

Justice for My Sister Collective, a project of Community Partners

Organization's Expertise:

Launched in 2011, the Justice for My Sister Collective is the first organization of its kind that was sprouted as a grassroots multi-sectoral outreach campaign led by survivors of sexual assault and domestic abuse to prevent gender-based violence using the arts, documentary, and leadership development on a transnational level, with cross-cultural skill-sharing, curriculum, live video chats, and social media initiatives.

Project Description:

The Justice for My Sister Collective is a project of Community Partners that promotes healthy relationships, prevents domestic and sexual violence, develops local leadership in youth, trains community mediators, and connects the general public to services. Our programming was birthed from the transnational outreach campaign associated with the award-winning documentary *Justice for My Sister*. We use interactive workshops, theater, screenings and public forum discussion to build relationships with community members.

We have created a suite of educational materials that allows us to have a wider impact, including:

- **SMS Toolkit & Guide:** We have produced a SMS service guide for partners who want to launch their own text-messaging service using our modules and content. The guide is an in-depth tool that we provide to organizations that formalize partnerships with us.
- **Trainers' Training Curriculum:** Our 30-hour interactive Trainers' Training curriculum consists of 10 three-hour sessions for audiences who want to become facilitators at our screenings, and who want to develop their skills in coordination, organizing, public speaking, and overall leadership. It covers a range of topics including: patriarchy and masculine privilege as sources of violence against women; redefining masculinity; community education and organizing techniques; healthy relationships; nonviolent communication; rewriting popular culture; using video production to break the silence; healing strategies; public speaking; and transformative justice and working with authorities.
- **Activity Booklet:** Tailored for 11 distinct audiences, this guide walks facilitators through various in-depth workshops that they can present, and includes introductions to popular education techniques such as Theater of the Oppressed.
- **Discussion and Study Guide:** Designed to walk university students through the complex issues the film explores, this guide is divided into chapters, and also offers general discussion questions that aim to bridge the practical and theoretical.
- **Web series:** In the process of bringing the film to communities, we have identified many other stories of survival and resilience that we have turned into short profiles for our web series. Hearing Rebeca's story has encouraged many other women to come forward and break the silence surrounding gender-based violence.

Mission

By using an arts-based approach, we create safe spaces within marginalized communities to initiate collective healing and develop local leaders to combat gender-based violence.

Vision

The Justice for My Sister Collective's vision is to create spaces where through popular education and art, women and men of all ages form support networks and alliances to understand, prevent, and thereby end the cycle of violence against women, trans, and gender non-forming individuals.

Strategy

The Justice for my Sister Collective hosts screenings of our documentary and offers violence prevention workshops to high school students, parents of elementary school children, and partners at community spaces and cultural centers. Our goal is to identify more potential outreach facilitators at our screenings, so that they can go on to later partake in our trainer's training.

About the Film

The award-winning feature length documentary film, *Justice for My Sister*, follows Guatemalan Rebeca who is determined to hold her sister's killer accountable despite all odds. The film has screened in nearly 200 communities in Guatemala, where we launched an outreach campaign that used a text message-based service to connect audiences to resources and references after screenings. It has since screened with over 10 Embassies in over 20 countries and at the United Nations 59th Commission on the Status of Women.

Programs:

- **Promotora Storytelling program for Immigrant Parents of Young Children (Primarily Mothers)**
 - o 6-part series in partnership with elementary schools and non-profits
- **“Nuevas Novelas” Media Literacy and Cultural Exchange with High School Students in Los Angeles and Guatemala**
 - o 9-month program with Watts Labor Community Action Committee
- **High School Healthy Relationships and Teen Dating Violence Prevention**
 - o 4-part leadership development series with high schools, community centers and city council offices
- **LGBTQ Resource & CyberCenter**
 - o yearlong program with Watts Labor Community Action Committee
- **Train the Trainer Program**
- **Retomemos la Noche (Take Back the Night)**
- **Community Forums: All Violence is Public**
- **Transnational Video Chats**
 - o Monthly, Spanish only
 - o Topic-based

Objectives:

Our main objective is to encourage participants to exercise their critical thinking skills and re-envision the world they wish to live in, where women are treated and portrayed as equal to men and have access to equal economic opportunities.

Other objectives of this initiative include:

- Train participants to spot gender-based violence in everyday life, prevent it amongst their personal circles, and offer solutions, increasing citizen security.
- Leadership development and team-building among young women, improving equitable social development.
- Creative collaboration and cultural exchange between young women in Guatemala and Los Angeles.
- Improve the participants' media literacy.
- Competency in storytelling, technology, and production.
- Foster positive relationships with adult mentors who serve as role models.
- Internship and volunteer opportunities which lead participants to jobs, expanding economic independence for young women and girls and thus preventing likelihood domestic violence.
- Encouragement of pursuing a higher education among girls and young women.

Testimonials:

"*Justice for My Sister* is a powerful, landmark documentary for exposing injustices and moving forward advocacy for women and girls in Guatemala. It can also ignite other countries to address violence against women and femicide in a more serious and accountable way."

- Lois A. Herman, Lois A. Herman, Coordinator WUNRN, Women's UN Report Network

"A number of students said in our next class that they were quite moved and impressed by the film--it really made an impact on them. In fact, it probably was the highlight of our semester."

- Linda Lumsden, Associate Professor, Journalism, The University of Arizona

"Kimberly's determination to bring Guatemalan women's stories to the screen and to use social media to further her message is exemplary. Guatemala will be a better place for women thanks to Kimberly Bautista."

- B. Ruby Rich, Director of the Social Documentation Program at University of California, Santa Cruz

"The documentary *Justice for My Sister* shows the reality of what it's like as the family member of a victim to deal with threats from the family of the alleged murderer, harassment of the media, the re-victimization by the justice institutions."

- Rosita Ortega, Cousin of Vanessa Landinez (Victim of Femicide) and Member of Justicia para Vanessa Collective

Significant accomplishments to date:

- Coordinator Uvence Martinez approached the Justice for My Sister Collective in the midst of her divorce from an abusive husband. In the aftermath of her divorce, she was asked to leave her church and the Collective served as a positive outlet for her to find community and organize in spite of the push-back she encountered. It also provided her with tools and the language to talk to her teenage daughter about gender-based violence, feminism, and women empowerment. Uvence's mother later decided to share her story of survival in a short documentary which we premiered on YouTube and which inspired other women to break the silence. This campaign brought inter-generational healing and personal healing to Uvence and her family, and gave three generations of women an opportunity to organize publicly for women's rights, both at our Take Back the Night event and job fair.
- Our coordinator Farrah Rivera went on to be accepted study midwifery at Puget Sound Birth Center in Washington State and attributes "her passion for working with women" to her time as a member of the Justice for My Sister Collective, when she became involved in "community work in LA as an organizer and domestic violence activist."
- Our coordinator Daniella Padilla moved to Hawaii to work at a center for abused women, and she credits Justice for My Sister as her entry into the world of domestic violence prevention. Through our trainer's training, Daniella became our representative to the Advisory Council for the East Los Angeles Women's Center. Our project also gave Daniella extensive opportunities to become versed in grant-writing and event coordination.
- Our Trainer the Trainers Manual has been used to develop leaders in Los Angeles (30), Guatemala (28), and Ecuador (11). Through the JFMS Collective trainer's training, participants have grown their skills in the following fields: leadership, public speaking, coordination, team work, event planning, and general knowledge of violence prevention and advocacy. This experience has led to success in their relative fields and careers.
- We have connected over 250 women and girls to services at East Los Angeles Women's Center, Peace Over Violence, Mil Mujeres, WomenShelter Long Beach, Women at Work, Casa de la Familia, the Department of Mental Health Services and others through our tabling, outreach and events.
- Over 2500 people in Los Angeles have attended JFMS events, and over 7000 in Guatemala. Over 12,000 have partaken in our social media campaign.
- The Guatemalan chapter launched a text-messaging campaign to connect communities who participated in the trainings to services and to continue to disseminate information via text long after the initial events. They accumulated over 1,500 subscribers to the service in six months' time.

Project Leadership:

Our dedicated volunteer-run team has been doing work in Los Angeles for three years. We have seen the impact our campaign has had on individuals and wish to continue expanding our reach through the region. At each event, we have identified new volunteers and we've been able to develop our leadership skills through our internal trainings and retreats, as well as our work geared towards the wider community.

Team

Project Director – Kimberly Bautista

Kimberly Bautista's feature-length documentary film, *Justice for My Sister*, has screened in over 20 countries as part of a transnational campaign to prevent gender-based violence. The film has won several accolades, including the HBONALIP 2012 Documentary Filmmaker Award, and Best Documentary at film festivals in Holland, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Los Angeles. She has spoken as an expert on the topics of gender-based violence and representation of women and girls in the media at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and at the INternational PUBLIC Television Screening Conference (INPUT) in El Salvador. She acted as jury member for the Connect the Docs Transmedia Pitch Competition at the 2013 Hot Docs Conference & Forum in Toronto, Canada. Kimberly freelances for LATV's American Latino, produced PSAs for Univision, and worked for TLC, Morgan Spurlock, and Patricia Cardoso. She holds a Master's in Social Documentation from University of California, Santa Cruz for film production. She has produced educational materials for the *Justice for My Sister* campaign and presented countless workshops on preventing gender-based violence to numerous audiences.

Project Manager – Hilda Franco

Hilda Franco received an Associate's degree from Fullerton College in Liberal arts then transferred to UC Santa Cruz and ultimately earned a Bachelors in Latin American/Latino Studies and Literature. She is currently pursuing her Master's at Cal State Long Beach in the Science of Counseling with a concentration on Student Development in Higher Education. As a student leader she has organized rallies, community events, discussion forums, art and cultural events, and educational workshops advocating for immigration reform, sexual and gender equality, cultural preservation and reverence. She has served as a child care worker in a group home that housed 6 foster youth who were wards of the state or on probation. She also worked as a Case Manager at a nonprofit in Little Tokyo where her 70 person caseload included womyn living in a domestic violence shelter, the homeless, the elderly, people with mental illness and HIV, and poor families and their children. She has experience writing grants, managing projects, and writing curricula. She is currently working for LA City College as a Programming Coordinator for the office of Student Life, and is responsible for conducting leadership trainings and providing the students with the tools necessary to coordinate their events within budget.

Events Coordinator – Uvence Martinez

Uvence Martinez is a mother of 3 children, Supports & Services Manager at Tri-Counties Regional Center, small business owner and a Domestic Violence Counselor/Collective Member at Justice for My Sister. She has a BA in Psychology from CSULA and is

pursuing her MS in Applied Behavior Analysis from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Los Angeles. She has served Tri-Counties Regional Center for over 7 years and currently supervises 14 Service Coordinators and is responsible for the proper case management of over 800 families in East Ventura County.

Uvence is also a domestic violence survivor. She made the difficult decision to leave a 13 year abusive relationship and decided she would use her personal experience to empower other women and families. After watching Justice For My Sister she decided to join the collective July of 2012. After serving the community in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, she took a 40 hour course to become a Domestic Violence Counselor through Interface Children and Family Services in Ventura County in 2014.

Public & Donor Relations – Heidy Rodriguez

Born to Guatemalan immigrant parents, Heidy Rodriguez takes pride in her bicultural and bilingual upbringing. She has a love and passion for the world, traveling, social justice and equality for all. She majored in International Studies with an emphasis in Latin America and has worked in Guatemala as a volunteer for a battered Women's Shelter. In her hometown of Los Angeles, she is involved in the faith community and currently works as a Development Coordinator at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles. She has participated in Justice for My Sister's trainer's training, and is fully versed in the organization's curriculum.

Antinea Moran – Facilitator and Outreach

Antinea Moran is a mother of 3 children who emigrated to the United States at age 18 with a one year old and a violent relationship that lasted 15 years. Now she is an independent, single mother. She learned many valuable lessons about women living in unhealthy and abusive relationships and provides educational workshops to women's groups on the topics of domestic violence and sexual abuse. She is a promotora for East Los Angeles Women's Center and continues with the desire to continue helping women out of these types of relationships.

Partners

- East LA Women's Center, Peace Over Violence, Casa de la Familia, CAST, Mil Mujeres, Proyecto Pastoral, Interface Children and Family Services, Maternal and Child Health Access and Planned Parenthood are service providers in California who have promoted our events to their clients, hosted our screenings and workshops for their staff and leaders, and have attended our events to promote their services and connect to community.
- Mujeres de Maiz, Ovarian Psycos, and AF3IRM are women's grassroots organizations that we have coordinated and collaborated with consistently over time.
- Corazon del Pueblo, Eastside Café, and Boyle Heights Youth Technology Center have hosted our trainings, screenings, and meetings.
- Women at Work is an organization that promotes financial independence among women. They have participated at our job fair.
- The LAPD and Pasadena Police Department have shared their strategies with us

- on how they follow-up with domestic violence calls, and have partaken in panel discussions and plan to participate in future trainings.
- Impunity Watch in Holland and Guatemala, The Myrna Mack Foundation in Guatemala, Catolicas por el Derecho a Decidir in Mexico, UN Women in Central and South America, Marcha de las Putas and Justicia para Vanessa in Ecuador, Red Chilena contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres in Chile, No Mas Feminicidios Nicaragua, have hosted our events and replicated our initiatives in their communities.
 - Various Embassies throughout Central and South America and the U.S. Department of State have funded and overseen our project development.
 - CHIME FOR CHANGE is a partner that helped us launch an online crowdfunding campaign.
 - Latino Public Broadcasting is a partner who has helped us launch our broadcast and outreach campaign.
 - New Day Films is our film's educational cooperative distribution company.

Project History:

In 2003, Director/Producer Kimberly Bautista first became politicized regarding cases of femicide/feminicide in Latin America after watching Lourdes Portillo's film *Señorita Extraviada*, which focuses on the violent murders of women in Juarez, Mexico. She co-founded the organization Speak Out For Them (SOFT) with friends at Pitzer College after creating a painting that critiqued the lack of access to information that the typical U.S. citizen has in regards to women's rights violations abroad. Through her student activism, she connected with individuals working in Guatemala, and decided to begin production of *Justice for My Sister* while completing her Master's Degree at University of California, Santa Cruz.

Justice for My Sister Collective in Guatemala:

In October 2011, the Justice for My Sister Collective formed in Guatemala during a series of leadership development trainings, with the goal of disseminating the documentary film *Justice for My Sister* to different communities throughout Guatemala. With support of the Dutch Embassy in Guatemala, we trained 18 individuals in advocacy, public speaking, and gender-based violence prevention. These individuals in turn brought the film to 60 communities in Guatemala.

In Guatemala, we were very successful in initiating dialogue among the public about the issue of violence against women. It motivated women who were being threatened and/or abused to seek support and denounce violence. We encouraged potential witnesses to testify, because cases often depend on them, as lack of scientific evidence is pervasive.

Through our outreach efforts, we accumulated over 1,500 subscribers to our text messaging service. On average, the operators reported receiving two new cases a week via text message. One of the most common incoming questions was how to leave an abusive relationship. Another common request was how to get child support from their father of their children.

One remarkable outcome of the campaign was the formation of leaders. One facilitator in particular was very timid and rarely spoke on the outset of the trainings. But by the time she was presenting workshops in communities, she had truly blossomed. Now her colleagues in the non-profit sector recognize her as an outstanding orator, so much so that she is currently representing their non-governmental organization in Spain. She points to the Justice for my Sister campaign as formative in her leadership skills.

Throughout January, February, and March 2012, the group underwent training again, and participated in group therapy administered by Centro Q'anil. We received funding from the US Embassy in Guatemala at the time, and were able to reach 80 communities with our advocacy team during that tour. Since then, we have partnered with Impunity Watch, Aquí Entre Hombres and other organizations that have brought the film and trainings to 30 additional spaces.

Justice for My Sister Collective in Los Angeles:

Throughout the spring and summer of 2012, organizations in Los Angeles such as Community Education Social Action (CESA) and Corazón del Pueblo hosted community screenings, where audience members who wanted to get more involved in the cause came forward as volunteers. In June 2012, the Justice for my Sister Collective was formed in Los Angeles at a retreat and training. Founding members included Uvence Martinez, who had watched the film at Solidarity Ink; Daniella Ortiz Padilla, who had watched the film at Corazón del Pueblo; Heidy Rodriguez, who had watched watched the film at Solidarity Ink; and Edwin Gomez, Terence Linton, Kimberly Bautista, and Farrah Rivera, who had volunteered previously at these events. Other participants in the initial training included Alex Alpharo and Elisa Noemi. The campaign has had a large impact on its facilitators, as well as on its participants throughout South and East Los Angeles.

Collective members share a strong desire to raise awareness around the issue of sexual and domestic violence because we ourselves are survivors and witnesses of traumatic events. This perspective also separates us from many other organizations and agencies that address similar issues. We also have really amazing rapport with the community, as we are primarily artists and activists engaging the community through art, which makes us very accessible. Oftentimes service providers can be intimidating to communities, particularly communities of color and undocumented communities who have historically had tumultuous relationships with authorities. Many community members have turned to us for resources and references, and we have been able to point them in the right direction and encourage them to seek further services when needed.

As a team, we have been able to host pilot runs of the educational materials and trainings internally, and this has been a testament to the training's effectiveness, and its ability to serve as a tool to provide leadership development and healing to facilitators that we hope to train. With our pilot training, we have witnessed participants grow their skills in the following fields: leadership, public speaking, experience in coordination, team work, event planning, general knowledge of violence prevention and advocacy.