open-ended survey was created for the Salvadoran rural women to identify how their living patterns and daily routine affect their economic development. Furthermore, this survey was generated to gain a better understanding of the impact that sustainable development has had on the lives of those who have had exposure to it.

In addition to the survey, a Personal Interview sheet was also created for all the participating agencies and NGOs. This allowed the investigator to see if economic sustainability had been achieved due to the implementation of these projects, and to determine if these projects (livelihood, micro-finance and/or micro-development) were effective in diminishing inequality amongst women.

This study analyzed and critiqued participating agencies and organizations that are active in El Salvador. The researcher's goal was to determine if these agencies and organizations had been successful in assisting and improving the lives of Salvadoran rural women on a daily basis through their strategic methods, projects and mission.

The agencies being analyzed were as follows: The Office of the First Lady of El Salvador, The World Food Program (United Nations), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The organization analyzed is as followed: Asociación Organización Mujeres Salvadoreñas Por La Paz (ORMUSA) *Association of Organized Women for Peace* (ORMUSA). Identifying if both agencies and organizations had a positive impact on rural women and development within El Salvador was the focal point to this study.

### **Research Questions**

The main questions that were discussed in the conclusion of this report are as follows: to what extent is there a relationship between the status of women and social inequality by gender through sustainable development in El Salvador; and to what extent have nations (e.g., El Salvador, USA and UN) and NGOs helped rural women of El Salvador remove the callus of inequality? Furthermore, are they helping women reach economic sustainability and what actions have been taken to help reach these goals?

### **Significance of Study**

A study of this kind could be very beneficial to all rural women of developing nations who have been mistreated, belittled and viewed as non-resourceful due to their lack of education and skills. This study also could benefit those who are interested in protecting women's rights and those who are interested in seeking a career in research and development (R&D) in the area of women inequality and sustainable development.

Primarily, this study informs the reader that agencies and NGOs are helping Salvadoran rural women in the area of micro-finance, micro-development and livelihood. This research also looks to agencies and organizations that have continued to provide strategic methods, workshops, projects and educational literature; and based on my knowledge in aid group assistance, these forms of aid can be viewed as possible methods of achieving economic sustainability in the lives of rural women. It is important to note that the support agencies and organizations offer provides easier access to community development banks that offer small loans. Secondly, this study informs the reader of what the Salvadoran government is doing to help rural women fight poverty and inequality. Lastly, this study informs the reader as to how agencies and organizations are assisting women by helping them fight against inequality through a focus on education and accessing information concerning gender issues, labor organizations and helping women understand the laws that protect their rights as workers.

### **Conceptualizing Poverty**

It is assumed that Salvadoran rural women live in poverty, and for this reason all rural women consulted were classified as poor and therefore, qualified to be interviewed. According to Anríquez and Stamoulis, Italian research economist from the Agricultural Development Economics Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2007), there are 1.2 billion people around the world who are considered to be in a state of extreme poverty and rural areas make up 75 percent of those people. Therefore, it is appropriate to state that if rural inhabitants are in a state of extreme poverty, then their dependency lies on agriculture and natural resources to maintain

survival; and sustainable development programs can be used to help rural communities escape poverty.

It is also appropriate to state that rural El Salvador is the most impoverished area of El Salvador and that rural inhabitants depend highly on natural resources and agriculture to survive. In 2005, The World Bank documented poverty levels of El Salvador and concluded that poverty was predominantly rural. They confirmed that over half of the rural inhabitants were poor and over one-third of the Salvadoran poor depended on agriculture for their central source of income. In addition, young rural women are at a higher risk of living in poverty due to their limited education and high pregnancy rates. The World Bank (2005) also expressed their concern on the growing teen pregnancy rates; they understand that this not only impacts young women's schooling and family life but it also impacts their economic future. For this reason, it can be assumed that these young women have made up a large portion of the rural women population in El Salvador.

Furthermore, we can conclude that poverty and rural women are linked together. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the World Bank's (2008) terminology as a way to define poverty scales and sustainable development. There are various elements in the definition of poverty; nevertheless, the investigator's beliefs and views align with the way in which The World Bank defines these terms. The definition of terms are defined by various authors and are acknowledged and understood in this manner by individuals engaged in these specific fields e.g., rights activist, foreign aid workers, government agents, etc. All authors provide a clear and concise meaning of the terminology as used

in this study and coincide with the researcher's beliefs in terms of meaning and its significance:

Absolute poverty: a number of people who are not able to meet basic needs for survival (World Bank, 2008).

Femicide: A specific term for misogynist killings of women (Gutierrez, 2006).

Machismo Societies: A male dominated society (Cranford, 2007).

Poverty: a basic lack of the means of survival; the poor are those who, even in normal circumstances, are unable to feed and clothe themselves properly and risk death as a consequence. More than one billion people worldwide live on less than \$1 per day, and another 1.6 billion people struggle to survive on less than \$2 per day (World Bank, 2008).

Sustainable Development: a method used to generate economic growth by distributing its benefits equitably which in turn helps improve the environment as opposed to destroying it (World Bank, 2008).

Total Poverty Gap (TPG): total amount of income necessary to lift every person above the poverty line (World Bank, 2008).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Relating to Women Inequality and Sustainable Development**

Specific agencies and organizations were reviewed and are as followed: The Office of the First Lady of El Salvador, The World Food Program (United Nations), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Asociación Organización Mujeres Salvadoreñas Por La Paz (ORMUSA) *Association of Organized Women for Peace* (ORMUSA), <sup>1</sup>Mélida Anaya Montes Women's Movement (MAM) and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, El Salvador Office. All of these agencies and organizations are registered as "Aid and Relief" agencies and/or non-profit organizations in El Salvador who in the past, have had a positive impact on rural women and development within El Salvador. Each agency and organization has specific goals and objectives they aim to complete which coincides with their organizations time frame for each project.

Rodriguez-Carmona (2004) understands that organizations can have an impact on social capital and on local organizational learning. Therefore, if the impact is occurring

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<sup>1</sup> Mélida Anaya Montes" Women's Movement (MAM) and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, El Salvador Office were contacted multiple times via e-mail and via phone. However, neither organization responded back; therefore, these organizations appear only in the literature review and not in the outcome of the Personal Interview Sheet.

in rural areas of the world, then the probability of women being the recipient is highly possible. Under this kind of organizational leadership, women can be trained to become leaders of their communities e.g., local representatives, health awareness directors and overall educators. Also, when referring to rural women, if organizations were to focus in the following areas: nutrition, human rights awareness, leadership training workshops and sessions concerning laws on domestic violence then it can be concluded that organizations are bound to see positive outcomes concerning women rights, their wellbeing and their economic sustainability.

### **Agencies in El Salvador**

#### **The Office of the First Lady of El Salvador**

The Office of the First Lady is lead by Ana Ligia de Saca as the First Lady of the Republic of El Salvador, along side with the department of Secretaria Nacional de la Familia *National Secretary of the Family*. Both of these offices believe in giving every individual the opportunity to achieve human development, especially to those individuals who lack resources and to those who are in a state of vulnerability due to their living conditions. These government offices are able to achieve this through the “Crecer en Familia” program: *Growing with the Family* (En Familia).

According to En Familia, Woman’s’ International Day and the National Day of Human Rights for Women has been a focal point for both the Office of the First Lady and for the Secretaria Nacional de la Familia. These offices have seen women improve their income status by enabling and initiating projects that are income generating into their communities.

The Integral Attention Program for the Salvadoran Family has several focal points e.g., providing nutritional support to the elderly, children, the poor and drug and alcohol rehabilitating individuals. Furthermore, providing immediate assistance to single mothers and to the vulnerable population in the area of construction of homes and basic furniture is imperative to their agency. In addition, this program has allowed single mothers to enable themselves to become self-sustained through micro-development and livelihood projects. They are able to accomplish this by providing these women with sewing machines, industrial stoves and materials to help them run their own businesses (Crecer en Familia).

The Office of the First Lady along with El Instituto Salvadoreño de la Mujer *Salvadoran Institute for Women Development* (ISDEMU) have united to form several goals regarding the well being of Salvadoran women. One of their objectives is to promote female participation at the local level by promoting sustainable development, micro-development and projects that bring about livelihood e.g., loans that help provide the necessities for a small business. They are also focused on projects that deal with laws of equality and equal opportunity in the work force as well as protecting women against discrimination through human rights laws. Another objective they present is the development and application of workshops into the communities that teach all family members about interfamily violence and ways to prevent brutality (Memoria de Labores, 2006).

During the 2006 term, the Office of the First Lady and ISDEMU were able to provide 1,300 single mothers with equipment, supplies, materials and workshops that encouraged female development through entrepreneurship, environment and sustainable

development, civic participation, local development, human development and a stop to interfamily violence. The endowment of these supplies e.g., industrial stoves helped them start their own micro businesses as well as helped improve their economical situation. The selected women resided in 23 communities located in the municipalities of extreme poverty within El Salvador (Memoria de Labores, 2006).

### **The World Food Program (United Nations) WFP**

According to the WFP, building for the future is a key objective in helping aid the poor throughout the globe. Helping construct better homes, schools and irrigation channels are fundamental necessities in battling against hunger and poverty in the world and in El Salvador (WFP, 2008).

It is important to note that the poor are limited in what they are able to acquire due to their lack of financial means. The WFP (2008) has had success in covering the short-term food needs of the poor. They have also provided the needy with workshops and resources to help them build new homes as well as assisting them in learning new agricultural methods. In conclusion, the WFP has helped the poor purchase new technological advancements which in turn allows them to build better lives for their families and their communities.

The El Salvador WFP (2008) office is also responsible for the establishment and development of the WFP humanitarian hub for Central America. This office is intended to help support emergency response operations throughout Central America. One of the WFP goals is to aid victims of natural disasters by supplying the necessities for survival.

However, diminishing inequality amongst gender as well as helping the poor reach economic sustainability is also part of their agenda.

According to Wamsler (2007) natural disasters have increased drastically throughout the world and have continued to greatly affect low and middle income nations in terms of lives, cost of damage and repair to their infrastructure and their economy. In the year 2005, there were approximately over 360 disasters worldwide. This brought about 92,000 deaths followed by 160 million affected civilians due to these unforeseen calamities. Furthermore, the world wide natural disasters of 2005 damaged approximately 160 billion US dollars worth of material possessions (this does not include reconstruction cost).

According to the Projected 2007 Needs for WFP Projects (2007) the national rate of chronic malnutrition of El Salvador lies between 19.4 percent and 47 percent. This is partially due to the 2005 Hurricane Stan disaster and the 2005 Santa Ana volcano eruption. Both of these natural disasters managed to vandalize the country's agriculture and productive infrastructure which in turn brought about food insecurity amongst the natives, especially those who farm for a living.

Sustainable development and livelihood projects are cornerstone projects for the WFP (2008) in helping to aid millions of rural farmers by educating them in the topic of managing their land by not over-exploiting it. The educational methods being implemented allows rural farmers (men and women) to reap a greater harvest which in turn, helps feed their families. Their goal is to weaken their views of cutting forests, over-grazing fragile rangelands, farming marginal soils and over-using water resources. The WFP uses food assistance to encourage farmers to increase their yields from the natural

resources they already have such as: terracing, tree planting, and soil/water conservation.

This in turn will not only help protect the environment but also their overall health.

The Projected 2007 Needs for WFP Projects (2007) also establish that women are the primary caregivers, educators and reliable individuals concerning the future and safety of the children. In their 2007 program, “Development of Human Capital through a School Feeding Programme in Pre-School Centers and Elementary Schools” their goal is as followed,

*“Beneficiaries assisted...are children...who live in the rural areas...most children...live in a chronically food insecure situation...this activity has the following specific objective: improving the concentration and learning capacity of children by providing meals before classes...the country programme works towards the consolidation of the school feeding programme to ensure its continuity after its completion at the end of 2007. Substantial progress has been made to improve the quality of the project with food and nutrition training for parents and mothers’ having surpassed the annual target...WFP supports and promotes an enhanced role for women in all planning activities and decision-making committees.”*

**United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

According to Construyendo Presupuestos Nacionales con Equidad de Genero en El Salvador (2006), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) believes the gap between men and women will only diminish when governments from Latin America design a program that shows that women and men were made differently. This can be achieved by incorporating mechanisms that eliminate any type of gender discrimination. Additionally, governments need to properly manage the finances of the gender equality design to forgo a society that does not tolerate discrimination. The UNDP understands that even though many Latin American countries have signed treaties and laws into their

constitutions, there still seems to be an equality gap between men and women; the UNDP monitors certain concerns relating to discrimination. For instance, in some Latin American countries, women experience violence from their partners. Moreover, in many cases young ladies are forced into sexual intercourse which can bring about adolescent pregnancy. The UNDP also notes that single parent homes (single mothers) are becoming more of a trend which brings about additional responsibilities and financial burden to their households. Furthermore, women continue to be confronted with employment discrimination, which can lead to settling for unstable and informal jobs. In conclusion, the UNDP states that some Latin American nations have increased in the numbers of female assassinations. These concerns are on the UNDPs agenda as well as revealing methods that will bring about equality and economic sustainability.

USAID (2005) states the following, “UNDP...advanced the Gender in Development focus...begun incorporating a Gender Equity Perspective...known as Gender Mainstreaming” USAID goes on to say that UNDPs projects and activities examine neutral topics and seek ways to minimize inequality by transforming El Salvador’s social relations. UNDPs goal concerning equality is by focusing on Gender Equity Perspective which can result in equality of both sexes.

The 2007 UNDP Annual Report (2007) states that the 2005 Hurricane Stan disaster combined with the 2005 Santa Ana volcano eruption created distress to 14,000 people in 22 communities. The UNDP along with United Nations (UN) agencies and specific NGOs were able to combine their assistance and help civilians rebuild their homes and aid those who lost their businesses by approaching it through livelihood projects. UNDP affirms, “...worked directly with...the most affected municipalities to

create preparedness plans for future disasters...through training 500 village leaders on how to develop and maintain the plans....resources and technical assistance supported the...Government in establishing a monitoring and alert system.”

Martinez (2006), a representative from both the UNDP and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) of El Salvador brings forth the issue of gender profile of the Salvadoran economy. He brings light onto the issue of house chores and how women are predominantly doing most of the work while men take little to no participation in assisting. Furthermore, while men are predominantly running small to large businesses, women are the ones who manage and operate micro-enterprises and micro-finance projects. In conclusion, USAID (2005) declares that Salvadoran women outnumber men in self-employment at the rate of 54% to 46%.

#### **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

USAID: El Salvador Office previously conducted research that focused on gender biases, which is an important issue in their agency. This research was determined to have had a positive impact on the designs and activities of USAID's 2006 blueprints. Furthermore, as USAID: El Salvador Office continued to strategize their yearly objectives, they noted that one of their provisions was to continue supporting the intervention centers which are used by all types of women seeking support regarding non-criminal conflicts and disputes. With this said, for the year 2006, USAID focused on providing training that aimed at encouraging men and women to participate in civil society so they would be able to impact their communities in both micro and macro levels (USAID Operational Plan, 2006).

This agency focuses on many aspects of family and economic development. Their goals are to provide economic development and humanitarian assistance. Economic development can not be achieved without laborers. Regrettably, citizens in many developing nations are leaving their countries in search for higher wages; the outcomes of these results can be tragic to a nation state. In addition, if remittance is a reason why a country's GDP has increased drastically, then the results can lead to masses of workers depending on monthly allowances. This in turn can motivate workers to retire from being a laborer, which also creates a loss of local employees.

Rural Salvadoran families are greatly affected by remittances; it has brought about economic security to many rural families. Remittances have affected the rural economy in both positive and negative manners. It has primed some family members to be less motivated to work the fields (both men and women) or to be employed at all (any sector). These results have generated a labor gap in the labor market for unskilled and low-skilled Salvadoran laborers. On the other hand, many Salvadoran semi-skilled and skilled workers have left the Salvadoran economy in pursuit of higher pay in northern countries. Lamentably, this leaves a high demand for medium to low skilled laborers in many rural sectors of El Salvador (Harberger, 2007).

### **Non-Profit Organizations in El Salvador**

#### **Asociación Organización Mujeres Salvadoreñas Por La Paz (ORMUSA)** **Association of Organized Women for Peace (ORMUSA)**

ORMUSA, a women's' rights NGO was established in 1985 with the sole purpose of assisting women through becoming leaders of their communities and of the Salvadoran

nation. When the ORMUSA staff applies strategic research along with the promotion of local development and human rights then it is their understanding that gender equality and women empowerment can be achieved. Furthermore, ORMUSA focuses in promoting sustainable development so the standard of living of both women and their families is above the poverty index (ORMUSA, 2004).

According to Economic Opportunities and Labor Conditions for Women (2003), Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas (ORMUSA) is an active NGO in El Salvador who is involved in helping protect women rights, their health and how the environment affects their every day lives. This organization not only dialogues with women individually concerning their rights and opportunities but they do this with the employers, government officials and groups who are actively involved with women rights. Their focus is to bring together all groups and coming to an understanding that women necessitate better working conditions.

In addition, ORMUSA has taken additional steps that could help researchers develop better strategies in dealing with women's rights and inequality. ORMUSA has developed surveys that are aimed at women who work for maquilas and the free trade zones. These surveys are documentations that can help governments develop better policies that deal with women's working conditions.

### **The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh: El Salvador Office**

Many micro-entrepreneurs in developing countries do not have the necessary inventory for a successful business. Many times these businesses lack the right size or color of a finished commodity the investor demands. In turn, this may result in a small

net income which prevents entrepreneurs from having a large inventory for future sales (Todaro and Smith, 2005).

The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is a micro-finance organization and a community development bank that offers small loans to the poor without the expectations of receiving collateral. For the impoverished, accessing credit allows an individual to attain a larger inventory which in hand provides the distributor with the necessary items for the success of their business. Credit allows an individual to become an established vendor (Todaro and Smith, 2005).

Access to tools, animals and small capital goods can help a businesses improve productivity. By diversifying crops investors are able to move towards commercial farming through cash crops. In turn, they are now able to sell it on the market and obtain profit. Access to credit allows the poor to learn skills, purchase raw materials and tools (fabric and sewing equipment) that can help facilitate the first steps of starting their own micro-business. Providing credit to the poor while minimizing the risk of wasting resources is a key factor that will help fight poverty in developing nations. This method of financial assistance was developed by allocating five individuals to become mutually responsible for one another. This allowed formal peer-to-peer group size intimacy and accountability (Todaro and Smith, 2005).

The Grameen Bank revealed in their 2003 Grameen Bank Historical Data Series that out of the 6.67 million borrowers, 97% were women and according to their Credit Delivery System, the recovery rates of these loans were at 98.85%. The success of this non-profit organization is partially due to the dedication the Grameen representatives have towards the cause. Grameen representatives go door-to-door (borrowers homes)

and work with “informal people” or as we know it, people who are illiterate and unforthcoming towards banks and its procedures.

Another element that has led to this success is the peer oversight borrowers have with each other. Their accountability has brought a 90% success repayment rate. The Grameen Bank have been able to prove success because they have understood peoples’ needs and believed they valued and could make it as micro-entrepreneurs. When a borrower proves to the bank they are honorable and trustworthy, then the bank will increase the borrower’s loan. This allows micro-entrepreneurs to increase their inventory which in turn gives them advantage in the market because they are now able to compete at the level of other micro-entrepreneurs who have capital.

According to the Grameen Bank of El Salvador’s web page (2007), Thirty-one percent of the population of El Salvador (2.1 million people) live on less than \$1 a day and 3.2 million people (48.3 percent of the population) live below the national poverty line and El Salvador is ranked as the 103<sup>rd</sup> nation on the Human Development Index. However, micro-financing is comparatively developed in El Salvador when compared to its neighboring countries, with 14 percent of its estimated demand being met.

### **Mélida Anaya Montes’ Women’s Movement (MAM)**

According to USAID Office of Women in Development (2003), Mélida Anaya Montes (MAM) is an NGO in El Salvador that is helping educate women who have had their labor rights violated in maquilas or in free trade zones. They are providing women with free educational activities and legal assistance e.g., workshops, media outreach distribution of pamphlets that highlight women labor issues, accessibility to

legal advice and counseling for earthquake victims. This has been possible due to grant proposals that have been implemented to help educate and assist the women who are in need of protection and higher education.

Mélida Anaya Montes (MAM) has also partnered with the Grameen Bank of El Salvador to help aid the poor. According to the Grameen Bank (2007), as of March 2006, they would have given MAM a total loan of approximately \$97,000 to help support the installation of automated management information system software. This would have helped MAM update their accounting systems as well as provided automated accounting and portfolio management capabilities and other banking functions to their facilities.

### **Summary of Literature**

The articles reviewed are positive examples of how projects concerning female rights and sustainable development can help rural women achieve equality. There are many agencies and organizations that assist the vulnerable populations; nevertheless, if governments were able to place this issue at the forefront of their agenda, then agencies and NGOs could help assist the needy in developing nations with ease and accuracy because they would be able to bypass government corruption, and government limitations when entering a nation or region that needs aid.

Virgínia Brás Gomes, Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Portugal understands the importance of governments' need to place women and poverty at the forefront of their agenda. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Gomes spoke at the United Nations 62nd Session of

the General Assembly as a representative to the European Union. She addresses all concerns to Madam Chair of the European Union (Gomes, Nov. 6, 2007).

*“Women worldwide face discrimination which hinders their full enjoyment of human rights, prevents them from unleashing their full potential and excludes them from equally benefiting from development-related services...the EU underlines the importance of strengthening the UN gender architecture...deficiencies arising from the current fragmentation of the gender architecture system, which is also incoherent and under-resourced, need to be addressed. Given the particular vulnerability of women and girls to poverty, we fully share the view that comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies, allowing...participation of women in policy-setting and decision-making, are needed to address the feminization of poverty, to ensure their human rights and enhance their contribution to economic and social development”.*

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Inequality amongst rural women in developing nations is not uncommon; rural women battle this on a daily basis. Many Latin America nations are ruled under a machismo society by which men dominate women's lives. According to Cranford (2007, p. 431), the machismo society is a male dominated society which implies reverence and respect towards Latino men. However, scholars use the term machismo to symbolize gender inequalities amongst men and women. The women in Cranford's study identified the term machismo as, "...a set of ideas and power relations based in separate, and unequal, activities of women and men...some women described machismo as the idea that women should be subservient to men in the home".

Gender inequality plays a large role in women's economic development progress. Knowing the obstacles and methods that agencies and organizations need to overcome and take in order to minimize the gender/inequality gap is crucial; and that is what the agencies/organization Personal Interview sheet sought to accomplish. Rural women of El Salvador were surveyed concerning the issue of inequality, sustainable development projects and their lives composition. The methods used to acquire the answers from both the agencies/organizations and the rural women are both quantitative and qualitative.

## **Data Collection**

### **Aid Groups**

The sample sizes consisted of four governmental aid groups and one NGO. During the months of May and June 2007, the investigator researched aid groups through an extensive on-line search on governmental sites, and current educational magazines and journals that highlighted groups who had reportedly helped rural women in El Salvador close the gap of inequality and who had also helped rural women become sustainable through sustainable development projects. In June of 2007, all relief groups were contacted prior to the primary investigator reaching the field in July.

Moreover, these groups were elected by employing a convenience, purposive sample (this sample was chosen due to the lack of accessibility and difficulty in acquiring interviews). Due to their magnitude, volume and their annual reports, we can conclude that in a given year, thousands of women are affected by the involvement and endeavors the selected organization and agencies provide (United States for International Development, 2006; World Bank, 2005; World Food Programme, 2008). The weight and relevance of the aid groups were determined by the amount of assistance and the capacity their accomplishments provided. The evaluation of reached women and the geographical region the organization chose to aid (rural versus urban) was also taken into consideration.

These groups qualified to be in the study because the investigator wanted to research the impact governmental branches and NGOs were having on women when referring to their rights, poverty issues and development projects. The selected groups

are as followed: The World Food Program (United Nations), the First Ladies Office, UNIFEM, USAID and ORMUSA. The relevant characteristics of this study were determined by the size of the aid group being evaluated and how many rural women they were able to reach and support. Dollar and Levin (2004) studied the shift in relief aid over the past 20 years and concluded that it is more beneficial to give aid to the poorest countries that practice good economic governance e.g., El Salvador.

These aid groups are acknowledged as groups that support equality of gender and economic sustainability (important to note: due to the sampling methods used, the participants may or may have not received assistance from the aid groups). The sample size was not limited to a specific number of agencies and organizations. However, because of the magnitude and volume each aid group held, we can affirm that hundreds of rural women were being affected by each of these groups involvements.

In order to comprehend the impact that these aid groups are having on Salvadoran rural women, the researcher needed to evaluate, examine and analyze the accessible annual reports as well as any grants, donations and allowances given to them by government divisions, MNCs and donors. These funds assist women in diminishing inequality and increasing economic sustainability. The responses from the interviews were decoded into tables that explained aid groups' patterns and outlines.

### **Rural Women**

Rural women were the second sample size and were chosen by employing a snowball sample (unless money is exchanged, in a foreign country, gaining trust is difficult when viewed as a reporter or researcher). Therefore, any women living in a

rural area qualified for this study. The primary investigator approached multiple rural districts in El Salvador by employing a snowball sample and with the assistance of the secondary interviewer, the study acquired 61 interviews. The secondary interviewer also used a snowball method to acquire interviews. Furthermore, since this issue pertains specifically to the developing nation of El Salvador, the demographic region was strictly within the boundaries of the Republic of El Salvador.

### **Research Procedures and Instruments**

The research questions that formed the basis for this study come from both the personal interview sheet (aid groups) and the survey (rural women). The overall theme of the personal interview sheet asks agencies and NGOs if they are doing what they set out to do (aiding rural women). Furthermore, the overall theme of the survey asks rural women the extent of assistance the implemented development projects have had on their lives and if it has brought about a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

Questions from the personal interview sheet and the manner as to why they were obtainable is explained first and the questions from the survey which were directed to rural women of El Salvador will follow.

### **Agency/Organization Questions and its Objective**

The records below summarize the questions that were asked and the purpose for asking those particular questions. As stated before, in each instance respondents were at liberty to comment on each issue.

**Question 1:** Why does the agency/organization focus on sustainable development? This was important to determine due to the topic of the research. The investigator perceives that economic sustainability could be achieved by implementing projects such as these and could help women achieve socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

**Question 2:** Could they describe one of their projects and how it operates? This question allows the researcher to gain depth of the agency/organization being interviewed as well as permitting the investigator to define what type of sustainable project the agency/organization was involved in.

**Question 3:** Does it involve rural women? If so, in what way are women involved in their projects? The research focuses on rural women; therefore, it is vital that the aid group direct partial or full attention on rural women for this research to have validity.

**Question 4:** Has their agency/organization seen improvements in the area of assisting rural women of El Salvador through the project they describe? This question allows the researcher to gain depth of the activities the aid group was involved in and the impact they were able to have on rural women. If they are able to provide the most current annual report and/or any documentation that demonstrates their efforts then this would also bring another form of validity to the research.

**Question 5:** Are the rural women they aid from “remittances” towns and has that had a positive or negative effect on their efforts? Furthermore, is it more difficult to aid women who have income generating from abroad? These questions allow

the researcher to identify if the women that they are trying to assist are receptive to their efforts since these women have additional income coming in from abroad. This may or may not have removed them from the classification of extremely impoverished or impoverished individuals.

**Question 6:** Has this aid group noticed a change regarding the personal lives of the women they have helped? The investigator understands that this question is rather personal; this allows the subject to express how they see their efforts of assisting rural women and if they have had positive impacts on women's lives.

**Question 7:** Does the agency/organization focus on environmental concerns? If yes, then what is being done to assist in this rising problem? Furthermore, have the projects they've implemented considered being both economical and environmentally sustainable to the lives of rural women? Developing nations' battle poverty as well as maintaining their land and natural resources e.g., trees, clean water and proper garbage disposal. It is assumed that this may be due to lack of funding for technological advancements that help maintain the environment. Therefore, these questions allowed the researcher to see if the aid group had implemented the concern of the environment into their mission statement and if they have helped women improve their lives and the lives of their loved ones through environmental education.

**Question 8:** What type of sustainable development projects is the agency/organization involved in and could they describe them? Furthermore, what type of sustainable equality projects is the agency/organization involved in? This type of questions allows the researcher to gain depth of the type of projects

the agency/organization are implementing and what approach they are choosing to take.

**Question 9:** Is it beneficial for the investigator to know what aid groups are planning on doing in the near future concerning rural women? This question allows the researcher to develop new inquiries for future research and it allows the investigator to see the direction the agency/organization is taking.

**Question 10:** Could they state the level of difficulty it is to access funding from governmental agencies (this may include, but it is not limited to the El Salvador government, the USA government and the UN). This opens avenues that may not have been available to the general audience due to lack of accessibility, confidentiality the agency/organization may have with the governments they are partnering with.

**Question 11:** Could they state the level of difficulty it is to partner with organizations who are involved with rural women and development. This question also opens avenues that may not have been available to the general audience due to the lack of accessibility and confidentiality the aid group may have with other agencies and/or organizations they are partnering with.

### **Rural Women Questions and Purpose of the Question**

It is important to note that the terminology used in the survey is simple and to the point. Most Salvadoran rural women lack primary education and may not know how to read and/or write. King and Hill (1998) speak of the educational gender gap that exist in developing countries; this in turn implies that women's educational level in developing

nations may be limited to minimal reading and writing skills. For these reasons the researcher was encouraged to simplify the language usage. In turn, this brought about accurate and precise responses. Therefore, the following questions in table III-I present a glimpse of the type of questions that helped formulate the makeup of Salvadoran rural women and their life styles.

**Table III-1. Rural Women Questions and Objectives**

El Salvador Journaling File System 2007		Thesis Journaling July, 2007
#1	<b>Marital Status: 1: Single/never been married</b> <b>2: Married</b> <b>3: Cohabiting</b> <b>4: Widowed</b> <b>5: Divorced</b> <b>6: Did not discuss marital status</b>	It is important for this study to know each woman's marital status. This allows us to forecast what type of changes occurred after giving up their independency; that is, if their status is not single.
#2	<b>At what age were you married?</b> Age married _____ Never married _____ Cohabiting since _____	It is important for this study to know if Salvadoran rural women have a companion and at what age this change took place.
#3	<b>Circumstances of the marriage</b> <b>1: Positive experience</b> <b>2: Negative experience</b> <b>3: Both positive and negative experience</b>	Each marital circumstance could determine if rural women's life style has changed for the better. It is important to note that there may be some women that will state that there has been no change in their lives; therefore, this is taken into account.
#4	<b>Changes that have occurred in your living conditions since your marriage?</b>	Can children, better/worst living conditions, having more/fewer responsibilities impact the lives of women?
#5	<b>Are you a mother?</b>	Can being a mother affect the way a mother views life?
#6	<b>Amount of children and their ages</b>	Can the amount of children a woman has impact her quality of life; and can the kids' ages show us a maternity pattern amongst rural women? Since this research does not concentrate on child bearing, the investigator will only show the ages of the youngest and oldest child.
#7	<b>Condition of children</b>	Does having children in school imply that these homes have a better quality of life versus a family that can't afford to have their children in school. Factors that limit a family from enrolling their child in public education are as followed: lack of money, no available transportation to and from school and a

**Table III-1. Rural Women Questions and Objectives**

El Salvador Journaling File System 2007		Thesis Journaling July, 2007
		need for additional hands to work the land.
# 8	<b>Would like to have more or few children?</b>	Does having few or many children impact women's outlook on life and are rural women being impacted by western society in terms of "less children is better for your health e.g., less stress, as well as more economical".
# 9	<b>Hours worked around the house per day</b>	Knowing how many hours a wife or mother spends at a home can show us if these women have time for a job to help contribute towards the household income.
# 10	<b>Time spent doing other work</b>	Do rural women have time to get a job due to their way of life or is cleaning and taking care of the children taking up all their time?
# 11	<b>Employment</b>	Does being employed affect women's living condition in rural El Salvador?
# 12	<b>Type of employment</b>	Does the type of employment such as: farm work, business employee, self employment in the agriculture sector, or having any type of temporary work affect how a woman reacts to economic development or economic impact in the country.
# 13	<b>Circumstances at work</b>	How have women's circumstances at work impacted their view on human rights and equality? In the survey, heavy manual labor and strictness at work are being classified as poor circumstances and no stress at work is being classified as excellent working conditions.
# 14	<b>How they earn money and/or food for their family</b>	This is important for the study because it will help us be aware if rural women are dependent of others for financial support or if they are supporting their families as the breadwinner.
# 16	<b>How much income is generated per day</b>	This will give us a better understanding of the economic hardships women face in rural El Salvador, with the understanding that EL Salvador is a developing nation with a high poverty level (PPP \$4,999: this is with accordance to the CIA Word Fact Book).
# 17	<b>Receive financial assistance from the federal government</b>	Knowing the estimated % of rural women who receive fanatical assistance can help determine the increase/decrease in future assistance from the government.
# 18	<b>Loans</b>	Knowing the estimated % of rural women who receive loans from the government or the private sector can help determine if there has been an

**Table III-1. Rural Women Questions and Objectives**

El Salvador Journaling File System 2007		Thesis Journaling July, 2007
		increase/decrease in economic development.
# 19	<b>Receiving financial support (remittances) from friends or relatives in other countries</b>	Knowing if rural women are receiving remittances can help determine how many family members are abroad. Also, it is important to note that people in developing countries are familiar with the term remittances since it can become a weekly or monthly allowance on their behalf.
# 20	<b>Frequency remittances are received</b>	Knowing the frequency the remittances are being received can help determine the impact these financial remittances have had on their household and if they receive enough to begin investing into the economy.
# 21	<b>Economic impact remittances have had on their lives</b>	Knowing their responds to remittances can help determine if remittances are positively or negatively impacting their lives.
# 22	<b>Organizations, or personnel who are assisting their areas by teaching workshops to the local communities</b>	This is important for the study because it will help us be aware if rural women are being aided.
# 23	<b>What they have taught</b>	Have organizations come into aid by teaching them skills that will make them more profitable in the market, e.g., reading, writing, computer skills, broidery and/or farming techniques.
# 24	<b>Has this information helped you?</b>	This is important for the study because it will help us be aware if rural women have benefited by having outside assistance.
# 26	<b>If you could request any assistance what would it be?</b>	This is important to the study because it will help us know rural women's necessities.
# 27	<b>What in your life is most troubling for you?</b>	This is important to the study because it will help us know what is most troubling to rural women and what agencies/organizations can focus on in the near future. It is important to note that many agencies/organizations attempt to aid specific groups by choosing what they believe is the most important need for that group. However, the group being aided is the best educator in terms of what is the most important thing for that group needs.

## **Interviews and Circumstances of the Interview:**

### **Aid Groups**

The aid group interviews were conducted in July, 2007 in an office style setting (private, one-on-one) with the following instruments: a personal interview sheet, a tape recorder and/or paper and pencil (See appendix B). These instruments helped validate the questions of this study. Furthermore, the information these interviews reveal could become a tool for aid groups who continue to research women inequality and economic sustainability. It is important to note that none of the questions in the personal interview sheet were considered personal to the participant. This in turn did not create any discomfort or distress during the interview and allowed each participant to answer the questions with ease. It is important to note that most of these participants elaborated on each questions and offered information that was not asked.

### **Rural Women**

The interviewing process involved the researcher reading a series of questions from a survey to the participant (See appendix A). However, the final question of the survey was an open-ended question that required an in-depth note-taking strategy since audio devices were not permitted. The researcher aimed to protect the privacy of individuals by using a coding system versus their legal names. Furthermore, the researcher gave them the opportunity to answer or not to answer questions that they may consider to be delicate and/or private. It is important to note that some of these participants chose to elaborate on the open-ended question and offered information that

may or may not have related to the main theme of the survey. The collection of this data occurred during the following time period: July-December, 2007.

### **Preservation of Each Subject:**

#### **Rural Women and Aid Groups**

The personal information concerning the identity of rural women was not given out. During all interviews, privacy was of the utmost importance and this setting style allowed anonymity. All selected agencies and organizations may or may not chose to state their name and/or title within their aid group, however, the researcher asked each representative to identify their affiliation to the agency/organization and their legal name if they were comfortable enough to do so.

### **The Study Site**

The country of El Salvador was selected as the study site for the following reasons. First and foremost, El Salvador is the country where the researcher was raised. This allowed her to turn to family and friends for assistance in accessing rural communities and established agencies and organizations. Moreover, since this is an international site, it is important to note that the researcher was able to reach rural communities with the assistance of a driver who was familiar with the rural areas and a truck or a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV). The researcher and the driver drove approximately one and a half to two hours from the capital (the roads were not paved and required a powerful vehicle to reach some of the sites) to reach a rural community. In

conclusion, rural women of El Salvador are a perfect example of women who are limited to education, job opportunities and are known to be of a vulnerable group since the majority of them are living under a machismo society by which men dominate and women submit.

The design chosen for this research study is qualitative in nature with quantitative components. The researcher also wanted an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern human behavior. The purpose of this design is to understand which aid groups are assisting Salvadoran rural women in their battle of inequality and what is being done so rural women can become economically sustainably sufficient.

This research is the most appropriate design for a topic such as this. The research being proposed will incorporate multiple statistical data that show how severe the problem of inequality amongst rural women of El Salvador is and how much is being done (sustainable development projects and women rights advocacy) to help assist rural women in El Salvador.

## **Design**

### **Qualitative**

The collection and analysis of the qualitative data was considered to be the primary source of data exploration for the agencies and organization selected. This was achieved by performing in-depth semi-structured interviews that were conversational and loosely structured in a one-on-one office setting (closed doors). This method allowed each participant to explore each question at their own pace without disruptions or distractions. Glaser and Strauss's Grounded Theory approach was pursued; the

researcher used this approach by formulating a substantive (setting specific) theory concerning what agencies and organizations are doing to achieve economic sustainability and equality in the lives of Salvadoran rural women (Charmaz 2004).

### **Quantitative**

The data collected for Sustainable Development as a Solution to Inequality Amongst Rural Women of El Salvador: an Exploratory Case Study was gathered from the following: scholastic text books, scholarly journals, on-line governmental sites, current educational on-line magazines and journals. All of these data sources highlighted and applauded agencies and NGOs that have helped women close the gap of inequality and who have helped improve the lives of Salvadoran women by implementing sustainable developed projects.

The chapters in the text books were all titled and/or subtitled “Gender Inequality and/or Poverty” or “Sustainable Development”. The internet articles were chosen when the documents acknowledged these key phrases: “Women/Global Inequality”, “Sustainable Development” and/or “Women Rights and Developing Nations”. The data collected was used to analyze the methods (livelihood, micro-finance and micro-development projects) used to determine if sustainable development was feasible.

The collection and analysis of the quantitative data was considered supplementary information on the sample of rural women selected. This was achieved by performing a one-on-one survey that asked a variety of questions concerning their habits and living patterns. The final question was qualitative in nature. It was left as an open-ended question which allowed the women to express themselves. The researcher was limited to

a paper and pencil method while interviewing rural women; therefore, the open-ended question was formatted as in-depth note taking rather than transcription.

## **Interviews**

### **Agency/Organization**

The data derived from a convenient, purposive sample and was selected by the researcher subjectively with the intention of obtaining a sample that appears to be representative of the given population. A purposive sample ensured a range of one extreme to the other e.g., government agencies and NGOs. The researcher interviewed a combined total of four agencies and one organization. The demographics of this sample consisted of agencies and organizations that aid rural women and aim at achieving community economic sustainability and gender equality.

### **Rural Women**

The data was derived from a snowball method approach. The researcher used logic and judgment when acquiring interviews for this given population. Rural El Salvador is large in landmass and full of inhabitants. For this reason, a snowball method was the most appropriate approach.

### **Notes for Agencies and NGOs**

The researcher included personal perceptions during each agency/organization interview. These notes helped define the collected data by assisting in its analysis. Each

participant's expressions and opinions were important in the final outcomes of knowing what difficulties and struggles they face when aiding rural women.

### **Agencies and NGOs Participant Selection Criteria**

1. Agency or NGO
2. Located in El Salvador
3. Focus in rural women development and equality
4. Willing to participate
5. Willing to reflect a minimum of 25 minutes of their time

### **Rural Women Participant Selection Criteria**

1. Rural Women (18 years of age or older)
2. Home address is in the rural areas of El Salvador
3. Willing to participate
4. Willing to spend a minimum of 10 minutes of their time

### **Recruitment**

#### **Agencies and NGOs Participants**

In order to obtain a variety of agencies/organizations, the investigator researched agencies and NGOs (purposive sampling) that worked extensively in El Salvador. Each agency and NGO researched is mentioned in the Literature Review. The investigator proceeded by e-mailing and/or calling each agency/organization researched to obtain a semi-structured interview. However, there were a few organizations that were not

interviewed due to failure of respondents to the e-mails and/or phone calls the researcher performed e.g., Grameen Bank: El Salvador Office.

### **Rural Women Participants**

As mentioned before, a snowball sampling was performed in order to recruit an adequate number of rural women participants. The researcher began by approaching woman who knew the investigators grandmother. From there on, the researcher continued to survey any rural women in those communities who were willing to spend ten minutes of their time with the investigator. The researcher also attempted to reach communities without knowing anyone; however, this approach gained the investigator only one interview. This method was problematic due to the fact that it is difficult to enter a community as a researcher when people do not have “you” on their agenda.

Other communities were also approached by the secondary investigator who was able to acquire additional surveys from rural women in rural communities. The secondary investigator also helped clarify the bilingual transcriptions of the personal interview sheets. The secondary investigator only took part in this portion of this investigation.

### **Interview Procedures**

#### **Agencies and NGOs**

The interviews were semi-structured in a closed-door setting in their office. This process permitted interviewees to present their information to the best of their knowledge. A contextual framework was created due to the set of questions that were

asked which allowed each individual to express their thoughts and attitudes towards what the agency or NGO was doing in relations to assisting rural women in achieving economic sustainability and equality. Each participant was provided with efficient time to answer all questions which in turn created quality interviews. Participants' names and place of employment can be used to excel this research.

The researcher understood that the participants may have thought of her as a foreigner (due to the fact that the only communication was via-e-mail and via-phone); however, once the interview took place, being Hispanic and being able to carry a formal conversation in Spanish with this educated group of individuals was all that mattered to them. The researcher used specific methods to adjust to their physical appearance. During each interview, the researcher wore her reading glasses and dressed in business attire for the sole purpose of adapting to the interviewees environment. The researcher's body language adapted to the respondent's body and was able to find their comfort level of communication.

### **Rural Women**

Rural women interviews were performed in a one-on-one relaxed setting. This permitted each participant to answer the survey questions to the best of their ability. Many chose to skip questions that confused them or that they felt had no relevance to them. The researcher expressed that it was okay to not answer questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. Each participant provided information concerning their living habits and their history. No participant was asked to share their name or personal information and each survey was documented by a numerical coding system.

The appearance the researcher had to take was a bit more difficult than the appearance she took with the business leaders. The researcher pulled her hair back, wore jeans and a t-shirt in order to not offend any participant (according to the researcher's knowledge of the culture, it can be offensive to wear shorts in El Salvador). She walked around with a pad and a pencil and left the backpack in the truck or SUV so there would be less attention drawn from the natives. The researcher walked slowly as if she had no agenda (according to the researcher's knowledge of the culture, this was out of respect to the natives) and gladly excused herself if the rural women did not want to be interviewed. The researcher also let them know in advance that there was no money involved by participating in the survey but that their responses could help bring attention back to the topic of assisting rural women achieve equality and economic sustainability.

## **Data Collection**

### **Agency and NGO**

With the exception of two participating agencies (for security reasons, audio-tapes or any type of electronic devices are not permitted into the United States Embassies where the USAID office resides and the First Ladies Office personnel requested to fill out the personal interview sheet on her own without the researcher in the room), all interviews were audio-taped with the participants knowledge and consent. The taping was used only for documentation and interpretation of every conversation as well as for translation purposes since the interviews were monitored in Spanish. Audio recording permitted a transcription to be generated and latter translated for accurate responses.

### **Rural Women**

Due to the state of impoverishment these women reside in, tape recording was not permitted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Therefore, the open-ended question was formulated through an in-depth note taking strategy. This allowed the researcher to obtain the maximum amount of information from the participating rural women without the use of an audio recorder. The investigator was able generate paraphrases from the information shared to her.

### **Agency and NGO Personal Interview**

The research instrument was done in a semi-structured interview format. Most questions derived from the information noted in the Literature Review regarding projects that bring about economic sustainability and equality for rural women. Furthermore, the personal interview sheet asked about the limitations each agency/organization faces when assisting this group and if environmental concerns play a role in their mission statement. These types of questions allowed the researcher to extract individual opinions, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about their work and the people they assist (rural women). In conclusion, the questions were formulated in a manner that allowed each participant to answer to the best of their ability which enabled them to contribute with insightful information. This in turn, brought about clarification and enhanced the validity of their responses.

## **Rural Women Survey**

The research instrument was done in a structured interview format. Some questions were derived from the information noted in the Literature Review regarding poverty levels, earnings and marital circumstances and marital status. Nevertheless, many of the questions generated came from the researcher and her committee. Most of those questions were demographic questions (e.g., are you married, how many children do you have, are you employed?) that do not upset or question the researcher's motives. These types of questions allowed the researcher to extract accurate responses from every participant.

## **Data Analyses**

### **Agencies and NGO**

The data that came from the audio-taped interviews, interview notes, and the reflection journal were triangulated for narrative-interpretivist analysis. The first step in this process was to review and translate the interview notes for a precise verification of the audio-tape interviews. This was done as a double-checking measurement tool due to the need of translating and transcribing the audio-tape recording. Secondly, the researcher transcribed all the interviews and examined the formulated data to identify key concepts and patterns within and between each interview. The researcher read and re-read all collected information from all the questions in order to understand the extent of their similarities and differences. This created a constant comparison analysis that helped to develop tentative conclusions, hypotheses, themes and observations within and

between categories (Glaser, 1965). The third process compared the notes and the transcription with the information recorded in the researcher's reflection journal.

### **Rural Women**

The data accumulated for the rural women came from the interview notes and the reflection journal. The first step in this process was to review the interview notes and see how their responses (which were to be translated) correlated with the answers the agency/organization gave in relation to rural economic sustainability and rural women's participation. The final step in this process was to take the open ended question and see how their responses reflected women's development and their views of equality, work and opportunities. This will help validate agency/organization work and their endeavors.

### **Validity and Reliability**

#### **Aid Groups**

The agencies and NGO interviews can be identified as being reliable and valid to the extent that their responses were consistent with the literature found in scholarly journals as well as with the annual reports of the agencies. The researcher made every attempt not to impact the responses of the interviewee. To address these concerns, all interviews were conducted in the participants' office; this allowed each subject to feel comfort and partial control of their surroundings. This was important to the investigator because research interviews have two active participants which imply that there is a partnership involvement. Interviews are a communicative performance and a conversational journey that expands and alters the meaning of the conversation (Miller

and Crabtree, 2004). With this said, a standardized set of questions were asked and if permitted, an audiotape player recorded the interaction between the researcher and the participant; otherwise, the investigator relied on in-depth note-taking skills to acquire the necessary data for this study.

### **Rural Women**

Reliability and validity were important elements to the research process; especially when it involved gathering the raw data from the rural women of El Salvador. Since this group filled out a survey in which the questions revolved around what their life is like on any given day, we can presume that the answers given were accurate and truthful. Only a handful of women decided to answer the open-ended question and the researcher was silent as they expressed additional concerns about their living conditions. It is important to note that the researcher did not distort any of the questions or possible answers given by the participants and that the researcher left out personal biases so the data would not be impacted by her thoughts and opinions. To address these concerns, all interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participant e.g., under a tree, their back yard or in their living quarters. Since this was a survey with no audio recording device, the manner in which the respondents answered the questions was not factored into the data collection, which decreased the standardization. However, a standardized set of instructions and questions were asked which allowed the researcher to acquire similar sets of answers from the participants. For this study, inequality of women is examined as well as how sustainable development projects have been effective tools in assisting women to rise from machismo societies.

## **Limitations of the Study:**

### **Agencies and NGO**

This study required the cooperation of agencies and organizations operating in a developing nation. For this reason, communication was intricate. The differences in culture and in positions complicated setting up a meeting with the aid group representatives. Agencies and organizations have a full schedule and fitting into their agenda was a difficult task to master. Some NGOs did not respond to my request for an interview e.g., The Grameen Bank. However, all agencies contacted responded to the request for an interview.

### **Rural Women**

This study required the assistance and cooperation of rural women. The researcher struggled to acquire participation when the women saw the investigator as an outsider (this occurred when the investigator traveled to the rural regions without knowing a single resident). However, when the researcher was introduced by an old friend (the researcher's grandmother) the women were more receptive to assisting the researcher with the survey completion.

### **Procedure**

The interview portion of this study was conducted in El Salvador. Overall data collection during this study was administered through the on-line government sites that were downloaded and through the articles chosen from educational and academic

journals that related to the topic of choice. The procedure of this research proposal is appropriate because it will allow the researcher to collect data from professors who are experts in these fields as well as the data from journals and magazines. After all of the data had been collected and reviewed, a more extensive literature review was implemented and the complete analysis of all data was administered in order to provide a logical understanding of each research question.

### **Summary**

This chapter explained the research design, the generalizability, the study site, the investigator's technique in which the subjects were selected, a discussion regarding the interviews and its process, and the validity and reliability of the selected method. The following chapter will examine and explain the research findings.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

As previously discussed, this study examines the importance of implementing projects that bring about economic sustainability into the lives of rural women in El Salvador. Furthermore, these findings help explain the importance of gender equality as well as the importance of equal opportunity employment so there may be noticeable improvements of the economy. If El Salvador took advantage of all the total available work force (men and women workers versus only male workers) then economic stability could be a viable outcome.

This study not only examines women's inequality and economic sustainability but it also focuses on the reasons why they are unequal and the reasons why they struggle to become self sufficient. Through the implementation of a survey, the investigator was able to explore Salvadoran women's life framework and their life patterns. This study examines the following aspects of Salvadoran rural women: marital status, changes in life do to marriage, work (domestic and vocational), assistance and difficulties. Furthermore, this study looks into the framework of aid groups and tries to understand their methods of assistance as well as the patterns they see in assisting rural women e.g., remittances, participation and family life structure.

The major findings of the study centered around the following themes: economic condition of women and marital status, whether women have access to employment, affordability and stability of bearing multiple children, affordability of child enrollment in a school and health care related issues. All of the previously mentioned issues were discussed and analyzed for thorough examination.

The results from the interview reveal that aid groups have had success in assisting rural women battle poverty. However, many agencies and organizations face the following issues: lack of motivation and desire from the participants due to incoming remittances. Many times, women don't see the need to educate themselves by learning a new skill because they have United States dollars coming in from overseas. Like some Latin American nation's, in the year 2001, El Salvador removed its currency (the colon) and adopted the US dollar. (For this reason, all data from the findings refer to dollar figures). According to Smith (2005) after El Salvador changed its currency in favor of the US dollar (8.75 colon to 1 US dollar), the country did not receive major criticisms but economic growth has slowed drastically due to the dollar devaluing. El Salvador faces a couple of obstacles since they adopted the dollar. Firstly, like Americans in the US, Salvadorans in El Salvador are feeling the effects of the drop in the US dollar and the rise in the cost of living e.g., gas prices, staple foods and commodities. Even though Salvadorans are not making more money, they still have to pay higher prices for food, gas and commodities. This in turn, brings about a greater scale of poverty levels throughout the nation. Furthermore, El Salvador has to compete with non-dollarized trading partners, which may guarantee that Salvadoran citizens will not have a wage increase any time soon.

## **Data**

Table IV-1 shows the characteristics of the sample by marital status. The table shows that most of the women were married and others were cohabitating. Furthermore, based on my knowledge of the culture, the practice of cohabitation in rural areas of El Salvador is common and may have had an impact on the way women view their circumstances and the way in which they responded to the survey questions.

**Table IV-1. Marital Status of Rural Women**

	Number	Percent
Single	11	18.0
Married	26	42.6
Cohabitating	22	36.1
Widowed	1	1.6
No Responds	1	1.6
Total	61	100.0

According to Emma Castro de Pinzon, a representing lawyer from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in 1994, 61% of unions in rural El Salvador were consensual but were not necessarily legal. Nevertheless, Table IV-1, affirms that 36.1% of the rural women surveyed are cohabitating with their mate, while only 42.6% of them are married. Due to the knowledge the researcher has concerning the Salvadoran society; many rural women see a need in attaching themselves to a male because this may bring about economic sustainability and offspring. It is important to note that only 18% of rural women classified themselves as being single, which emphasizes the need for unions in the rural areas. Pinzon's data and the research findings show that cohabitation continues to be a common practice in rural areas of El Salvador.

While conversing with Salvadoran rural women during the open-ended question, many stated their concern regarding the wellbeing of their children’s future. Table IV-2 reveals that only 44.3% of women could afford to have their children in school; these results can be somewhat alarming to a mother in a developed country. However, many parents in developing nations can not afford to send their children to school. It is not uncommon to see a child work for money. Based on my knowledge of the country; the Salvadoran Constitution prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14, however, it is not uncommon to see young children from poor families work as street vendors or to see children work alongside their parents in commercial agriculture. El Salvador is a country that exports coffee and sugar, therefore, it would not be uncommon to see kids work the fields during the harvest season.

**Table IV-2. Children in School**

	Number	Percent
Children in School	27	44.3
Children not in School	12	19.7
Not Applicable	4	6.6
Chose not to Answer	18	29.5
Total	61	100

This limitation (lack of money to support child’s education) relates to women’s economic conditions. One woman expressed the following, *“My desire is to see my kids receive a good education so when they grow up they can defend themselves and so they don’t have to go through the limitations and struggles I have gone through.”* In many instances, Salvadoran women undergo vulnerability due to the lack of financial means to support their young. One mother shared her concerns for her children, *“I would like to have more opportunities for work so we can continue to pay for our kids schooling.”* While another struggles to provide for her family each day, *“I am a single mother of 6*

*that must be fed.*” The World Bank (2008) declares that only 19% of Salvadorans continue education past high school and few rural women get the opportunity to attend college or a vocational school. During the open-ended question only one women out of the 61 interviewed stated that she was going to college and she thanked her uncle who lived in the US for sending her the money so she can further her education.

However, most rural women do not have the opportunity to continue their education past primary school; therefore, many have chosen to work and most were mothers of multiple children. Some expressed their concerns about their work obligations and families duties *“My job does not permit me to spend enough time with my kids.”* Even though for some, jobs may bring about small amounts of income, many women understand the difficulty that lies in finding a vacant job in rural areas since the majority of the occupations are located in the capital or larger cities in El Salvador. One woman proclaims, *“There are no maquilas here. We have to travel 1.5 hrs into the city to obtain a job.”* While another chose not to work at all, *“I’ve decided not to work because the money I made did not surpass the cost of what it costs to pay for food and transportation to get to work in the city.”* While another worries about the job market in her community, *“It is necessary to open up more jobs for our community.”*

Women have to balance marriage, jobs, house chores and children; therefore it can be assumed that with marriages and unions comes greater responsibilities. Table IV-3 shows the biggest life changes women face after they declare their commitments to their companion. Approximate, 21.3% of women believe that the biggest change after marriage was having children while 26.2% of women believed it to be additional responsibilities to their work load. Moreover, 16.4% of women believed that the

combination of children and additional responsibilities were the most difficult aspect of marriage or union. With accordance to the data, most women are reproducing at a slower rate than before; 77.6% of the respondents have less than four children. The assumption is: couples understand the expenses that accumulate when raising multiple children and at this point in time, it is no longer affordable to feed more than four children. One woman stated, *“My husband works but it is not enough to pay all the bills. He gets sick all the time so he goes months without working due to his health condition (liver, high blood pressure). We trust the Lord will help our situation.”*

Nevertheless, when the data from Desired Fertility were revealed (Table IV-5), the research concluded that most women either liked the amount of children they had (53.4%) or would like to have more children (29.3%). It is important to note that most of these women had fewer than four children and it can be assumed that most women have no regrets in having had children.

**Table IV-3. Changes in Living Conditions Since Marriage**

	Number	Percent
Having children	13	21.3
Better Living Conditions	2	3.3
Worst Living Conditions	2	3.3
More Responsibilities	16	26.2
Fewer Responsibilities	0	0.0
No Change	2	3.3
Children & More Responsibilities	10	16.4
Children & + Living conditions	3	4.9
Children & (-) Living conditions	2	3.3
Not Applicable	6	9.8
Chose not to Answer	5	8.2
Total	61	100

**Table IV-4. Employment Status**

	Number	Percent
Yes	35	57.4
No	23	37.7
Chose not to Answer	3	4.9
Total	61	100

**Table IV-5. Desired Fertility**

	Number	Percent
Want More Children	17	29.3
Want Less Children	5	8.6
Likes the Amount She Has	31	53.4
Chose Not to Answer	5	8.6
Total	61	100.0

Each table represents a part of each women's lives and we can conclude that these woman share common concerns about their future and the future of their children.

Every woman contributes to the economy in which ever way they can. Table IV-6 shows that 43.3% of women did not work or did not choose to answer about their income, yet 57.4% of rural women are employed. These findings indicate that many women are not only working but also taking care of the house chores and their family.

Furthermore, Table IV-6 indicates that 37.6% of rural women make less then \$5.75 a day and only 13.2% of them make \$10 or more a day. It is important to note that The World Bank (2008) documented the GNI per capita for El Salvador at \$2,540.00 and according to the results; the rural economy is significantly behind the urban economy. This could be due to the fact that out of the 61 women surveyed, 47.5% of them stated that they spend all day doing house chores (Refer to Table IV-7).

However, in many cases, the male income is not enough to support their family at the most basic level and few are fortunate to receive financial aid from abroad.

**Table IV-6. Income Per Dollar**

	Number	Percent
\$0.88	1	1.6
\$1.30	1	1.6
\$1.40	1	1.6
\$2.00	4	6.6
\$2.50	2	3.3
\$3.00	3	4.9
\$3.33	1	1.6
\$4.00	2	3.3
\$5.00	5	8.2
\$5.5	2	3.3
\$5.75	1	1.6
\$6.00	2	3.3
\$6.50	1	1.6
\$7.00	1	1.6
\$8.50	1	1.6
\$10.00	2	3.3
\$11.00	2	3.3
\$11.5	1	1.6
\$16.16	1	1.6
\$0.00	20	32.8
No Responds	7	11.5
Total	61	100

**Table IV-7. Hours Spent on House Chores**

	Number	Percent
All Day	29	47.5
When Available	3	4.9
11-16	5	8.2
6-10	8	13.1
0-5	10	16.4
Chose not to Answer	5	8.2
Not Sure	1	1.6
Total	61	100

The findings confirm that external assistance is not found in all rural areas of El Salvador but rather in pockets of El Salvador. The United States Department of State (2008) declares that remittances are a vital source of income for many Salvadorans. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, in the year 2007, an estimated \$3.3

billion dollars were sent back to El Salvador from Salvadorans living in the States. This additional income positively affected the lives of 22% of the population. However, Table IV-8 shows that only 13.1% of interviewed women received remittances while 78.7% did not receive any aid from abroad. Nevertheless, the women who did receive remittances believed it to be of a positive impact on their lives and 63% of those women received remittances on a monthly basis (Table IV-9). Furthermore, when the data from Marital Status and the Impact of Remittances were cross-tabulated, the research concluded that 82% of single, married and cohabitating women did not receive remittances.

With this said, it can be assumed that remittances affects pockets of El Salvador since the investigator selected participants (snowball sample) from approximately seven to ten different communities in different municipalities of El Salvador. Remittances did not impact the majority of the rural women interviewed but these findings do not suggest that remittances are not impacting the Salvadoran economy. On the contrary, studies by the Central Intelligence Agency (2007) show that remittances are impacting Salvadorans at a greater scale than most people had ever anticipated.

**Table IV-8. Remittances**

	Number	Percent
Yes	8	13.1
No	49	93.4
Chose not to Answer	4	6.6
Total	61	100

**Table IV-9. Frequency of Remittances**

	Number	Percent
Monthly	3	4.9
More than once a month	2	3.3
More than once a year	2	3.3
Yearly	0	0.0
Enough to pay school bills	1	1.6
When needed	1	1.6
Never	48	48
Chose not to Answer	4	6.6
Total	61	100

As previously stated, external financial assistance can not be the sole factor of dependency for Salvadoran women. Many of these women depend heavily on their husbands to provide financial support. However, those who are cohabitating may face fewer obstacles since they do not have to deal with the law if they choose to leave their companion, but it is important to note that rural couples who go into cohabitation usually have multiple children to care for which in turn discourage the women to leave, even if the partnership is sour. One lady expressed her concerns, “*I need help to overcome my man’s alcoholism.*”

Employment status, marital status, and enrolling their children in school are important and a reoccurring theme throughout the rural women findings. The following section will expand on sustainable development project participation by women, but more importantly, the findings will determine if women are being aided and positively affected by these groups’ involvement.

## Agencies and Organizations

The research findings confirm that all aid groups interviewed devotes part or all of their time and effort in assisting rural women achieve gender equality and sustainable development (Table IV-10). Daisi Marquez, the Program Officer for the United Nations, World Food Program in El Salvador affirms that their goal is to aid families who are in a state of poverty in the rural regions of El Salvador by teaching them how to commercialize.

*Marquez states, “Normally we aid the poorest families of communities that don’t have the means to feed their own, our objectives are to provide nutritional security for families of low income and at the same time to educate them in how to generate income through projects and or products we have developed. While they (the women) are receiving the food they are also being training and depending on the rural area, we teach them on how to market the products and the income that is generated from these projects...we aim on improving the quality of life of these families.”*

**Table IV-10. Sustainable Development and Rural Women Involvement**

	Number	Percent
Yes	5	13.1
No	0	0.0
Chose not to Answer	0	0.0
Total	5	100

María de la Paz Benavides, an ORMUSA representative, agreed to share knowledge about the NGOs endeavors. She expressed their involvement with rural women and sustainable development. This organization believes that if the opportunity was given, then women could be powerful,

*“We are a program of local development. In the area of local development we apply ourselves more in the rural areas. Specifically in four areas: an environmental area, the other is in health...maintaining equilibrium in environment health and the other has to do with empowering women in the area of organization and training. In the same*

*way, we want to educate them in the infrastructure of hygiene so we are able to improve their house hold and to help them individually. So, we are talking about a program that has these components... we have determined that they are all important: the training, the organization, and the adoption of the infrastructure. It has a lot to do with sustainable development because it helped them in the area of... how they should balance and help conserve their environment, the way they live their lives and the donation they receive from these projects. For example we are talking about a project but more specifically the project "Day of Hope" ...we want women to learn how to live their lives; this may be in the area of health, or it may be improving the economic conditions of their households and the infrastructure of their homes...for example there are many households that do not have toilets, curtains and they do not count on drinking water. Therefore, you can see there are infrastructures and basic needs to this population due to economic limitations. This reflects in how our organization trains in regard to how we utilize the funding for their infrastructure, we don't want anything being misused ...we want them to utilize the resources that are in their neighborhoods and communities. For example, the water, the trees...that is helpful, and they are receiving individual aid which in turn helps out the family as a whole and trickles unto the community and in this manner they become more developed and over-comers. The beneficiaries are the women and their children...because we know that women are the ones who educate. They are the ones that teach and they are the ones that maintain a positive conduct. Therefore, women are the ones who become ours direct beneficiaries. Through them, the benefits are seen in the family and in the community. In the end they are the ones that become empowered."*

Marquez also views women to be powerful; she states that the WFP prefers to direct their time and energy towards women because they invest the skills learned and money generated back into the family.

*"In reality, preference is given to women...we educated them and certify them to manage their resources. We prefer it this way because it has been proven that when woman improve their quality of life then their income will go directly to the improvement of the quality of life of the family as a whole. This can not be said for men when their income improves."*

In addition, when Marquez was asked about the changes she had seen in women, who incorporate projects of sustainable development into their lives, she stated the following,

*“Truthfully, it is an experience for them. However, the women who incorporate themselves into the products are becoming like entrepreneurs in spite of the difficulties and all the activities they have to manage in their household they still participate, they are responsible and when they have advanced in their projects and are generating income they are able to take more charge of their own lives. They feel more like bosses of their own lives as well as more secure.”*

Furthermore, Ada E. Méndez Narváez, a representative from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) believed that equality of gender and economic sustainability can be achieved by working together with other aid groups and by promoting projects that encourage women to become self sustained. Méndez Narváez stated the following:

*“You see, the projects that are accepted by the UNDP are more focused in promoting capacities and fairness. We observe how human development operates in politics... it is necessary to take into account that the level of direct action is at a macro level. This institution does not intervene at a local level the intervention is done in the politics of the public. To strengthen the organizations who are involved with public institutions our agency created a project directed at gender inequality The Agenda for Women in the Economy...lets just say that there is an increase in their self-esteem... in the women that get involved in the overall objectives... like the women who work for companies... women are more capable to express their needs, they speak more, they are more apt to express themselves in a public setting... but mainly I believe that there is still room for women to advance...if the participation is mixed company (men and women) ... we can say that there is a difference and more difficulty, that's why it is harder to promote it; but if there are changes, for example there is change in the way women conduct themselves... like... the way in which they appear in public... and how they participate and act in front of people.”*

However, Marquez believes it to be very difficult to work with some aid groups because it requires great coordination. Nevertheless, she is able to work with most of the relief groups but expresses that some have maturing to do.

*“Yes it is very difficult. I would say it is work that requires a lot of coordination. Trying to understand their agenda and seeing if it coincides with ours. But usually, our agendas are on the same page; we both want to improve the living conditions of this population group (rural*

*women)...it hasn't been too difficult for us...truthfully; we have all worked together very well. Not every organization has the level of maturity that would qualify them to work seriously with us. We are looking for a high level of commitment from them...but once we find an organization that meets our requirements, we have not found it so difficult to work with them. There is an enormous amount of organizations working here but not all of them have the accountability and maturity level to be able to work with an agency like ours."*

Even though there are different points of view, both agencies believe it is important to work together to accomplish common goals e.g., economic sustainability and gender equality. Table IV-11 and Table IV-12 reveals that all participating aid groups are working towards similar objectives.

**Table IV-11. Sustainable Development: Project Categories**

	Number	Percent
Micro-Development	2	40.0
Micro-Development, Micro-Financing, Livelihood, Earth Quake Recovery Program	3	60.0
Chose not to Answer	0	0.0
Total	5	100

**Table IV-12. Sustainable Development: Equality Project Categories**

	Number	Percent
Mediator	1	20.0
Workshops, Group Meetings, Free lawyer Consultation and Representation, Empowering and Focusing on Gender Equality	1	20.0
Workshops, Group Meetings, Mass Media	1	20.0
Group Meetings, Labor Market, Labor Rights, Domestic Work, Discrimination & Inequality	1	20.00
Workshops, Group Meetings, Free lawyer Consultation and Representation	1	20.00
Total	5	100

As previously stated, remittances are found in certain areas of El Salvador and this can also be said about external assistance. Table IV-13 illustrates that many women are not receiving aid, however, most women involved with relief groups have benefited from the training (Table IV-14 & 15); though, some have chosen not to participate. This could be due to excess responsibilities to their home, family and employment. A young single working mom expressed the following,

*“I work for a restaurant, I pick up wood for them and I earn more or less \$7 every 8 days. There is a group of people in our community teaching others how to read and write but I don’t go...I would like it if someone could give us tin so we can build our homes. There is not much around here, no jobs that I know of.”*

However, when an older working mother was asked about external assistance in her community, she did not hesitate to praise their work. She believes that education is an important factor to success and realizes that there are benefits to learning,

*“There is an NGO in our community that teaches computers, but my kids won’t go. They don’t see the benefits because they are grown up, but I really want my younger kids to learn computers.”*

One woman was able to benefit from the trade the aid group taught the community because she was hired by an embroidery factory, *“They taught us how to embroider and work the bamboo.”*

**Table IV-13. External Aid (Agency and/or NGO)**

	Number	Percent
Yes	17	27.9
No	39	63.9
Chose not to Answer	5	8.2
Total	61	100

**Table IV-14. Content of Training by Agency and/or NGO**

	Number	Percent
Read and write	2	3.3
Computers	1	1.6
Broidery	1	1.6
Farming	1	1.6
Not Applicable	39	63.9
Broidery + Farming	1	1.6
Ethics + Human Rights	1	1.6
Ethics + Reading	2	3.3
Health Promotion	7	11.5
Chose not to Answer	6	9.8
Total	61	100

**Table IV-15. Helpful Training by Agency and/or NGO**

	Number	Percent
Yes	13	21.3
No	0	0.0
Not Applicable	42	68.9
Chose not to Answer	6	9.8
Total	61	100

**Summary**

The chapter reported descriptive analysis from the research questions. This chapter also summarized women’s life framework and if they saw a benefit in learning new skills to better their economic condition and status. Though, only 27.9% had exposure to external aid, it is clear that many tried to benefit from what was being taught while others felt bombarded by life chores that making time to learn a new skill was not on their agenda. Marquez understands these difficulties and expresses her concern for women living under these conditions and the concerns of funding for the aid groups wanting to assist in the best possible manner,

*“The obstacles that we face are that normally women find themselves to be very busy with their house chores. As a result, when we arrive with projects that can help them become integrated in productive activities and projects that are income generating this normally is seen as another load even though these projects would help give them more independency they view it as another load. Also incorporating projects that generate income requires funds because these women will need tools and equipment, we designate materials for these productive projects e.g., agricultural projects or similar projects...at times these can be obstacles. Normally, we work in coordination with other organizations that are financial organizations because we are not a financial agency. We will assist with any of the technicalities of these projects, we provide food but our strength is not funds, we have some resources that are designated for that but it is by far our strongest area. We associate ourselves with NGOs that have funds so we are able to develop a well rounded style of support for these women.”*

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Introduction**

This study was designed for the purpose of understanding the root of inequality amongst rural women of El Salvador and to see if projects in the area of sustainable development could be used as tools to help alleviate economic distress. This study not only examines what aid groups are doing to assist rural women but also looks into the makeup of a rural woman. Knowing why they live in these circumstances and why they suffer from economic hardship can help determine the impact an agency or an NGO can have on their lives and in the community.

This study can be applied to most Latin American countries (excluding communist nations) and many developing countries due to the topics of interest: poverty and gender inequality. The results confirm that when a woman had exposure to a development project then they felt that this type of aid was beneficial to her life and the lives of her children (Table IV-15). However, the results also indicate that 68.9% of participants did not have direct contact with any type of external aid; though table IV-13 reveals that only 63.9% of women did not have aid groups in their communities. There is a 5% difference between these two figures, which affirms that not every woman is taking advantage of available assistance. It is important to note that 68.8% of rural

women are occupied with house chores (these groups of women are working at least 6 hours a day or more around the home (Table IV-7)).

It is impractical to expect aid groups to assist every rural woman requesting help. However the investigator believes that if aid groups continue to concentrate on helping women achieve reading and writing skills, computers skills, broidery skills, farming techniques, education on ethics, education on human rights and health promotion then sustainability could be reached (Table IV-14). It is important to acknowledge a woman's framework and what she must deal with on a daily bases. Her dedication is to her family and agencies and organizations must continue to work together to find methods that will incorporate family values into the projects they are implementing. Table IV-12 indicates that agencies are focusing on micro development, micro financing, livelihood projects, labor rights inequality and discrimination. However, it is important to note that 63.9% of surveyed women had no exposure to aid (Table IV-13). Nevertheless, the results indicate that aid groups are beneficial to rural women; therefore, it can be assumed that agencies and NGOs are assisting rural women achieve sustainability and gender equality.

After summarizing all chapters, it can be presumed that Latin American countries continue to struggle in the area of sustainable development. Previously it was suggested that in order for a country to see positive economic outcomes, nations must use all available resources (natural resources and all available work force (men and women)). Furthermore, it is appropriate to state that intervention is a key element that needs to be implemented by the government. If nations placed the issue of equality at the forefront of their agenda then economic growth would increase at a higher rate and sustainable development would be viewed as a feasible task. . In Conclusion, it is important for the

researcher to reaffirm the following: gender bias is a negative factor that prohibits the achievement of economic growth rates. Furthermore, understanding that gender discrimination discourages workers from entering a job that benefits the overall economy has the ability of lowering a nation's value of output (Busse and Spieldmann, 2006). Change begins with government intervention (creating and enforcing laws that promote equality of gender in the home and in the work force), without this, sustainable development cannot be achieved.

### **Research Limitations**

Sustainable development and rural women inequality is a sensitive topic that can't be dealt with in an acute manner. For this reason, the researcher proposed to cover the following areas: interviews with agencies and organizations that have successfully incorporated micro-finance projects, micro-development/livelihood projects and women rights projects into their mission fold as possible solutions to inequality amongst rural women of developing nations. This approach allowed the researcher to do an in-depth investigation of the topic which helped to clarify any misconceptions of sustainable development and women inequality.

### **Rural Women**

A considerable limitation to this study was acquiring an adequate amount of interviews. Many rural women did not want to talk to outsiders which restricted the

interviews. Their shyness and their timid ways limited their motivation and trust towards the investigator.

### **Agencies and NGOs**

A significant limitation to this study was receiving replies to the researchers request for an interview. One NGO responded to the e-mail and/or phone call in regards to an interview. Fortunately, all agencies agreed to be interviewed, which in turn reflected on the results section.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The researcher's suggestions for future research are as follows: an ethnographical study should be implemented. Being able to experience the relief work can be beneficial to future studies because the researcher would have direct contact with the projects (livelihood, micro finance or micro development) being implemented in the communities. It is important to note that a researcher would be participating with a group who is already established and knows the area and the people. Therefore, if the investigator had the opportunity to work along with an aid group to see the levels of impact they are having in the community, then the researcher could determine which projects are best suited for rural women which in turn could help create a guideline for aid groups to follow when assisting impoverished groups. In conclusion, if funding is limited then the researcher could accomplish this ethnographic study in six months to a year because although the researcher has become a part of the group by going native, it is important to

understand that this group was functioning without him or her before they decided to join their mission.

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## **APPENDIXES**

## APPENDIX A—IRB

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### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, July 05, 2007  
IRB Application No: GU0714  
Proposal Title: Sustainable Development as a Solution to Inequality Amongst Rural Women of El Salvador  
Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited  
Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 7/4/2008

Principal Investigator(s)

Marilyn Lopez	Patricia Bell
3602 N. Washington St. H65	006 CLB
Stillwater, OK 74075	Stillwater, OK 74078

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, [beth.mcternan@okstate.edu](mailto:beth.mcternan@okstate.edu)).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

**APPENDIX B—Rural Women Survey 2007**

Question # 1: Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

- Marital Status: 1: Single/never been married  
2: Married  
3: Cohabiting  
4: Widowed  
5: Divorced  
6: Did not discuss marital status

Question # 2: At what age were you married?

- Age married \_\_\_\_\_  
Never married \_\_\_\_\_  
Cohabiting since \_\_\_\_\_

Question #3: Circumstances of the marriage \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Positive experience  
2: Negative experience  
3: Both positive and negative experience

Question #4: Changes that have occurred in your living conditions since your marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Having children  
2: Better living conditions  
3: Worst living conditions  
4: More responsibilities  
5: Fewer responsibilities  
6: No change  
7: Children + more responsibilities  
8: Children + (+) living conditions  
9: Children + (-) living conditions

Question # 5: Are you a mother \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: I am a mother  
2: I am not a mother

Question # 6: Amount of children and their ages

- Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Question # 7: Condition of children \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Children are in school  
2: Children are not in school

Question # 8: Would like to have more or few children? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Want more children
- 2: Wanted less children
- 3: Likes the amount she has

Question # 9: Hours worked around the house per day. \_\_\_\_\_

- 98: All day
- 97: Weekends only
- 96: Every 15 days
- 95: Don't Know
- 94: Only in the mornings

Question # 10: Time spent doing other work. \_\_\_\_\_

- 98: All day
- 97: 2X a week
- 96: A few times per month

Question # 11: Employment \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: I am employed
- 2: I am not employed

Question # 12: Type of employment. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Farm work: employed
- 2: Employed by a business
- 3: Self employment: Ag.
- 4: Temporary work: Any
- 5: No employment

Question # 13: Circumstances at work. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Poor (Heavy manual labor/Strict)
- 2: Fair
- 3: Good
- 4: Very Good
- 5: Excellent (No Stress)
- 6: Does not work

Question # 14: How they earn money and/or food for their family. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Work
- 2: Depend on husbands income
- 3: Depend on extended family's income
- 4: Depend on friend's income
- 5: Work + husbands income
- 6: Depend on husbands income & on extended family's income

Question # 15: Time spent working and taking care of home chores? This question is repetitive...will NOT be used

Question # 16: How much income is generated per day \_\_\_\_\_

Question # 17: Receive financial assistance from the federal government. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Yes I receive aid
- 2: No, I do not receive financial aid

Question # 18: Loans? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Yes I receive loans
- 2: No, I do not receive loans

Question # 19: Receiving financial support (remittances) from friends or relatives in other countries.

- 1: Yes I receive remittances \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: No, I do not receive remittances

Question # 20: Frequency remittances are received. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Monthly
- 2: More than once a month
- 3: More than once a year
- 4: Yearly
- 5: Enough to pay school bills
- 6: When needed

Question # 21: Economic impact remittances have had on their lives. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Positive impact
- 2: Negative impact
- 3: No impact
- 4: Don't receive remittances

Question # 22: Organizations, or personnel who are assisting their areas by teaching workshops to the local communities.

- 1: Yes, there are organizations or personnel assisting us \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: No, there are no organizations or personnel assisting us

Question # 23: What they have taught. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Read and write
- 2: Computers
- 3: Broidery
- 4: Farming
- 5: Not Applicable
- 6: Broidery + Farming
- 7: Ethics + Human Rights
- 8: Ethics + Reading
- 9: Health Promotion

Question # 24: Has this information helped you? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Yes
- 2: No
- 3: Not Applicable

Question # 25: What type of help would best serve you now? This question is repetitive...will NOT be used

Question # 26: If you could request any assistance what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Helping us feed our children
- 2: Teaching us how to read
- 3: Helping us find Jobs
- 4: Teaching us a trade
- 5: Materials for home
- 6: Help feed children + help find jobs
- 7: Job + trade
- 8: Clinics
- 9: Money

Question # 27: What in your life is most troubling for you? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Not having our own electricity line
- 2: No proper home, no work
- 3: Our Salaries don't pay enough
- 4: Streets and transportation are poorly managed
- 5: Lack of water and energy
- 6: No proper home, no work, no water and energy
- 7: Not having our own electricity line + streets and transportation are poorly managed
- 8: Not having our own electricity line + lack of water and energy
- 9: Our Salaries don't pay enough + streets and transportation are poorly managed
- 10: Lack of water and energy + education over alcohol abuse
- 11: Nothing
- 12: Economic hardship + no work

Question # 28: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about what we have discussed? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C—ENCUESTA PARA LAS MUJERES RURALES 2007**

\*99 indica que ella decidió en no responder

- Q. # 1 Estado civil \_\_\_\_\_
- 1: Sola/nunca me case
  - 2: Casada
  - 3: Acompañada
  - 4: Enviudada
  - 5: Divorciada
  - 6: No quiso discutir
- Q. # 2: ¿Ha que edad se casó? \_\_\_\_\_
- Me case a los \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nunca me case \_\_\_\_\_
  - Acompañada desde \_\_\_\_\_
- Q. #3: Circunstancia del matrimonio \_\_\_\_\_
- 1: Experiencia positiva
  - 2: Experiencia negativa
  - 3: Experiencia positiva y negativa
- Q. #4: ¿Cuáles son los cambios que han ocurrido en su vida desde que se caso? \_\_\_\_\_
- 1: Tener hijos
  - 2: Condiciones de vida mejore
  - 3: Condiciones de vida peores
  - 4: Más responsabilidades
  - 5: Menos responsabilidades
  - 6: No hubo cambio
  - 7: Tener hijos y más responsabilidades
  - 8: Tener hijos y condiciones de vida mejore
  - 9: Tener hijos y condiciones de vida peores
- Q. # 5: ¿Sos madre? \_\_\_\_\_
- 1: si soy madre
  - 2: no soy madre
- Q. # 6: ¿Cuántos hijos tuvo? \_\_\_\_\_
- Cantidad: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Edades: \_\_\_\_\_
- Q. # 7: Condición de sus hijos \_\_\_\_\_
- 1: Mis hijos están en la escuela
  - 2: Mis hijos no están en la escuela

Q. # 8: ¿Quisiera tener más hijos? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Quiero más hijos
- 2: Quería menos hijos
- 3: Me gusta la cantidad que tengo

Q. # 9: Horas que utilizo trabajando en la casa por día. (Solo use estos números indicados si no da horas exactas) \_\_\_\_\_

- 98: Todo el día
- 97: Fin de semana
- 96: Cada 15 días
- 95: No se

Q. # 10: Tiempo usado hacienda otro trabajo. (Solo use estos números indicados si no da horas exactas)

- 98: Todo el día
- 97: 2 veces por semana
- 96: A few times per month

Q. # 11: Empleada \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Si estoy empleada
- 2: No estoy empleada

Q. # 12: Tipo de empleo \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Trabajo de cultivación
- 2: Empleada por un negocio
- 3: Trabajo para mi misma
- 4: Trabajo temporáneo
- 5: No estoy empleada

Q. # 13: ¿Cuales son las circunstancias en su trabajo? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Mal
- 2: más o menos
- 3: Bueno
- 4: Muy Bueno
- 5: Excelente
- 6: No trabajo
- 7: El trabajo es pesado
- 8: Estricto
- 9: No hay estrés

Q. # 14: ¿Como gana dinero o comida para soportar su familia? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Trabajo

- 2: Dependo de los ingresos de mi marido
- 3: Dependo de los ingresos de mi familia extendida
- 4: Dependo de los ingresos de mis amigos
- 5: Trabajo y dependo de los ingresos de mi marido

Q. # 16: ¿Cuánto dinero genera diariamente? \_\_\_\_\_

Q. # 17: ¿Recibe usted ayuda financiera del gobierno federal? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Si, recibo ayuda financiera del gobierno federal
- 2: No recibo ayuda financiera del gobierno federal

Q. # 18: ¿Tiene usted préstamos? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Si tengo préstamos
- 2: No tengo préstamos

Q. # 19: ¿Recibe usted apoyo financiero de amigos o parientes en otros países.; por ejemplo remesas? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Si recibo remesas
- 2: No recibo remesas

Q. # 20: Recibo las remesas en esta frecuencia... \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Mensualmente
- 2: Más de una vez por mes
- 3: Más de una vez al año
- 4: Anualmente
- 5: Suficiente para pagar las facturas escolares
- 6: Cuando sea necesario

Q. # 21: El tipo de impacto económico que he tenido por recibir remesas ha sido... \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Positivo
- 2: Negativo
- 3: No he tenido impacto
- 4: No recibo remesas

Q. # 22: Hay organizaciones o personajes ayudando en nuestras áreas. Ellos han enseñando talleres a la comunidad.

- 1: Si hay organizaciones o personajes ayudando en nuestra comunidad \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: No hay organizaciones o personajes ayudando en nuestra comunidad

Q. # 23: ¿Que han enseñado? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Leer y escribir
- 2: Computación
- 3: Coser
- 4: La agricultura
- 5: No es aplicable 6: Coser y cultivación

- 7: La moralidad y derechos humanos
- 8: La moralidad y como leer
- 9: Promoción de salud

Q. # 24: ¿Le ha ayudado esta información? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Si
- 2: No
- 3: No aplica

Q. # 26: ¿Si usted podría solicitar cualquier ayuda qué sería? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: Alimentar a nuestros hijos
- 2. Enseñarnos a cómo leer
- 3. Ayudarnos a encontrar trabajo
- 4. Enseñarnos talleres
- 5: Materiales para construir nuestra casa
- 6: Ayudarnos ha alimentar a nuestros hijos y ayudar en hallar trabajo
- 7: Hallar trabajo y enseñarnos un taller
- 8: Dispensarios locales
- 9: Dinero

Q. # 27: ¿Qué en su vida es la mayor molestia? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1: No tener electricidad propia
- 2. No tengo hogar propio y no hay trabajo
- 3. Nuestros Salarios no alcanza
- 4. Las calles y el transporte están en malas condiciones
- 5. La falta de agua y energía
- 6: No tengo hogar propio, no hay trabajo, no hay agua y energía propia
- 7: No tener nuestra propia línea de electricidad y las calles y el transporte están en malas condiciones
- 8: No tener nuestra propia línea de electricidad y la falta de agua y energía
- 9: Nuestros Salarios no pagan suficiente y las calles y el transporte están en malas condiciones
- 10: La falta de agua y energía y la falta de educación sobre el abuso de alcohol
- 11: Nada
- 12: La dificultad económica y no hay trabajo

Q. # 28: ¿Hay algo más que usted quisiera decirme acerca de lo que hemos discutido hoy?

## APPENDIX D—INFORMED CONCENT FOR RURAL WOMEN

Project Title: Sustainable Development as a Solution to Inequality Amongst Rural Women of El Salvador

Investigators: Marilyn Lopez  
School of International Studies  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between the status of women and social inequality by gender through sustainable development (projects offered by agencies/organizations that have helped you eliminate poverty from your life); as well as examining the extent researchers, governments, NGOs and MNCs have helped advocate and promote equality among rural women like yourselves from the nation of El Salvador.

Procedures: This project will consist of a one-on-one interview between the researcher and the participant. Interviews will be conversational and loosely structured. All notes taken during the interview will be transcribed and translated back into English. Each interview is expected to last 20 to 25 minutes.

Risks of Participation: There are minimal psychological, social, physical or legal risks associated with this project considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Interviews may however include questions that may induce stress or discomfort subjects will be made aware that some questions may ask their income level or if they receive remittances, however, if the subject is not at will to answer, then the question will be skipped.

Note: *There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.*

Benefits: There are no known benefits to the rural women. However if the researcher finds communities that have received little to no aid, then this will be shown in the information the agencies/organizations have access to and it may encourage them to aid these communities.

Confidentiality: All information about you will be kept confidential and will not be released. Interview transcripts and record forms from rural women will be identified as numbers rather than names, however, agencies/organizations will be asked if their names and agencies/organizations could be used for publication.

The researcher and her thesis committee will have access to all the data except names.

The data will be kept during the duration of the thesis and a full year after expected graduation date of December 2007. The data will be reported in the thesis. There are no foreseeable risks.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify the rural women of El Salvador. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

- Compensation:            There is no compensation for participating in this research.
- Contacts:                If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Marilyn Lopez, researcher, 417-849-9501 [marilyn.lopez@okstate.edu](mailto:marilyn.lopez@okstate.edu) or Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).
- Participant Rights:     The participation of this research is voluntary and the subject may discontinue at any given time without reprisal or penalty. Any risks to subjects that might occur due to withdrawal must be made clear. Explain any reason the subject's participation may be terminated.
- All Rural Women interviews will be read to by the researcher due to the fact that you may not have the ability to read; this should help eliminate any confusion or discomfort you may have. Please let me know if you would rather read it yourself without the assistance of the researcher.

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX E—AGENCY/NGO PERSONAL INTERVIEW SHEET

Question # 1: Does your agency/organization focus on sustainable development?

Explanation:

Question #2: Describe one of your projects and how it operates?

Explanation:

Question #3: Does it involve women? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

Question #3A: Does it involve rural women? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

Question #4: If yes: In what way are women involved in this project? \_\_\_\_\_

Question #5: Has your agency/organization seen *improvements* in the area of assisting rural women of El Salvador through the project that you just described? \_\_\_\_\_

Question #5A: If yes, then could you please provide the most current annual report and/or any documentation that demonstrates your efforts? \_\_\_\_\_

1: No documentation given

2: Refer to documentation

Question #6: Are the rural women you aid from “remittances” town? \_\_\_\_\_

1: Yes

2: No

3: Some

4: Most

Explanation:

Question #7: Has that had a positive or negative effect on your efforts? \_\_\_\_\_

1: Positive

2: Negative

3: Both positive and negative

Explanation:

Question #8: Is it more difficult to aid women who have income generating from abroad?

1: More difficult \_\_\_\_\_

2: Less difficult

3: No difference

4: Some times it’s difficult and some times it’s not difficult

Explanation:

Question #9: What have you noticed regarding the personal lives of the women you have helped? \_\_\_\_

Question #9A: Does your agency/organization focus on environmental concerns? \_\_\_\_

1: Yes

2: No

Question #9B: If yes, then please explain in your own words what your agency/organization is doing to help this rising problem.

Explanation:

Question #9C: Have the projects you've implemented considered both economically and environmentally sustainable to the rural women's lives? Please explain your answer. \_\_\_\_

1: Yes

2: No

Explanation:

Question #10: What type of sustainable development projects are your organization involved with? Please describe them. \_\_\_\_\_

1: Micro-Development

2: Micro-Financing

3: Livelihood

4: Earth Quake Recovery Program

5: All of the above

6: Environmental

7: External debt being converted into local sustainable projects.

Question #11: What type of sustainable equality projects are your organization involved with? \_\_\_\_

1: Workshops

2: Group Meetings

3: Free lawyer Consolation and Representation

4: Mediator

5: 1, 2, 3 + empowering and focusing on equality

6: 1, 2 + Mass Media

7: Group Meetings, Labor market, Labor rights, Domestic Work, dealing with discrimination and promoting equality.

8: 1, 2, 3

Question #12: In your own words, please state what you see your organization doing in the near future concerning rural women...

Explanation:

Question #13: Please state the level of difficulty it is to access funding from any governmental agency (this may include, but not limited to the El Salvador government, the USA government and the UN).

Explanation:

Question #14: Please state the level of difficulty it is to partner with organizations who are involved with rural women and development.

Explanation:

**APPENDIX F—ENCUESTA PARA GRUPOS DE ASISTENCIA  
INVOLUCRADOS EN APOYAR A LAS MUJERES EN  
LAS ZONAS RURALES DE EL SALVADOR**

Mi nombre es Marilyn López y soy un estudiante de maestría en la universidad de Oklahoma State University. Estoy interesada en aprender más sobre las condiciones de las mujeres en su región. Todo lo que usted comparta será estrictamente confidencial.

- ¿Esta su agencia/organización enfocada en el desarrollo auto-sostenible? ¿Por favor describa uno de sus proyectos y cómo funciona?

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ¿Involucra a las mujeres este proyecto? Si o No

Si la respuesta es No, por favor explique las razones por que no están trabajando con mujeres.

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Si la respuesta es sí: ¿De qué manera están las mujeres involucradas en estos proyectos?

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¿Involucran a las mujeres rurales? Si o No

Si su respuesta es no, por favor regrese a la pregunta anterior para poder registrar su respuesta.

- Por favor explique con sus propias palabras las razones por las cuales su agencia/organización no ha podido ayudar a las mujeres (rurales o las de la ciudad) en el área del desarrollo sostenible

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Acerca del proyecto que usted acaba de describir. ¿Ha podido contribuir su agencia/organización en mejorar el área de asistencia hacia las mujeres rurales de El Salvador? Si o No

- ¿Si la respuesta es sí, entonces pudiera por favor tener el reporte anual de su compañía más reciente y cualquier documentación que demuestra sus esfuerzos?

- Si la respuesta es no, entonces ¿podría por favor explicar con sus propias palabras los obstáculos y limitaciones que su agencia/organización ha tenido?

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ¿Reciben "remesas" las mujeres rurales de los pueblos que ustedes ayudan? Si o No
- ¿Cuál ha sido el efecto de las remesas en la comunidad referente a sus esfuerzos -- Positivo Negativo?
- ¿Es más difícil ayudar a las mujeres que tienen ingresos del exterior? Si o No

**Nota: Favor de aclarar**

• ¿Qué ha podido observar en la vida personal de las mujeres que usted ha asistido?  
Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ¿Se enfoca su agencia/organización en los problemas ambientales? Si o No
- a. Si la respuesta es sí, entonces por favor explique con sus propias palabras lo que su agencia/organización ha hecho para asistir en este creciente problema.  
Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• ¿Han podido aplicar el desarrollo ambiental y económico en las vidas de las mujeres rurales por medio de sus proyectos? ¿Por favor explique su respuesta?  
Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• ¿en qué tipo de proyectos de desarrollo auto-sostenibles está involucrada su organización? Por favor describa cada uno de éstos.  
Micro-Desarrollo      Micro-Financiamiento      Sustento (livelihood)

• ¿Qué tipo de proyectos auto-sostenibles de desarrollo e igualdad se ha involucrado su organización?  
Talleres      Reuniones de Grupos      Consulta de Abogado y Representación  
Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Por favor explique con sus propias palabras el estado en el cual ve usted la organización/agencia y cuáles son los pasos que tomarán en el futuro con respecto a la asistencia hacia las mujeres rurales...  
Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Por favor indique el nivel de dificultad que existe para obtener asistencia financiera de agencias del gobierno (esto puede incluir, pero no es limitado al gobierno de El Salvador, el gobierno de EE.UU. o las Naciones Unidas).

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_

- Por favor indique el nivel de dificultad que hay al asociarse con organizaciones que están involucradas con asistencia para las mujeres rurales y su desarrollo.

Grabación: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G—INFORMED CONCENT FOR AGENCY/NGO

Project Title: Sustainable Development as a Solution to Inequality Amongst Rural Women of El Salvador

Investigators: Marilyn Lopez  
School of International Studies  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between the status of women and social inequality by gender through sustainable development; as well as examining the extent researchers, governments, NGOs and MNCs have advocated and promoted equality among rural women of El Salvador.

Procedures: This project will consist of a one-on-one interview between the researcher and the participant. Interviews will be conversational and loosely structured. The interviews with the agencies/organizations will be audio recorded and the notes taken during the interview will be transcribed. Each interview is expected to last 20min. to an hour.

Risks of Participation: There are minimal psychological, social, physical or legal risks associated with this project considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Interviews may however include questions that may induce stress or discomfort, such as, “Has your agency/organization had a positive impact on rural women”. If the subject is not at will to answer, then the question will be skipped.

Note: *There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.*

Benefits: Each participant from an agency/organization may have access to all the information that was gathered which grants them an inside views of what other agencies/organizations are doing in order to aid rural women and how they can partner and work with each other, through networking channels.

Confidentiality: All information about you will be kept confidential and will not be released. Interview transcripts and record forms from rural women will be identified as numbers rather than names, however, agencies/organizations will be asked if their names and agencies/organizations could be used for publication.

The researcher and her thesis committee will have access to all the data except names.

The data will be kept during the duration of the thesis and a full year after expected graduation date of December 2007. The data will be reported in the thesis. There are no foreseeable risks.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify the rural women of El Salvador. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Contacts: If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Marilyn Lopez, researcher, 417-849-9501 [marilyn.lopez@okstate.edu](mailto:marilyn.lopez@okstate.edu) or Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Participant Rights: The participation of this research is voluntary and the subject may discontinue at any given time without reprisal or penalty. Any risks to subjects that might occur due to withdrawal must be made clear. Explain any reason the subject's participation may be terminated.

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX H—SAMPLE OF TRANSLATED ITEMS**

**The following information is based off of question #28 from the survey. The first version is the original transcript; however, the second version is in English.**

<b>#28</b>	<b>Spanish Version</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<b>Survey # 7</b>	Un grupo de recursos o derechos humanos trataron de subir el pago a \$10 mas seguro	A human rights group came to town and attempted to have the wage raised to \$10 plus insurance.
<b>Survey # 18</b>	Me gustaría tener casa propia. Tengo que pagar luz, agua y renta. Mi esposo paga los costos de la escuela y los costos de comida.	I would like to have my own home. I have to pay the electricity, water and rent bills. Mi husband pays school bills and he buys food for the home.
<b>Survey # 23</b>	Me gustaría ver que las calles fueran arregladas el nuestras calles rurales y no solo en las ciudades.	I would like to see the streets fixed in our rural communities and not only in the cities.
<b>Survey # 25</b>	Decidí en no trabajar por que los costos de transporte y alimentos no alcanzaban.	I decided not to work because the money I made did not surpass the cost of what it costs to pay for food and transportation to get to work in the city.
<b>Survey # 28</b>	Hubo una organización de España: Manos Amigas. Ellos construyeron casas.	There was an organization that came from Spain (Manos Amigas) they built homes in our community.
<b>Survey # 29</b>	No hay maquiladoras aquí. Tenemos que viajar 1.5 horas para obtener un trabajo en la ciudad.	There are no maquilas here. We have to travel 1.5 hrs into the city to obtain a job.
<b>Survey # 30</b>	Ella tiene más de 60 años. Le gustaría ver más ayuda extranjera para que ellos construyan más casas y un centro de salud en sus comunidades.	She is past 60 years of age. She would like to see help from abroad so homes and a health clinic can be present in their community.
<b>Survey # 32</b>	Mis deseos son que mis hijos crezcan con una buena educación para que se puedan defender y no pasen por las limitaciones que yo tuve.	My desire is to see my kids receive a good education so when they grow up they can defend themselves and so they don't have to go through the limitations I have went through.
<b>Survey # 33</b>	Aunque tenemos muchas limitaciones, somos una familia unida, llena del amor del señor.	Even though we are poor. I thank God that we are a united family filled with the love of God.
<b>Survey # 34</b>	La preocupación por la enfermedad del esposo, por que sus limitaciones económicas no pueden darle el	The worries of my husband's illness. His economic limitation does not permit us to get him the needed

#28	Spanish Version	English Translation
	tratamiento médico necesario.	medical treatment.
<b>Survey # 40</b>	Por el trabajo, no dedico tiempo a mis hijos/as y que me ayuden a superar el problema de mi esposo alcohólico.	My job does not permit me to spend enough time with my kids. I need help to overcome my husband's alcoholism.
<b>Survey # 42</b>	Yo quisiera que nos ayudaran con los niños en algo para seguir adelante con la ayuda de Dios.	I would like to receive some type of aid for the kids, so they can succeed.
<b>Survey # 43</b>	Mi esposo trabaja y no alcanza para todo lo que necesitamos. Aparte de eso el se enferma muy seguido y por eso no siempre trabaja. Por eso en este momento, tiene un mes de no trabajar por razones de su hígado y por sus nervios. Confiamos y oramos a Dios por nuestra citación.	My husband works but it is not enough to pay all the bills. He gets sick all the time so he goes months without working due to his health condition (liver, high blood pressure). We trust he Lord will help our situation.
<b>Survey # 47</b>	Es necesario que abran más trabajos en nuestra comunidad.	It is necessary to open up more jobs for our community.
<b>Survey # 49</b>	Quisiera tener mejor oportunidades de trabajo para poder seguir dándoles estudio a mis hijos.	I would like to have more opportunities for work so we can continue to pay for our kids schooling.
<b>Survey # 52</b>	Que la canasta básica sea mas barata.	Lowering the price of the basic basket.
<b>Survey # 53</b>	Tengo muchas necesidades soy una madre sola con 6 hijos que tengo que alimentar.	I am a single mother of 6 that must be fed.

## VITA

Marilyn Denise Lopez

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS A SOLUTION TO INEQUALITY  
AMONGST RURAL WOMEN OF EL SALVADOR.

Major Field: International Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Billings High School, Billings, Missouri in May 2002; received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Missouri in December, 2005. In May, 2008, I completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in International Studies at Oklahoma State University.

Experience: After completing my undergraduate degree, I had the opportunity to become an international administrative assistant for a relief, development and disaster responds non-profit organization (2005-06). I was also a Graduate Research Assistant for the Department of Agricultural Economics, at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK (2007-08). The provided grant permitted the exploration of Hispanic electronic-commerce in rural Oklahoma and allowed us to perform bilingual (English/Spanish) research and bilingual survey design. We were able to develop three educational models that estimated the Hispanic online potential, basic website design and Hispanic e-commerce strategies that detailed the relevant factors for attracting and serving Hispanic customers.

Professional Membership: Midwest Sociological Society and Phi Beta Delta, Epsilon Upsilon Chapter Honor Society for International Scholars (2007-Present)

Name: Marilyn Lopez

Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS A SOLUTION TO  
INEQUALITY AMONGST RURAL WOMEN OF EL SALVADOR: AN  
EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

Pages in Study: 105

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: International Studies

Scope and Method of Study: This study was designed as a mixed methods investigation that permitted the performance of qualitative and quantitative methods. Agencies and NGOs were selected by a convenience, purposive sample due to the impact they have had on women when referring to their rights, poverty issues and sustainable development projects. Semi-structured interviews were performed with each aid group which in turn helped support the secondary data (scholarly journals, governmental sites and educational magazines that rated the levels of rural women involvement by aid groups). Furthermore, 61 rural women agreed to participate in a survey with an open-ended question that allowed the investigator to glimpse into their life structure as well as to see the levels of impact aid groups have had in their lives and to see if projects in the area of sustainable development have positively impacted their lives.

Findings and Conclusions: This study was designed for the purpose of understanding the root of inequality amongst rural women of El Salvador and to see if projects in the area of sustainable development could be used as tools to help alleviating economic distress. This study not only examines what aid groups are doing to assist rural women but also looks into the makeup of a rural woman. Knowing more about the circumstances under which these women live can help to determine the impact an agency or an NGO might have on their lives and the community. The results of this study show that rural women who implemented sustainable development projects into their daily routine had improved living conditions and a more positive outlook on life when compared to women who had no exposure to sustainable development projects. Furthermore, aid groups continue to battle with inequality of gender, poverty levels, limited funding opportunities and partnership possibilities.

Advisor's Approval: Dr. Patricia Bell

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