

W O R K S H O P

Violence Against Women in Guatemala: Global Connections & Action Featuring: Norma Cruz, Survivors Foundation and Winner of a 2009 Woman of Courage Award from the US State Department

BRIEF SUMMARY:

Violence against women is at epidemic proportions in Guatemala and a dynamic of *femicide* has been recognized by the international community. *Femicide* is the killing of women by men simply because they are women and data indicate that over 4,000 women have died in the nation since the Millennium. Multiple advocates and human rights defenders have engaged in defining the problem and solutions while demanding justice. The continuum of violence against women in Guatemala ranges from domestic violence in the home and across to community-based violence. A parallel issue has been an intercountry adoption industry which capitalized on this violent environment and an unknown percentage of children were adopted as a result of coercive relinquishments, all of which included at least economic violence and some of which included force and even child kidnapping. Cruz's range of work, through her NGO *Survivor's Foundation*, includes an attempt to have some adoptions nullified. As a human rights defender, Norma Cruz who was one of 8 women to receive the world-wide "Woman of Courage" award from the US Secretary of State and First Lady Michelle Obama. Cruz's advocacy work focuses on all of the above problems, including child kidnappings for adoption (see <http://www.socmag.net/?p=540>). This workshop will cover these areas, learning objectives below.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

1. be able to describe the dynamic of femicide within the context of "impunity"
2. be able to recognize how domestic violence fits within a continuum of violence in Guatemala and how the nation state has been complicit even with progressive laws
3. be able to identify how adoption fraud took place in some cases, including use of force and kidnappings and how the US government has responded with new regulations under the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption to prevent further abuses.
4. be aware of action steps of how they can respond to the problem as US-citizens and individuals interested in taking part in an advocacy plan under the Guatemala Human Rights Commission *For the Women's Right to Live* campaign.
5. understand the complex environment that immigrants from Guatemala to the USA leave behind, including violence, trauma, fear, and coercion which may have been the catalyst for their departure from the nation.

TIME: 3-hours

CEUs: Pending NASW approval, X hours

MATERIALS & RESOURCES NEEDED: Ordinary workshop audio/visual (ppt. & video) in addition to appropriate learning space.

SPEAKERS:

Norma Cruz. For more about Cruz's background and honors, go to:

http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/entries/norma_cruz/

Amanda Martin, MSW, MPH. Executive Director of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission. She is Cruz's interpreter and she is a social worker with many years of experience working in Latin America, including expertise on multiple human rights issues including violence against women. For Martin's bio, go to: <http://www.ghrc-usa.org/AboutGHRC/Staff.htm>

Karen S. Rotabi, PhD, MSW, MPH. Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University.

She is an expert on intercountry adoption fraud and the US role in the problem as well as solutions. For Rotabi's bio, go to: <http://www.socialwork.vcu.edu/people/rotabi.html>