Solitas: An Evaluation of a Non-Government Organization's Approach to Gender Needs in Latin America

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SOLITAS: AN EVALUATION OF A NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION'S APPROACH TO GENDER NEEDS IN LATIN AMERICA

by

Tara J. Vette

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Tara J. Vette
This study is an evaluation of a project conducted by a non-government organization working with single women in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The focus of the evaluation was how Solitas, a non-government organization project approached gender-specific needs of the women. More specifically this study will ascertain if the skills learned by the women were sustainable, the amount of participation in decision making for the project and if the skills taught by the organization led to the participants organizing independently.

This evaluation was conducted by examining the organization’s own reports concerning the progress of the project and the organization’s gender policy. In addition, a questionnaire was used to survey some of the administrators and volunteer workers who work with the organization on this project.

The findings of this study were that this project needed to continue to have a more lasting impact on the participants, the participants did have a role in making decisions for the project in both formal and informal ways, many basic needs are met such as income earning and health and sanitation through training sessions, while an improvement in literacy was needed among the participants. Finally, the women have organized around some of these practical needs, but have not organized around any political or social issues.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marx stated that the "status of a woman [in society] is the measure of progress" of that society (Taplin 1989). Most development agencies agree that more attention should be paid to gender needs when designing and implementing projects in the Third World. The recent trend toward including gender sensitive factors in development projects is growing. Yet, it is not clear whether these specific factors are leading to a change in the lives of women in Third World countries.

As the following approaches to the ways for non-government organizations (NGOs) to create gender sensitive programs suggest, integrating women's needs into development projects has been part of the NGO agenda for some time. The most recent approaches suggest that when an NGO focuses on the practical needs of women, eventually, strategic goals will follow. It is also agreed that in order to influence the political, economic, and social development of their country, women must have a significant and validated voice in policy making. One which is heard and one which is taken seriously by the mostly male policy makers.

The trend toward finding alternative development models demands input from women whose approaches to development and programs have proven to be creative, innovative and less bound by Western thought. In order to gain this influence, however, women must have the resources to become organized and unified. Since the lack of funds from their own governments, as Sen and Grown (1987) suggests is the result of structural adjustment and militarization policies, and since the reduction of social programs is also due to the same factors, women must first gain simple practical
achievements such as clean water, food, and housing. With these achieved, women can begin to think about their rights as citizens and their important contribution to the development process. In the absence aid from their own government, women must look to NGOs to provide the training and resources needed to meet first their practical and then their strategic needs. Therefore, an NGO project must focus on these two elements of women’s needs in order to empower women to contribute most effectively in the development of their country’s economic, social, and political spheres.

In this thesis I will evaluate the Solitas project which is being carried out in Latin America by a Non-government organization (NGO). In this introductory chapter, I will begin by outlining my specific research questions and clarifying the intentions and limitations of this paper. Next, I present an overview of how women have been viewed in development and the relevance of several major theories to my thesis. This theoretical discussion will help the reader understand the history, failures, and accomplishments of gender sensitivity in development organizations in previous years. In addition, I will explain my methodology and expectations for this research.

The second chapter will be based on a case study of Solitas, a project in Honduras. I will explain the economic, political and social context for the project, as well as the organization which sponsors the project. In addition, I will describe those involved in the project, its goals and a few initial accomplishments. In the third chapter, I summarize the evaluation of the project made by the sponsoring organization and ask the questions which are specifically geared to answer my research questions. I will present the results there. This will be the most important part of the thesis as I will be attempting to assess the project on my terms, not those of the organization. In my conclusion, I will return to theory, summarize my findings, and speculate on possible future accomplishments for this project.
Throughout this thesis, it is important to understand two key concepts. "Practical gender needs" are those needs which women have everyday. Examples are clean water and air, housing, income earning and clothing. "Strategic gender needs" are those which, if met, elevate women in the society they live (Molyneux, 1985). This may be done by organizing a social movement, changing laws which discriminate against women, or changing values in the society. My case study, the Solitus project, will demonstrate this approach to women's needs by engaging a women-only project and by targeting foremost practical needs of the women participants.

Review of Literature and Theory

In this section, I will discuss the relevant literature to demonstrate how different theories of development have treated gender awareness. Feminist theorists concerned about development have critiqued several major development theories. The critiques have focused on the dependency, modernization, and historical materialist theories. Responses led to both organizational changes in such places as United States agency of International Development (USAID) and the United Nations (UN) as well as various specific policy responses, including the welfare, equity, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches. These responses were however weakened by larger national and international policies. Structural adjustment and military spending are examples of these policies. Each step is an attempt to better include women in development projects. I will comment on the general strengths and weakness of each, but will also demonstrate the specific questions which each suggests should be asked of NGO projects such as the case study presented in this thesis.
Women in Development

The theoretical basis for including women in development projects is broad. The phrase 'Women In Development' (WID) was first coined by the Women's Committee of the Washington DC Chapter of the Society for International Development in the early 1970's. The term was quickly adopted by United States Aid (USAID) and has come to stand for development approaches which consider women not as passive bystanders in development, but as economic providers to it (Moser 1993). This term is now used within the office of Women In Development in USAID to distinguish development approaches which attempt to integrate women's needs and roles into development.

This discussion ignites the debate between the terms "women in development" and "women and development". The later implies women already having a role, even if it is not recognized by the male political sphere, in development. The former suggests NGOs must put women into development where they have not belonged or participated in the past. The later is now the more accepted term and influences the framework of NGO work with women in developing countries (Braidotti et al. 1994, 82-85).

Most development agencies now try to engage women as active participants in the economic sphere. For example, in the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) Solitas project, women are being taught more marketable skills to earn independent income. The use of the term within USAID was only the beginning of a recognition that women had a place in development. The particulars of whether their role was different than the role of men in development projects had not been analyzed. Yet, this increase in awareness was a major breakthrough. This initial step suggests an
examination into whether the women participating in NGO projects are already integrated into the market.

Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory sees the Third World as completely dependent on the First World and women as passive participants in the economy. The modes of production that affect women are influenced by the dependent status of the nation in the world system (Taplin 1989). The emphasis was on labor, as dependency theorists hypothesize that the demand for cheap labor from the Western world makes women victims, controlled by capitalism. The personification of this theory through NGOs is primarily in the form of the Welfare and Equity Approaches, described in detail below.

Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory sees the capitalist marketplace as the focus of development planning (Taplin 1989). This approach is mostly economic and technology driven and deals little with women specifically. It is assumed that having goods similar to those in Western countries is valuable. This does not promote domestic goods or independence from the Western world. In many cases it has created a “shell” of modernization without education or skills to fall back on. A dependency on the First World is inevitable. Therefore, a focus on the marketplace did not automatically create equality. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) discovered that women’s organizations, as diverse as they may be, should be deemed legitimate and powerful in their own right with or without economic clout. The anti-poverty and efficiency approaches described below reflect this theory.
Historical Materialist Approach

Both Moser and Taplin explore the Historical Materialist Approach. Moser states that Malthus felt populations have a natural tendency to outstrip resource availability. Because capitalism is based on the use of natural resources for profit and the eventual lack of resources will hurt women because their position in society will decrease as production moves to the domestic economy (Taplin 1989). This theory focuses on who controls the means of production. If the control over production is taken out of the hands of males and capitalists, women will move up in society. This is done through a political approach: Socialism. Marx believed that in a socialist society the community was responsible for all production, including domestic duties, women’s traditional confinement would cease.

This theory is relevant to the Latin American cultural context in which the projects I will be assessing take place. Not only has the left been a place of emerging feminist movements in Latin America, but many see this theory as a reaction to the machismo attitude in Latin America. The hierarchy between man and women is visible in every country, yet Latin American countries have a unique term to describe this glorification of man and the demise of women. It is necessary, as this theory makes us aware, to examine the gender relationships which society and elites control. Yet, a major criticism of this theory is that without the rise of a socialist state, women’s role does not change. Researchers wonder whether women can wait that long for emancipation (Taplin 1989, Moser 1993). I will attempt to describe some of these relationships in the discussion of machismo.
Welfare Approach

The Welfare Approach is derived from the colonial experience throughout which women were viewed as “vulnerable” along with the disabled and elderly (Taplin 1989). Several women scholars, including Taplin and Moser examined this theory on the basis of its effects on women. It views women as passive participants in development with their most important and most effective role being that of child bearer and mother. This approach focuses on better mothering. It also viewed women as the source of overpopulation. When using this approach, NGOs are usually seen coordinating handouts: food and basic needs. They supervise middle class women to help those struck by poverty or a one-time disaster.

Several groups criticized this approach and the “handout” plans which accompanied them because it perpetuated erroneous views about women’s roles. Female professors and researchers from the West with a feminist perspective saw how these plans hurt women. This approach did not raise self-esteem nor encourage empowerment (Taplin 1989, Moser 1993). Because the emphasis of this approach is on survival, only short term aid is given. No training or long term education is taught. It is still a popular approach because it is politically safe. There is no challenge to the nation’s government or its cultural traditions. It is easy to administer because it uses a top-down approach. These factors make it attractive for NGOs but it is also the basis of many criticisms.

This approach however, made an important contribution to the evolution of the recognition of gender needs. It examined the women as child bearers very carefully to probe what needs were special to women in these areas. This was an advancement from the earlier approaches. Yet, these theories do not explore whether there are roles
other than child rearing which women play in development. This is a great error as Moser explores later, showing that there are several roles through which women participate in development. In addition, these theories present the dependency of the Third World on the First World. This is a relevant issue in this thesis because the organization I will be assessing originates in the United States. Therefore, I will try to discern whether the projects teach long term skills which allow them to become independent from the organization and how the project approaches each of these roles.

Equity Theory

This was the first approach used by the new division Women In Development (WID) in USAID. This theory advanced the Welfare Approach because it emphasized how women weave their productive and child bearing roles into economic development. It is a reaction to the critiques contained in the Dependency Theory. The Dependency Theory and the Welfare Approach see major problems revolving around the restriction of women to the household. In addition, there was an inappropriate application of Western values on women's work through the Welfare approach. Finally, women's productive role was neglected. Women's active participation in economic development through productive and reproductive means became the emphasis of the Equity Approach. This active role often goes unnoticed, but meets both practical and strategic needs (Moser 1993).

NGOs that use the Equity approach emphasize women entering the economic sphere. The major actions that are seen in such an approach are the opening of access to employment and affirmative action policies. The problems that arise with such an approach are several. First, critics see a continuation of forcing Western values of equality on Third World countries, while the Third World countries would prefer to emphasize development. In addition, agencies come in conflict with national
governments because the approach emphasizes strategic needs and there are usually
cultural traditions opposing such advances for women. It came into conflict with
societal norms and values and it was not accepted by the women who were punished or
ostracized if they followed this view. Finally, the approach still uses a top-down
approach so the women are not empowered to be self-reliant.

This theory suggests the need for development agencies to be sensitive to the
cultural norms and values of the society in which they are working. It is also important
because it integrates women’s economic contribution with their role as mothers.
Several problems such as conflict with tradition, equality practices which did not meet
rhetoric, and top-down organization doomed this approach. Therefore, I will assess
what cultural values the project has attempted to overcome and which ones they
reinforce and the reasons for each.

Anti-Poverty Approach

The anti-poverty approach was a reaction to the Modernization Theory. The
Office of Women In Development moved to this approach to emphasize income
earning for women as a chance to meet practical needs. It was a search for alternative
models of economic and social development for the Third World (Moser 1993) since
the Modernization Theory had not produced a “trickle down” effect as agencies had
expected, but produced unemployment and poverty. This approach also developed
from the need to confront traditional relations between men and women.

The action taken in this approach is based on aiding the lowest income earners
and their families (Moser 1993). The World Bank and other agencies determined the
basic needs of women. These include such things as food and shelter. Yet they add to
this list a group of social needs as well, such as education and human rights. Women
became the target group for the action because they were the subjects most affected by
failure of "trickle down" and they are the most vital link in providing basic needs to their families. Therefore, access to income earning activities and informal sector employment is emphasized. In addition, education about birth control is taught. The NGOs usually focus on jobs which are traditionally women's work and convert these into income-earning activities for the women.

Critics of the Anti-Poverty Approach cite the lack of opening new employment area for the women as a major concern. Especially in urban areas, new skills are needed to keep up with the emerging service and distribution sector. Many times as well, resource allocation remains with the male head of the household, so decision making power does not shift. It also combines domestic and economic work which depends on women extending their already long work day even more. It also excludes them from micro enterprises where only men compete.

This theory advanced the view of women's role in development because it included an economic role for them. This is especially relevant to the Solitas project because one of the major goals of this project is alternate income generation for the participants. Again, it is important to see if projects are teaching skills which reduce dependence on the First World. This theory suggests the importance of women's economic role to be included in training. Therefore, I will attempt to discern if the economic skills taught by the agencies are simply ones which transfer Western tastes while ignoring indigenous wisdom and skills formerly supported by society and if the skills are traditionally women's. Women must be allowed to determine their own needs. If women themselves determine what their needs are before a project comes in, the goals of the project can be shaped by these desires instead of those which the project imposes on the women. New economic spheres can be open to them, as well. In addition, I will evaluate whether the agencies attempt to take any reading of the needs in the project area or incorporate women's self-expressed needs in the projects goals.
Efficiency Approach

The Efficiency Approach is currently advocated by such organizations as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This approach takes the focus off women in particular and turned it toward development (Moser 1993). This approach begins to emphasize structural adjustment policies within the recipient countries. These are economic strategies imposed by IMF to target the balance of payments problem through “demand management and supply expansion” (Moser 1993).

With this approach, equity between genders is achieved through economic participation. Because the emphasis is on cash crops and production, it is successful only by extending the already stretched working hours of women who have to continue to grow food and haul water for survival. The results of these measures have shifted paid production to unpaid labor (usually women) in the name of efficiency and production (Moser 1993). In many countries, the result of such policies have led to recessions and a further debt crisis. The consequences have been lower incomes, and reduced government education, health care, and food subsidies. These affect women’s practical needs greatly by requiring longer hours for less or no pay and does not provide for strategic needs. In addition, the cut in social programs by the government in the name of efficiency hurts women most. They are the ones most likely to receive such aid.

This is a vital consideration on the national level. Yet, it may be reflected in a shift of burden at the project level. This suggests that women may spend much of their time in training or educational activities when other paid or child-care activities should be emphasized. Therefore, I will assess how much time the activities require as compared to the time used for income generation, child care, and other necessities.
Structural Adjustment Policies and Military Spending

The Efficiency Approach has led to changes in government policies. Third World governments depend on the World Bank and IMF for loans so their policies are influenced by these agencies. Sen and Grown (1987, 67-80) address the link between the balance of payments problem from which Third World countries suffer and its effects on women. They emphasize that organizations such as the United Nations Commission for Latin America have suggested land reform and import substitution as solutions to the debt crisis. Recently, as mentioned, structural adjustment has been a popular strategy. Sen and Grown outline the employment and social consequences of this type of plan (1987, 71). For example, employment in small industries will be reduced while sweatshop industries will flourish. The informal and agricultural sectors will suffer as well. The impact on women’s lives and their employment must be considered. Moser echoes Sen and Grown’s discussion of how social expenditures will also be reduced (Moser, 1993). Again, a national fiscal issue may be reflected by whether there is a market or absorption of skills gained by women. Can the society handle more producers/sellers in the market? Social impacts such as working and living conditions must be considered.

Sen and Grown’s discussion also includes the issues of militarization and violence (1987, 67-71). These author’s look at how by using structural adjustment, many countries neglected other key polices and issues. As the balance of payments crisis was frequently influenced by military expenditures, Sen and Grown explore the consequences of these expenditures on women in Third World countries. They propose that the increase of expenditures leads to the increase of a culture of violence against women or “macho-ness” (Sen and Grown 1987, 67). While an increase in arms production decreases land resources, it also lowers output and consumption. As a
result, the number of women refugees would increase as the incidence of war increased. Spending on social programs which are primarily used by women would decrease.

The problems of structural adjustment and military spending are important to this paper because these policies increase the needs of women. Many Latin American governments have used a lot of money to support the military. Social services, which affect the poor and women the most, are often sacrificed for the sake of defense spending. Women suffer from these expenditures because they are most often cut from the social services from which women benefit. In addition, unemployment is a major problem in Latin American countries. Structural adjustment may eliminate jobs which women could otherwise fill. Furthermore structural adjustment policies create sweatshop jobs usually occupied by women. This macro approach is not very useful in improving women's role in development or their livelihood. In the discussion of the political, social and economic context of Honduras, I will explore these themes as they relate directly to that country.

**Empowerment Approach**

Most of the authors reviewed here advocate the Empowerment Approach to integrate practical and strategic needs and gender planning into development planning (Sen and Grown 1987, Moser 1989, Moser 1993, Molyneux 1985). This approach began as a reaction to the Equity Approach. The Empowerment Approach involves grassroots feminist organizations which usually form in an area to meet practical needs of women in the community. It is based on Third World authors and prefers to avoid the Western feminist movement. In some cases, these groups may unite into a national or international organization permanently or temporarily advocating strategic needs. This approach emphasizes self-reliance and internal strength. It does not advocate
women dominating men (Molyneux 1985), but women’s control over resources. Some of the organizations do not allow Westerners as members because the founders value self-reliance and self-definition. This type of approach may be most valuable because the women themselves can define the purpose and goals of the group. They can evaluate the consequences of actions in their own terms and sustain the development and progress made. The women can determine whether actions by development projects are simply shifting the burden to another sphere in their lives. Organizations such as DAWN and GABRIELLA (current organizations in Africa and the Philippines, respectively) have been the most effective way to achieve practical gender goals and utilize these to reach self-defined strategic objectives in development planning.

There are several actions taken by groups, such as the one above, which advocate this approach. The groups, formed usually in geographical regions, may gather around a specific practical need, such as weaving. Then as goals are articulated, specific strategic needs are addressed. Issues such as women’s place under the national law, women’s rights, access to employment and education are discussed. They attempt to reach strategic goals through practical ones. Many times, an existing organization working on practical needs becomes empowered through these methods. The group may also participate in direct political action and exchange of information.

This approach is not yet widely used because it challenges Western ideas of feminism and development. It also decreases the role of the NGO. Development is initiated by the women it affects. This approach suggests outside organizations only aid the group once they ask for help. Therefore, I will be assessing whether the women came to the organization or whether the organization came to them. In addition, I will ask whether the original goals of the participants have been upheld by the organization. Women should be a part of the leadership, planning, and implementation
of the project so that independence from the project is gained. It is important for Western organizations to recognize and utilize the insight these groups possess.

Development and Evaluation Research

Evaluating Third World Problems

Chambers (1983, 13-23) outlines six biases which affect how developers and researchers view the poor. The first is the spatial bias which keeps researchers and outsiders on the roads and near the cities so they do not experience the real plight of the poor. Second, there is a project bias whereas researchers are pointed to where projects are already being done and money is being spent. Third, there is a person bias. Chambers includes a male bias along with elite, healthy, and adaptive biases in this category. Those who are community leaders, healthy, and adapt easily to Western ideas benefit. He also states that researchers and developers have a dry season bias. The researchers only venture into the area when it is easily accessible: during the dry season. Fourth, he states that there may be politeness and timidity biases. Finally, he sees a professional bias in the training and values of outsiders which attract them to the less poor. Those who are concerned about the poor are trained in Western institutions and are urged to remain near the cities where resources are plentiful. It is important to remember that the theoretical and practical approaches to development mentioned earlier may encompass some or all of these biases. Each has their assumptions about women and the agencies which try to engage in gender-sensitive projects.

Chambers most clearly addresses each of my research questions. He makes many suggestions on how to conduct surveys, questioning, and integrating different techniques in order to answer these questions (Chambers 1983, 58). He calls on “outsiders” to not be afraid to go into the periphery where the poor and especially
women’s needs are apparent (Chambers 1983, 13, 19). By asking what needs the poor and women see themselves as having and combining their innovation with academic experience, progress can be made toward helping women in constructive ways in alleviating some of the biases he mentions (Chambers 1983, 202, 206). Chambers really gets at the need to ask women what their needs are instead of “outsiders” determining these for the women. In addition, he is sensitive to relieving the burden of women by using their own talents to meet these needs. These suggestions lead to an examination of those answering the questionnaires whether some of these biases are present.

Further, Sen and Grown (1987, 45) emphasize the need to gather preliminary information about the socioeconomic conditions of a project site. Then the markets available to women, soil conditions, job opportunities and training programs need to be explored. They suggest that “knowledge banks” of such information, better trained project personnel and more indigenous input will lead to greater project success. Moser (1993, 83) suggests objectives which are operational, manuals and checklists for the projects, and a new methodology that would include the process and organizational structure to implement a plan. Again, Chambers does the most in exploring new ways to combine the efforts of practitioners and academics to provide the best understanding and help the poor themselves develop plans to better the poor and women without taking on the traditionally held paternal attitudes.

**Evaluating Empowerment Approaches in Terms of Gender Needs**

Moser (1989, 1981) applies the concepts of Practical and Strategic Gender Needs (Molyneux 1985) to development projects in order to evaluate the Empowerment Approach. First, Moser distinguishes between the different roles women play in society. She states that, despite common generalizations, women do not only perform
a reproductive role but also productive and community management roles. The reproductive role of women is not limited to childbearing. It includes caring for the present and future labor force. Another role is as productive workers. Both men and women take part in this role. It includes agricultural, market and home production. Women are usually the secondary income earners. The final role women have is as community managers. Women are a large part of non-political neighborhood activities such as health care, education, and the division of labor. The activities are usually unpaid work done during women's "free-time". These roles are important in the context of empowerment because they form the basis around which women's lives revolve. If development projects are trying to empower women, they must look at each role women play in their specific society. The projects need to ask the women which role is most important to focus on and form goals and plans of action using the women's input.

Moser uses two broad concepts within which women's roles must be evaluated. This is especially true for considering gender roles in development plans. The difference between women's practical and strategic needs (Molyneux, 1985) becomes vital. Practical needs are those involving day-to-day needs for survival. Examples are clean air and water, food, and income earning activities. These are the needs which give women and men and their children and the community the means of life. Strategic needs are those which raise women from their subordinate position in relation to men. Examples are equality in labor, and equality in the right to organize, own land, vote and acquire credit. Meeting these needs empowers women. They are also the needs which must be met through political means. Moser (1989, 1987) further proposes that if met, practical gender needs will change civil and traditional laws which will lead to strategic gender achievements.
This discussion suggests that although unable to organize initially, after being taught certain practical skills, women may have time and energy to work toward more ideological goals. Therefore, I will look at the projects to see if any practical needs have yet led to strategic ones.

The Rise of Civil Society in Latin America

The rise of Civil Society in Latin America has come slowly. Yet, the last decade or two has found the most advancements. One of the major steps in this process had been the emergence of labor unions throughout Latin America. Although mostly male groups, peasant men and women became politically aware and saw the result of their political power when organized. The right to vote was given to women only after the Second World War across Latin America. Even then, many believe the motivation was not an adherence to the rights of women, but the expectation that women's suffrage would simply strengthen the conservative forces which had strongholds at that time. Yet, as in the United States, the push for women's suffrage inspired the beginning of women's organization and a women's movements across Latin America. Four categories of political mobilization have been found. Jaquette (4-6) suggests that women have organized first around human rights issues. An example of this is the famous Madres of Plaza de Mayo of Argentina, who protested the disappearing of their fathers, sons, and husbands and in effect directly protested the government through an accepted “women’s cause”. Secondly, feminist movements, usually originating in leftist political movements, have had impact on the transition to democracy in Latin America. The main issues revolve around the opposition to the authoritarian regimes, which in turn found opposition among women to the authoritarian structure of the household and family. Opposition to this family structure could easily be woven around the political movements during the transition years of the
1980’s. Third, Jaquette suggest that urban poor women have also formed movements which have impacted the transition to democracy. As discussed above, as structural adjustment programs and militarization occur in Latin America, social programs which affect women and children most directly are sacrificed by the government. Therefore, urban women have rallied around the need to rely on their own resources. In order for support, have looked to politicized groups such as political parties, the Church and international foundations, and NGOs. Although it is the urban poor women who are the focus for this paper, it is vital to include a fourth group which Jaquette leaves out. Rural poor women have recently emerged in parts of Latin America as a new force to be reckoned with by policy makers. Groups such as the Federacion Hondurena de Mujeres Campesinas (FEHMUC) or the Federation of Rural Honduran Women, formed by Reyna de Miralda, is a grassroots movement emerging from one of the most remote and poverty stricken areas in Honduras. As of the late 1980’s, this organization had 350 women’s groups with a membership of approximately 5,800 (Levy 115). Despite the struggle which still faces Latin American women, these four unique women’s forces have begun to take advantage of the transition period which is leading to civil, if not democratic, society in Latin America.

It is important to try to bring these theories, concepts, and approaches together to see how organizations are actually applying them in their projects and how women are being regarded in these projects. An exploration into the tactics and factors which make projects better at meeting women’s practical and gender needs is vital.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

My research is based on five broad research questions which stem from my major inquiry of how NGO approach gender needs and whether these approaches are effective and my proposal that NGOs must focus on both the practical and strategic
needs of women in order to empower women to contribute most effectively in the
development of their country. How are NGOs incorporating empowering, gender
sensitive aspects into their projects? The following hypotheses will help to identify my
research. I propose that current development projects are teaching skills which are
useful for women’s needs, yet, these skill may not last after the project leaves. I
propose that in most cases, strategic gender needs are not being met (empowerment,
organization). Those strategic needs that are being met cannot be directly traced back
to or a causal relationship can not be proven, although they may be an indirect result of,
practical needs (health, food, housing) which are proposed by the agency. The projects
are actually relieving the burden of women, not simply shifting the burden to another
sphere of their life. The contents of the project’s training is determined by a need
foreseen by the women themselves at least in part not only those skills which the
agency determined the women needed.

Thesis Outline and Expected Results

In the thesis, I intend to evaluate one non-government organization, by
examining the organization’s project evaluations as well as my evaluation. The project
will be from Latin America, as that is my area of interest. This will mean that some
themes of women’s oppression relating to machismo will run through the background I
will give for the region and country. I have intentionally chosen a women-centered
project. This is important in order to see how women in particular are affected by the
project.

Organization

The organization I will examine in this thesis was chosen for a variety of
reasons. First, it is a non-government agency. I hope that there will be less bias in the
reports I receive from the sponsor organization because it is not dependent on government funding. Second, the organization has projects in Latin America. Because I want to focus on Latin American development, this is necessary. Third, the project emphasizes women. I have chosen this because I am interested in how the organizations are sensitive to women's needs in particular.

The NGO I have chosen, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is the missionary branch of a Protestant church denomination. It focuses on health, literacy, and income generation in their projects. This organization has projects in many Third World nations and is committed to not only presenting Christianity, but also to providing self-help skills for the participants. The specific project I will be evaluating is called Solitas (single women) which teaches women living in the slums of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, job skills and other skills.

**Methodology**

I will present the project as a case study. Given space limitations I will briefly describe the organization as well as the economic, political, social and geographic conditions surrounding the project. Then I will describe the project's planning and implementation in as much detail as possible. I will use the organization's records to do this part of this thesis.

Next, I will review and summarize the evaluations or assessments which the organization itself has done. Semiannual and annual reports of the CRWRC show the progress of each project in both statistical and narrative form. Also, they use independent evaluations which will be included in this section of this thesis. I will use the most up-to-date evaluations the organization can provide for this purpose.

Finally, I will make my own separate evaluation of the project. I will use a questionnaire for this part of the evaluation section. These questions were derived from
the major hypothesis stated at the beginning of this chapter. Each question in the questionnaire relates specifically to one of the propositions. A copy of the questionnaires in both Spanish and English are presented in Appendix B. How the study was conducted, the results of the questionnaire and a discussion about the respondents are stated in Chapter 3 of this thesis. This section will be the most in-depth assessment of the needs of the women and whether or not the project meets those needs. In addition, I hope to assess whether the skills taught were skills that are useful for the women and skills which the women can use even after the term of the project. A possible source of success or failure may be whether the women in the project area determined their own need for NGO or outside aid for a self-diagnosed problem or whether the organization defined the women's needs and proceeded with the project under that assumption. This section will hopefully lead to some ideas about what specific factors are needed in development projects in order to meet women's needs.

Expectations

In my conclusion to this thesis I will review the theoretical discussion and the questions each theory and approach suggests. I expect to answer these questions in the context of this specific case study in order to form a better understanding of how NGO projects can incorporate these suggestions to create effective projects. What I expect to find is that the project will be assessed favorably in terms of the organization's own evaluation. Yet, when evaluated in terms of answers to my own questions geared primarily at the impacts of these project on women, I expect that the projects will not fare as well. I believe that this investigation will lead to a better understanding about the impact of NGOs on women and hopefully it will help NGOs improve development plans.
It is now important to move to the political, economic, geographic, and social context of Solitas in order to view the Solitas project within these settings. In addition, a discussion of NGOs and their funding practices and possible biases follows. This is important to evaluate how CRWRC confronts the culture and conditions surrounding the project as well as the specific details of the organization's goals and priorities.
CHAPTER II
A CASE STUDY: SOLITAS

In this chapter, I will describe the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and Solitas, a project the organization sponsors in Honduras. I will use the CRWRC and this development project to analyze how non-government organizations approach gender-specific development in Latin America. The project, Solitas, is specifically geared toward poor women. The context surrounding Solitas is important to understand in order to see what changes are needed for effective development. This will include a brief summary of current economic, political, and social concerns in Honduras, the country where Solitas is located. A discussion of machismo, the cultural view of gender roles is necessary. Any discourse on gender roles and changing gender relations must begin with an explanation of the cultural beliefs of the specific society. Both men and women in Latin America are affected by these social constructs and they must, therefore, be included in such a study as well as the cultural traditions NGOs encounter. In addition, it is important to describe the urban context in which the women involved in Solitas live. This will help identify the development needs of these women and the area in which they reside.

Next, a description of the general and project-specific goals of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee are reviewed. In addition, a description of Solitas itself is necessary in order to assess how the stated goals are operationalized. The groups of people involved in Solitas, the activities and areas of greatest concern, and the implementation of the project is presented. This description is included in order to assess whether sustainable changes are being made in this project area. It is also
necessary in order to evaluate whether gender specific needs are being met. The assessment will take place in later chapters and a personal critique of these goals, activities and implementations also is included.

Non-government Organizations in Developing Countries

Western Non-government organizations working in developing countries receive funds from mostly private donations. However these donors are motivated, this money influences many lives. This motivation may be through the desire to help "under privileged" people or because of the tax incentive in most Western countries. Money funneled through an NGO working in a developing country side-steps advocating the government (and possible misdirection of funds by an a mistrusted government) and its policies as a whole while continuing to have an effect on the citizens of the target region. In addition, Third World governments rarely deny the presence of such organizations as they contribute to the infrastructure, education, and job force in the country at virtually no monetary cost to the government (James 1989). Further, survival of the projects depend on this funding and funding is denied on the basis of project success or failure. Therefore, as Chambers stated earlier, projects become inherently urban based (where they have access to more money), results-oriented (results may be biased toward a positive return) and academically biased as grant-writing and fundraising become increasingly important to the project.

Many NGOs in developing countries are religiously based. James attributes this phenomena to the proposition that Christian religion demands good works such as helping the poor in order to gain spiritual remuneration (James 1989). The limited scope of this thesis does not permit further evaluation of the motives of donors and organizations. Yet, it is true that the church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, has had a great influence in Latin America, including Honduras. Latin American
governments, however secular, can not deny or excuse this influence. While decrying the woes of the influence the Church has on its country, most governments realize the volunteer work which is done through these organizations and are careful to preserve their relationship with them, however precarious (James 1989).

The Context of Solitas

Geographical Context and Importance

Honduras has been described as being "in the jaws of a nutcracker" (Rudolph, 1984). Situated between Nicaragua to the Southwest, El Salvador to the West and Guatemala to the Northwest, gives Honduras its strategic position in Central America which has given the country both privilege and suffering.

Many negative affects from this position have taken its toll on Honduras. The poorest country in Central America must deal not only with its own population, but also with refugees and immigrants from the war-torn countries on its borders. As Sen and Grown (1987) suggest, these are most likely to be women. Especially during the 1980's, while Honduras' own population was booming, its mountainous and remote borders were infiltrated with guerrilla forces and refugees from all three countries. In addition, political exiles have often retreated to Honduran borders making it center stage for counterrevolutions (Rudolph 1984).

In contrast, because of its central position, Honduras has become a vital figure in the region. When attempting to form a common market in the 1970's and 1980's it was Honduras which is attributed the first move in breaking up the alliance which eventually lead to the demise of the agreements. Honduras also has been a leader in the regional peacekeeping effort in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s.
In domestic matters, the topography of Honduras also plays an important part in the political and social structure of the country. It is very mountainous and therefore travel and communications continue to be difficult, even in this decade. The population is also overwhelmingly rural despite the recent influx of urban migration. The only large urban areas are the capital of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. In addition, such luxuries as medical care and running, clean water are enjoyed mostly in these urban centers. As stated above, many times it is NGOs which are providing for the internal infrastructure of the country, while the government enjoys the volunteer labor and resources this brings to the country (James 1987).

Economic and Political Context

Although Honduras has not suffered from the intense international or civil wars of its neighbors, it has had an influx of refugees from them. In addition, Honduras has suffered from economic hardships and scarce resources. This makes Honduras a relatively stable, but very poor country.

Resources, such as energy, are scarce. Electricity is only on a few hours a day most of the time. Poverty and economic instability are common characteristics of this country. Many rural poor families make less than $800 (US) per year (Witte 1995). The rural to urban migration is very high as is typical in most developing countries. This results in consequences such as the high rate of unemployment. Many migrate to the cities to find jobs, but because they lack necessary skills, the migrants end up in the slums. Many of the slum dwellers are women because they usually lack the skills needed to survive in the city. Government assistance is also sporadic so survival is an on-going struggle.

The November 1993 election was seen by many as the most peaceful (CRWRC Semiannual Report June 1994). Despite its promises of stability and cleaning up
corruption, economic conditions remain dismal. With an inflation rate of 30%+ in 1994 and a large national debt, the government and the International Monetary Fund were and continue to be at odds. Further, the lack of rain in 1993-4 and less water has meant even less electricity and higher food prices than normal. By the end of 1994, electricity was back on twenty-four hours a day in most areas. Yet, the economy did not pick up. Food prices continue to be very high, as the previous drought caused scarcity. Because of the large foreign debt Honduras bears, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) does not allow price controls on agricultural items. Increased pressure on the poor for employment, food, and basic services has caused increases in poor-on-poor violence. By July 1995, inflation was still at 17.5%. Many protest groups have expressed the general feeling of being betrayed by the government to foreign banks, the wealthy, and multinational corporations (CRWRC Semiannual Report July 1995).

Social Context: Machismo

The social context of Honduras is also critical in understanding the actions and livelihoods of Hondurans. The culture of machismo frames the gender context in Honduras, as well as other Latin American countries. In Latin American culture, the implications of machismo are important to the accepted roles which women assume at home and in the workplace. Bustos (1976, 31) defines machismo as the male idea of themselves as superior to women. He states that this attitude results not only in a world view but also affects day-to-day behavior. Bustos recognizes the idea that a woman may keep herself repressed because she “honors the habits and beliefs that are opposed to her self-realization” and keeps her potential within the limits others have given her. This is called machista. Bustos indicates that the family is the vehicle of passing on this cultural ideology by raising children to be “good” girls and boys within the limited rules ascribed to them. This is still true today in Latin America. Boys are taught “No sea
cochon!" (Don’t be a faggot) (Lancaster 1992). Girls are taught to be passive and innocent, pure. Bustos (30) asserts that both men and women manifest these attitudes.

Despite the fact that it is accepted tradition for men to leave their wives and children or have several families, the legal act of marriage may be ridiculed by both men and women. Women tend to believe that the only leverage they have to leave a man if they abuse them is to threaten to leave them and legal marriage then would make this much more difficult. Men may also excuse legally marrying their “companero” because they are afraid of being tied to one women who will nag them and surely can not live up to their sexual expectations (Lancaster, 1992). Many men have several wives in different locations which they may visit from time-to-time. In addition, it is much more socially unacceptable to be legally married and then divorced than leave one’s husband when not legally married (Lancaster 1992). This is why so many of the women in Solitas pronounce themselves “married”, as marriage is rarely a legal act or something which obligates the man to provide for or live with his wife (wives) and children.

This ideology exhibits itself in the division of labor found throughout Latin America. Men’s work is outside the home and is remunerated while women’s work is usually neither. If a wife does work outside the home, it is usually a different job, status, and salary than a man. Women are seen as weak and are thought unable to handle duties outside the home because they are not strong, capable or psychologically stable enough (Bustos 1976, 36). Women’s work is seen as cheating on the husband or the husband believes that if given an inch, his wife will take a mile and will abuse her privileges. In addition, it is feared that the woman will become so independent of her husband she will neglect her duties at home, which are most important (Bustos 1976, 37). Jobs are considered an exception for women and agreed to only if assisting the fundamental role of mother and wife to educate the children or help her husband. Even if a woman has skills, possibly used in the formal sector when unmarried, she is
expected to use those inside the home after marriage. In 1990, the InterAmerican Development Bank issued its annual report which included a special section on working women in Latin America. It emphasized that women have less access to such things as personal development and income improvement (Bonilla 1990, 223). Occupations and university curriculums are chosen for their usefulness at home (de Lenero 1976, 41). In one survey a man admitted, "...to allow a wife to work is to confess publicly to not being a man..." (de Lenero 1976, 37. See Gerald Fortin 1971, 237). de Lenero (1976) adds to this discussion by indicating the guilt which burdens many Latin American working women. de Lenero (1976) also suggests that modernization does not necessarily lead to liberation of women, but lures them to a higher level of control where one is told what to wear, how to act, and what to look like in a consumer society. The InterAmerican Development Bank report confirms these findings. Bustos (1976) states that these "components of oppressive ideology and low self-image are thus related to the real economic, occupational, and educational segregation..." in Latin America. In concurrence with these recent InterAmerican Development Bank findings, Lancaster (1992) states that men and women are still brought up to believe traditional "macho" role for men. Some of his findings do indicate that although laws such as divorce laws and other laws are beginning to change, few attitudes about the roles of men and women in Latin American society are changing. Yet, some argue that with the younger generation with the influence of liberal regimes in many Latin American countries, is emerging a new set of ideals toward men and women. Despite this hope, few doubt the culture of machismo and its implications on social and political events in Latin America is near the end of its influence and oppression. Lancaster (1992) notes that it is these events occur within a machismo culture, not the other way around. Therefore, it is machismo which influences the structure of culture and society, and
perpetuates culture. As we can see, *machismo* is a large part of how women see themselves and how they function at home and in the workplace.

**Social Context: Urban Life**

Political and economic conditions affect urban migration. *Machismo* does as well. It is vital to see how these conditions weave themselves into the urban setting in Latin America. Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, is surrounded with urban slums. These slums consist of families who have migrated to the cities in hopes of finding employment, but have only found they do not have the skills or training to be employed. Many of the inhabitants of these slums are single women and children. As stated, women usually do not work outside the home if they have other choices, nor is the idea readily accepted. The culture of *machismo* has urged them to follow their husbands or lovers into the cities, but it does not allow for them to receive training or legitimate employment once the women arrive there. It is difficult for these women to overcome the mentality of being dependent on the men they followed, even if those same men desert the women. Yet, the women who live in the urban slums, many without husbands, must work to live. They must find income earning activities to support their families.

In a society which is not used to educating or training their women in marketable or income-earning activities, training for these women is very important. Without the necessarily skills in occupations and interests of their choice, these women will continue in their poverty. As will be explored later in this chapter, children tend to leave their mothers and join gangs or beg in the inner cities because of the lack of food and housing in the slums. Without skills, the children resort to a variety of odd jobs, begging and possibly prostitution. Therefore, acquiring these skills is a real
development need of urban slum dwellers. This education may break the vicious circle of unemployment in the urban centers and dependence on men.

Many of these slums are on the outskirts of large metropolitan areas, like Tegucigalpa. Therefore, services such as clean water, sewers, and electricity are scarce. Consequently, sanitation and health are lacking, to say the least. Women must learn basic health and sanitation techniques in order for them and their children to survive. The time it takes for these women to carry water for the daily chores and cooking is, in itself, a huge burden.

Water availability is an especially important aspect in women’s lives (Bennett 1995, 106-127). In the slums, clean, readily available water is scarce, making women’s work more difficult. Water is the “primary tool of women’s work” (Bennett 1995, 114). This is especially significant for women who are the primary income earners like those in Solitas. These single women are not only responsible for earning wages, but also the traditional social reproductive roles such as shopping and cooking, cleaning house, raising children, doing laundry and caring for the sick. A several mile walk to retrieve water each day becomes a time consuming task. This time could be used to earn wages or participate in other activities. Another significant aspect of the politics of water is men’s lack of knowledge about this issue and its importance in women’s lives (Bennett 1995, 114). Men, who have either left women totally on their own or who only return to the slum to sleep at night and on weekends, do not realize the crucial need for water service. Even those women who have water in their household must work around rationing and shortages. Those who must go outside the home to fetch water usually stand in long lines and must plan for times when the service is cut off.

One example of this taking place is in Mexico, where water has become a rallying point for women. Women use their need for clean, available water to protest
the government's discrimination of women's needs over the needs traditionally seen as more important, such as business. The women have used different tactics, such as blocking water trucks or picketing legislator's offices to get their point across. In addition, these tactics are even more effective because the police are hesitant to force the women and children to leave. Instead, they try to intimidate the women or negotiate with them (Bennett 1995, 120). These issues have quite a large political effect as it demonstrates the conflict between the lower income groups and the government. It is important to understand that not only do women have to cope with working conditions which are inadequate, but that women are usually the first to feel cuts in government spending on public services (Bennett 1995, 125-6).

On top of the lack of public utilities, many slum dwellers do not have basic income earning skills as well as not knowing how to read or write. Without education, jobs beyond the subsistence level will not be achieved and usually children will not learn these skills either. Literacy and math skills are needed in these areas in order for women to be able to run small businesses, avoid being cheated or taken advantage of, and to teach other women and their own children. Education is also the key to the children escaping from the destiny of their poverty-ridden mothers and their invisible, migrating fathers.

In conclusion, gender problems relate to these economic, political, and social needs in several ways. The economic and political context of Honduras keeps women working in informal sector or in demeaning jobs because they are unskilled. With a lack of public education, women are not able to resolve this condition. In addition, poverty is felt hardest by women as they are usually the poorest of the poor (Chambers 1983, 19). Because the government also lacks cash, social services which help the poor and women the most, are slowed or frequently cut. Utilities which provide clean water and other necessities are often denied by the government. The culture of
*machismo* inhibits many women from getting jobs or gaining skills, even when they are available. Also, men are allowed to leave their families without repercussion. Dependence on men for money and support make women willing to endure abuse and discrimination. All of these conditions make it very difficult for women to emancipate themselves from their situation. Yet, education, job skills, political activism may all be a part of the solution for these women.

This synopsis of recent political and economic events and the social context in Honduras demonstrates the reasoning behind the need for urban development. The development problems in Honduras have strong implications for the gender problems of Honduras. Many development agencies have tried to address these needs through development projects.

The Christian Reformed Church World Relief Committee (CRWRC)

Background and Goals

The CRWRC is a Christian organization working within the Christian Reformed Church of America. This organization partners with other organizations to fulfill three major objectives. Each of these objectives is derived from the main mission of the church denomination. This mission is to “promote the kingdom of God and demonstrate the gospel by administering the mercy of Jesus Christ to people in need everywhere...” (Gary Nederveld 16 October 1995).

First, the CRWRC emphasizes development. This is defined as “helping groups learn to identify and solve their own problems using available resources” (CRWRC Annual Progress Report 1994). This goal is met through several objectives. Leadership skills are taught in projects in order to strengthen the church groups or organizations. In addition, food production is emphasized. “practical and
environmentally responsible farming techniques” are taught in the development projects CRWRC sponsors. Focusing on income earning has produced many loan, skill development and managerial training programs. Health education is another goal of development. Nutrition, sanitation, and disease prevention techniques are taught. Finally, development projects emphasize literacy. Development took up 64% of the organizations budget in 1993-4.

The second area of CRWRC work is relief. CRWRC goes to many parts of the world when disasters occur. In 1994, CRWRC entered five North American disaster sites, including earthquake relief in California and continued hurricane Hugo relief in Florida and Louisiana. In addition, thirteen international disaster areas were helped by CRWRC. These included civil war relief in Mexico (Chiapas) and Rwanda. Sixteen percent of CRWRC’s 1993-4 budget went to relief.

CRWRC’s final goal is educating other Christians about how they can put their faith into action by donating time, goods, and funds to CRWRC. Two percent of CRWRC’s budget for 1993-4 was spent on this area. Innovative programs, which teach simple, basic skills must be implemented. NGOs with religious orientations believe that there is also a spiritual need in these areas, as well. They advocate that beyond basic needs, a spiritual dimension should be added to development.

The remaining 18% of the 1993-94 budget was spent on management/general areas and fund generation. The majority of funds for this organization come from church and individual donations (82%). Government grants cover 8%, while other agencies and interest makes up the last 10% of funds.

These goals are very clear and well stated. The emphasis of the organization is in development. This is reflected on how much of the budget is spent in this area. It is important, as well, to look at the organization’s attitude toward gender awareness in the development area of their mission.
Gender Awareness

The CRWRC is one of the only church organization in West Michigan that I investigated initially which has a gender statement. I investigated approximately 5 organizations. This is quite impressive as the Christian Reformed Church is usually viewed as being very conservative not only in doctrine, but also in innovation. It is important for NGOs, especially religious ones, to come to terms with the need for gender sensitivity and how they will achieve it in their programs. The gender statement declares “Our operational core value acknowledges both men and women as image bearers of God and therefore equal before God” (Gary Nederveld 30 January 1995). In addition, the CRWRC set several goals to achieve more gender-sensitivity in their projects. These goals include educating their financial partners on the importance of gender equality and ensuring that women are involved as “planners, decision makers, implementers and evaluators of projects and programs.”

In light of the goals and the gender awareness which CRWRC possesses, It is important to explain the influence this organization has had on Honduras and especially its partnership with Solitas.

Honduras and Solitas

CRWRC has been in Honduras since 1974. As of July, 1995, it has eight projects in Honduras. Included in this number is a national project (DiakoniaNacional) which includes an agriculture project, a preventative health project and a church and community leader training project. Solitas, the project specifically evaluated in this thesis, is a new project for CRWRC. Its partnership officially began in December,
1993 although work with the project began in November, 1992 (Gary Nederveld 17 December 1993).

CRWRC has a specific process to select the partners (other organizations which provide monetary, staff and resource aid) and projects in which they participate. The general guidelines for partners in these projects are those which “demonstrate values similar to those of CRWRC; needing the consultative services that CRWRC staff could provide; and willing to implement changes that would lead to effective projects” (Gary Nederveld, Correspondence, 17 December 1993). In addition, some specific criteria are used (Gary Nederveld, Correspondence, 16 October 1995). A few of these are important to this project because of the implications they have for the goals of the organization as well as the implementation of the project. One of these goals is “empowering” the Honduran participants in the project so that “people develop their gifts and talents” in order that they will teach their neighbors. This is because CRWRC is “opposed to creating dependency”. “We need to ask how to provide help that liberates, that empowers, that enables, rather than building dependence on the assistance”. In addition, CRWRC points out the need for the projects to be sustainable. The projects must be “strong enough to go on after CRWRC leaves”. Finally, it is important for there to be institutional development so that the community “owns” the “vision, the values, the results”. This will allow for the capacity of the people to make necessary “adjustments, obtain the needed resources, to insure that the gains are preserved, and that the capabilities are maintained over time” on their own. This is a good guideline, but it is not clear how the organization could operationalize some of the terms used in order to evaluate each project.

The major partner in Solitas is the InterAmerican Foundation which first funded the project. Partners are selected by an approval process (Correspondence 19 June 1996) which begins with field staff or regional directors initially submitting
possible partner organizations to the CRWRC binational board. Several factors are considered, including how the values and goals of CRWRC mesh with the proposed partner’s goals, whether Christian outreach can be encouraged through the project, the opportunity the partnering will provide, and if the partner relationship will lead to increased effectiveness and efficiency. A formal proposal may be then made to the Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) field director and the Field Coordinating Council. Once they have formally approved the partnering relationship, the proposal is passed on to achieve budget approval. Finally, approval must be made by the Outreach Team, Ministry Coordinating Council (the highest level of staff approval), the CRWRC delegates, and the CRC Board of Trustees. In order for this approval several questions must be answered. First, consideration of previous consultation, with special attention to discussions and decisions with CRWM and other CRC agencies. Second, what has led to a determination that an effective ministry project is possible? Third, demonstrate that a consistent Christian witness can be achieved. Fourth, how will articulation of the gospel in conjunction with a Christian church be accomplished? Fifth, what are the specific terms of the agreement (who will work with whom at what for how long at what cost)? Sixth, the formal recommendation. An important note to this process is that a project does not need Board of Trustee approval for provisional or two year approval of a partner organization. In the next section, a description of Solitas, how it began, and its gender sensitivities will be considered.

Solitas: Single Women

The people involved with Solitas live everyday attempting to break out of their old ways of dependence in order to begin and new way of life through development. The project has the most direct impact on women and children. Yet, the men who left these families and the staff who are devoted to helping the women are affected as well.
It is also important to see how the organizational goals have met the development needs above. Although more assessment will be done in later chapters, it is important here to see how the participants of the project and the project coordinators merge into the structure and hierarchy of the project, the administration of its goals and activities, and the development areas emphasized in order to reach the women's needs.

_Solitas_ means "single women". Single women are not only defined as those without husbands, but also those who although living with a man take responsibility for the economic, educational and other needs of the family. _Solitas_ began when a group of Christians from several denominations who had been helping groups of street children, realized that the single mothers of these children needed help, too. This original group made up the initial board of directors for the project. Plans have been made to rotate board membership with new participants in the future. The project is currently working in five marketplaces and three _cuarteles_ or _cuarterias_ (slum/tenet dwellings).

The project targets two specific groups of single women: those who work in the market and those who live in the tenant housing of the slums. The women who live in the slums are usually worse off than those in the market group (Solitas Baseline Study 1994). They rent one-room housing with dirt floors and zinc or ceramic tile roofs. There is no electricity in most homes and only a community washtub, a toilet or latrine, and possibly a water pump. The tenants are set up next to and facing each other making a rectangle (therefore _cuarteria_) with a courtyard in the center. There is an informal "matriarchal" social structure in these dwellings personified in the mentoring relationship between the older women and the young mothers (Don Zeilstra, Interview, 1 October 1995). The older women teach the younger how to do certain activities and take care of the children if the women are off working or gathering water. They also counsel and guide the younger women. One of the concerns of the project leaders has
been the sustainability of this structure since there is usually a large gap between the older women and the single mothers. There is a fear that the community will fall apart once these senior women die. Interestingly it is these women, who are usually not any relation to the younger women, who take on the role which grandmothers would if the young women were with their extended families (Lancaster 1989). It is important to keep this sociological perspective in mind as development projects must decide how to maintain or interrupt these structures.

Some of the women have followed their husband or partner into the city where the men left them or stopped bringing home support for the family (Don Zeilstra, Interview, 1 October 1995). Others were born in the city and have tried to survive independent of their husband or partner, but do not have the skills to do so. Either way, the women end up in slums. The women may earn meager incomes from taking in laundry, sewing, sending the children to beg, or prostitution. These economic activities are sporadic and unreliable. In addition, there are obvious the health and safety risks connected with begging and prostitution. Many of these activities only lead to the further degradation of women and jeopardize their dignity. These type of activities are reinforced by the *machismo* culture which does not allow women educational opportunities or marketable skills training. This vicious cycle keeps women dependent on men or desolate without them.

Generally, those who work in the market have a higher standard of living as compared to those in the *cuarterías* who have jobs such as those described above. Most of the market women live in *barrios* or neighborhoods in which they either own their house or live in an apartment. Most of these have electricity and in some instances, even more than one room. Yet, water availability is still a problem for them. Most go to the market in the morning and use the toilets and showers provided there (*Solitas* Baseline Study 1994). As discussed above, water availability can be a
potential political challenge for women as well as a rallying point for their organization and empowerment.

Although their income earning activities of selling snacks, tortillas, flowers, and fruit in the market improves their situation in many respects, they still live at a subsistence level. They must pay for their booth in the market and, if living in the barrio, must pay much higher rent for their apartment (Solitus Baseline Study 1994). They work between 8-14 hours getting “rest” only in the evenings and late Sunday afternoons. Their “free-time”, however, is usually filled with caring for the children, cleaning and cooking meals. In addition, they have few skills to improve their businesses and compete with other sellers.

These conditions are not unique for these women, they apply to most poor women in the third world. Poor women are isolated, lonely and in need of skills and community to help them not only survive, but thrive every day. Their children depend on them for survival as well.

The children are a vital part of the project area. In fact, as noted, they are the reason the women’s needs were noticed in the first place. The main concern of the women for their children is to keep them nearby so they will not have to go to the city streets to beg or join gangs after they are too big to feed at home. Ten is the average age of children leaving their mothers and resorting to the streets (Don Zeilstra, Interview, 1 October 1995). In order to keep them home (not venturing further into the city and living on the streets) not only must the women have the financial means to do so, but also the value of men staying with their families and keeping families together. Although this does not coincide with the traditional machismo value of sending men to the cities to support the family, it is essential to continue the children’s education. If the children leave, they will not continue in their schooling. Also, if they remain at home, they will reinforce the Latin American tradition of large extended families and
communities. This is important for the support system and breaking the cycle of further migration.

The men and fathers of these families are the invisible component in this structure. They have either left their wives to fend for themselves or have promised to send money to support these women. Although almost 40% of these women claim to be living with a man, the women are still the main wage earners and child care providers for the family. Most times, the men these women claim only live with the women for very short, sporadic periods (Solitas Baseline Study 1994). In the culture of machismo, the women are taught to be dependent on the men for their livelihood and identity. After the men move into the city, they usually do not send the support they promise. Many have followed their partner into the urban area in order to force the men to be responsible for the family. When these women arrive many can not find their mate and end up either latching on to another man or finding alternative ways to survive the city.

The project coordinators and administrators are the link between these women and the skills they need. There are two social workers, a pedagogical (educational director), two teachers, an accountant, and a medical doctor on the team. The medical doctor, Giovanni Antunez, M.D., is the project leader. Currently, he is at Tulane University. Norma Castillo is the director while he is away for two years. The social workers are the main contacts between the women and the rest of the team, although understandably with such a small permanent staff, each team member receives feedback and input from all participants.

All of these participants play a role in the Solitas project. Whether directly or indirectly, each has a part in reaching the development goals of the project.
The Goals of the Project

There are five main goals of the *Solitas* project. These are aimed at achieving support of the major objective: “providing...alternatives for self-sufficiency which contribute to bettering their (single mothers) quality of life and raising their living standards” (Antunez 1994). First, the project hopes to organize committees which will plan activities together. Second, skills training is emphasized. This includes leadership groups, first aid, nutrition, human relationships, communication, health education, and basic accounting skills. Third, the goal that no illiteracy will exist among the women participants is sought. Fourth, the project focuses on production through training in marketing and micro enterprise by small credit groups. The final goal is counseling, crisis intervention and spiritual support through these activities.

Committees

The social workers “ask the women in the markets for the ‘agenda’ of their programs” (CRWRC Semiannual Report January 1995). The programs then revolve around the goals and needs articulated. *Machismo* is weakened through many activities which make the women more independent through the training and income they receive. However, family values, a large part of the Latin culture, are affirmed. The organization does not attempt to break up families which have stayed together, but these are very few. The activities for children attempt to teach young men to stay with their families. Since unemployment is the major reason for migration, the organization teaches literacy and basic skills.
Skills Training

This program is designed to give the women in the ghetto alternative wage earning opportunities and also give small, short-term loans to those who work in the market in order that they can increase their earnings. Income earning opportunities targeted through several training methods. Five loan groups have been established with thirty-four women. There are four, three month repayment periods per year. In addition, the women save some of their money collectively to buy goods which they agree on. Plastic buckets were bought recently to cut down on water-carrying time for the women living in the cuarterias. As discussed, improved water availability can be very important for women. Skills such as accounting are also taught to help responsibility and independence.

Health and Sanitation

Health and sanitation are major factors for both groups of women. For the women in the cuarterias these basic skills are taught not only to the women, but also to the children. As of January, 1995, 130 women were enrolled in or completed these health workshops. In addition to nutrition and first aid, mental health techniques are also taught. I suspect this is a unique feature among NGOs. The women are taught relaxation, communication, and anti-stress techniques because of the pressure on them. This is done in the hope that the "pressure cooker" cycle of the poor will not be repeated in these communities (Solitas Baseline Study 1994). Studies have shown that the hopelessness of the poor in combination with the stress of basic survival may explode into violence. These psychological activities will help the women avoid such action. When a mother joins the health program, 75% of the lunch meal is paid for by
the organization. After three years the mothers are providing 100% of the cost of this once subsidized meal. Next, the project strives to teach mothers how they can gain training to make money to provide for their families. Health practices are taught which may help the mothers be able to feed and take care of their children more effectively. It is very difficult to save money as they can hardly sustain themselves. But, the money they have saved so far has gone toward plastic buckets to hold water, so only one trip to the well is needed each day. Another achievement has been cleaning up the courtyard and painting the tenant walls. These achievements seemed to give the women pride and self-esteem. Some recent project volunteers observed how proud the women were of such achievements. They readily showed their handiwork off to the visitors. Typically, Americans are embarrassed that the women are so proud of such dismal conditions, but to the women, their lives had come a long way (Don Zeilstra, Interview, 1 October 1995).

**Education and Literacy**

Education and Literacy is another area of need identified by these projects. In July 1995, 24 women were participating in the literacy training. Importantly as well, the children participate in programs teaching basic literacy, hygiene and sanitation techniques. There are hardly any children over the age of 8 or 10 in the *cuarterías*. These older children have gone into the street to find money or food for their family. They may simply leave all together because there is not any more room or food for them with their mother. This is something which project coordinators are trying to avoid, especially with the young men. By teaching the young boys about sanitation, providing education and job skills, the boys will learn to stay with their families. Hopefully, another generation of boys leaving their families and responsibilities behind
to find jobs will not again occur. Literacy training aims at keeping the children with their families and teaches the women to teach their own children to read and write.

**Spiritual Aspects**

The project has not attempted to establish a separate church for these women. It has however encouraged attendance at local churches. In addition, as the organization’s goals indicate, the project tries to demonstrate the gospel through the work and activities in which the coordinators participate. In addition, retreats are offered which emphasize spiritual activities and integration of Christianity into every day lives. For a religious NGO, the information on this area was scarce.

There were less specifically stated evangelical goals than expected in the project documents. Many references to Biblical standards and reasoning were made in general reference to the Biblical goals of the organization. As seen, these goals were based on what they believe God has commanded in the Bible for the organization. There seemed to be almost an element of apology for these references or at least a reassurance that conversion is not the organization’s main goal. This may be a result of the bad reputation some denominations received when colonialism and religious conversions were enforced.

**Preliminary Achievements of the Projects**

More specific achievements will be mentioned in later chapters, but it is important to outline a few more general achievements here. The women in the project were very proud of the accomplishments they have already made (Don Zeilstra, Interview, 1 October 1995). The women have cleaned up the barrios in which they live and the courtyard their homes surround. They have also saved enough money to buy plastic buckets, as mentioned. Finally, the women have whitewashed their homes.
Even in a relatively young project like Solitas it is important to explore what has already been accomplished. Westerners must remember that success in the Third World does not always conform to conventional ideas of success. Small practical advances may require great changes of attitude regarding dependence on others. These achievements do not seem very significant, but as observers have reported, these small steps have given these women a sense of accomplishment, pride, and dignity which they have not before experienced. Working together to reach these goals, the women begin to become independent of the men who deserted them. Now that the project and its goals have been described, a further analysis of the project's accomplishment and shortcomings is necessary.
CHAPTER III:

AN EVALUATION OF SOLITAS

This chapter is an analysis of whether Solitas has implemented and achieved the goals outlined previously in this thesis. In addition, it is vital to understanding how women are being trained and what kind of training they are receiving. Finally, it is significant to analyze the effects of this training on the women in light of gender specific needs and goals. In this chapter, the Solitas Baseline Study and the reports available from CRWRC will be summarized. In addition, a summary of the questionnaires recently given to some of the administrators and coordinators of the project will be included. The responses will give increased insight into this project and its successes and failures in the realm of gender sensitivity.

Solitas Baseline Study and CRWRC Reports

The baseline report was written during the last half of 1994. The CRWRC was already working with the project at this time. The Solitas Baseline Study was conducted by volunteers and employees of CRWRC working with Solitas. It was summarized and written by its former director, Giovanni Antunez. The report covers many areas, some of which continue to be the focus areas for the project to date. Other data is demographic data, important as well, but not in the scope of this thesis. This summary will focus on those areas that are consistent with the goals of the organizations working with Solitas. Sixty-eight women were surveyed for this baseline study. All of the following statistics are from the Solitas Baseline Study,
1994, unless indicated otherwise. The Solitas Baseline Study will be used here to present the literary status, income levels, living conditions of the women.

Literacy rates as measured in this survey are presented in Table 1. Although several of the women completed a primary level of education, this rate is still below 50%. Almost 18% of the women are illiterate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency (No.)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete Primary Level</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete Primary Level</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Secondary Level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Taken In Part From Solitas Baseline Study (No. 16), page 16.

The income levels of the women show the average daily income of less than $1.00 - 2.50 (US). This money must be used to support the whole family and all its expenses. In addition to these expenses, those women who work in the market must pay a rent fee for their booth. This fee is usually around $0.05 to 0.10 daily. This fee is a high fee considering their low daily incomes. The women also expressed their occupational interests in this survey. Thirty-six percent of the women wanted more sewing training; twenty-six percent wanted crafts training.

The women working in the markets sell different types of goods such as fruits and vegetables, grains, snacks, and candies. The “ambulant” market includes those
products which are sold by the women while walking inside and outside the market hour after hour. The women living in the *cuarterias* have different labor activities. They usually take work into their homes such as laundry, sell corn tortillas, or are a housekeeper or housewife. Fifty-one percent of the women claimed to be a housewife and almost 25% said they do not have any labor activity.

Forty-two of the women who are sexually active (61.8%) did not practice any type of contraceptive methods when this survey was taken. As a result, there are 222 children shared between only 68 of the women. This means on the average, each woman has three to four children. In addition, the women expressed that they did not know how to express or enjoy their sexuality without getting pregnant or being exploited. It is important to remember that “single women” is defined as those who “assume the responsibility to raise the children, provide shelter, food and pay the bills” (*Solitas* Baseline Study 1994, 2). This does not mean that they are not necessarily living with a man. The women frequently expressed the fact that they do not know why they live with a man. Many felt that times, it was only to have a “watchman at home” (*Solitas* Baseline Study 1994, 2).

The living conditions of these women was questioned as well. Although it was reported that 51.5% of the women are owners of their room, more than half of these women live under “Puente Curias”, a bridge. On the other hand, of the women working in the market 32.3% own their own house (usually a dirt floor, one room, cinder block structure) and 42.6% rent these types of houses (or worse) at about $5-8.00 per month in the *cuarteria* or $8-10 in a *colonia* or *barrio*. In many cases, several children and women share the room, many sleeping on the dirt floor at night.

As has been discussed, utilities, especially water, is an important factor in poor women’s lives. The market workers usually take their shower, wash their clothes and that of their family at the market. In the *cuarteria* up to 30 women must share 3 toilets.
There is a similar ratio for the piped water. Yet, those who do not have access to these services must buy them from their neighbors.

Once the baseline had been taken and CRWRC became officially involved with the project, reports were made every six months on the progress of the project to CRWRC headquarters. It is important to keep in mind that this is a young project. The following will be a summary of those reports. They are taken from the CRWRC Honduras Semiannual Reports June 1994, January 1995, and July 1995 as indicated. This summary will focus on the main areas on which the project focuses: Committees, (Income Earning) Skills Training, Health and Sanitation, Education and Literacy, and Spirituality.

Committees

Before June 1994, the main focus of the committees was to continue their reputation with the street children and their mothers that they had already established before CRWRC got involved with the project. The committees help the women participants “take responsibility for the execution of the programs and tracking of results” (CRWRC Honduras Semiannual Report, January 1995) needed to evaluate progress of the project. The January 1995 report states that the women are being asked for their input into the programs in which they will be participating. They also reported a large increase in participation and that the women had begun to “take responsibility for some areas of the programs” (CRWRC Honduras Semiannual Report, January 1995). In the July 1995 report committees are not mentioned, but a change was made from a health to a leadership goal. This fits under the sphere of the main committee area. It is reported that one hundred fifteen families are involved in this area of the project. What is mentioned is the vital counseling and intervention services brought to
the women through the staff. It is said that this program is “the back bone of what Solitas does” (CRWRC Honduras Semiannual Report, July 1995).

This change from health to leadership skills training and implementation may indicate a change from practical to strategic needs being met. The health training meets every day needs, while leadership training and leadership activities imply needs which are needed for women’s liberation from the machismo culture. Investigation outside the realm of this thesis would be needed to confirm this hypothesis.

Skills Training

Income earning skills training is one of the major goals of Solitas. As of June 1994, one hundred and twenty five women were involved in the skills training. By January 1995, four credit groups were established with 26 women reported as having credits. In addition, the groups had almost 100% recuperation of funds weekly to the groups. More women have become interested in these groups or have formed their own outside of the organization. In July 1995, there were 5 credit groups and thirty-four women with credits. Credit workshops were also held. Yet, the report expresses the need for more “practical training to improve income” (CRWRC Honduras Semiannual Report, July, 1995). Please see Figure 1.

The skills training is one of the strongest areas in this project. Although credit groups are slowly growing, the most encouraging news is that women outside the project have been forming credit groups after seeing the success of those in the project. This may be an indication of empowerment and begs more questions about the kinds of training (if any) these women outside the project are receiving. It may be possible that women participants in Solitas are passing on their skills to these women outside the project. If this is true, the participants have achieved another element in effective development: that of teaching others what they have learned.
As of 1993-94 the goal was to have 125 families involved in the health and sanitation aspect of Solitas. Other accounts (Don Zeilstra, Interview 1 October 1995) have confirmed as well that health was a primary issue even before CRWRC entered the project. This seems to be mostly because the first director of the project is a medical doctor. In January 1995, the report states that in 1993-94 there were 73 families (58.4% of goal) involved in this aspect of the project. This number grew to 130 (52% of goal) in 1994-95. The cost of this training per woman was $192.00. As discussed above, this area was changed to leadership training “to reflect what is actually taking place” (CRWRC Semiannual Report, January 1995) in January 1995. At this time, a change of leadership in the Solitas project may have affected this change in focus as someone without health training is presently directing the project while the former director is on leave. Please see Figure 2.

Figure 1. Skills Training: Credit Groups.

Health and Sanitation
Education and Literacy

In 1994, the hope was to have 50 women involved in literacy training. By 1995, only 9 were at literacy level, but this does not reflect how many were in training, only those who had achieved literacy. In July 1995, eleven women had achieved literacy levels and the goal was dropped to thirty. Yet, it does not seem to be reported how many women were actually involved in the literacy and education, only those who achieved literacy at the time of the report.

Figure 2. Health/Leadership Training.

Much more information is needed in this area in order to make a fair evaluation of the project. There is a lack of data on literacy and how many women or children participate in educational programs or classes. This is a very important element in development and in this project it is hard to tell whether it is a priority or not.

Spirituality

In 1994, the CRWRC shows concern for the spiritual aspect of Solitas. They began leading retreats which “show how to incorporate Christ in daily living”
The January 1995 report states that although many volunteers from local churches help in the Solitas project, more ways of “express[ing] their [the participants'] Christian faith” are needed. The spiritual area of this project is not mentioned in the July 1995 report.

As mentioned previously, there is an expectation for more evidence of the kinds of spiritual programs provided with a religious NGO. Yet the data concerning this project in this aspect is scarce. It is unclear whether this is simply an oversight in the evaluations, a phenomena tracked in other records, or an intentional lack of emphasis in the spiritual aspect of the project.

A general comment made in the reports is worth mentioning. A major concern is the need to not only focus the project on specific goals, but also achieve a vision for the future of the project. Although seemingly contradictory, the big picture is needed to define day-to-day activities and measure progress. This is considered a growth area for Solitas.

Summary of Questionnaire Results

In addition to the CRWRC evaluations, it is necessary to get a feel for the particular indicators of empowerment and gender specific needs which have been outlined previously in this thesis. This is important in order to look specifically at the interest targeted in the research: how women’s needs are met by NGOs. Therefore, several questionnaires were sent to people who work with the Solitas project.

All of the questionnaires were answered by a sample of those who currently or formerly work with the project. Six respondents answered the questionnaire. Five of the six respondents are women and one is male. The male respondent is the former director of Solitas and a medical doctor. He is presently on leave at Tulane University while an interim director oversees the project. Each of the respondents work with
Solitas or have worked with the project in the past. Of those who are currently working with Solitas, three indicate they are or were employed by CRWRC. Of the remainder, two indicated they are employed “del Proyecto Solitas” (the Solitas Project), while the last did not indicate how she was employed. Because of the limitations of the thesis, these respondents were selected by the CRWRC coordinator in Tegucigalpa. By conducting the research face-to-face, I could have gained more of the perspective from the participants, not just the administrators and volunteers of the project. In addition, the respondents would have been chosen randomly and some of the biases which are inherent in asking organization employees would be avoided. Despite these limits, each individual response was given equal weight and the responses to each question were tallied on a blank questionnaire. They were then ranked as to which response was chosen and how many respondents chose each response. Those responses which indicated an area to explain one’s answer were tallied a second time. The written notes which represented the whole of the responses or had implications for specific research questions are noted in detail below. The questionnaires were given in either Spanish or English as needed. A sample of the questionnaire in both languages is located in Appendix B.

Let us reflect on Chamber’s warning against the biases which may riddle such evaluation to explore the possibility of those biases apparent in this study. First, as mentioned, the respondents were chosen by a coordinator of CRWRC. This may lead to a more favorable view of the project from the standpoint of the organization. In addition, the former director may also have some favorable bias toward the results of this evaluation as he was one of the original administrators of the project. Third, those who are answering the questionnaire can read it and have become leaders within the project so those responding create another bias as they are seemingly literate, healthy, and have adapted to the project’s goals. There may also be an urban bias
because the project is close to the resource base of the organization's headquarters in the country, but it is not clear that this bias is reflected in the respondents' questionnaires. Despite the assumption each respondent answered the questions as accurately and honestly as possible, each of the responses are estimations on the part of the respondents and therefore, the answers may be somewhat unreliable.

 Unless otherwise indicated, all of the findings and comments below were found in the responses to the questionnaires. A summary of the findings from these questionnaires follows.

**Quality of Life**

Whether the women participating in Solitas have a better life because of Solitas is one indicator of the effectiveness of the project. Everyone who answered the questionnaire stated that the goal of training women in "alternatives for self-sufficiency which contribute to bettering their quality of life and raising their living standards" (Project Solitas) is being realized. Yet, a variety of reasons were given for such responses.

Some state that such things as the income level, self-esteem and spirituality of the women demonstrates achieving this goal. Others state that lower illiteracy, better business skills and personal development indicate that the women's lives are improved. Most interestingly, one respondent wrote that because women now buy flowers for friends, get their hair cut at salons, and purchase piñatas for their children's birthday parties, quality of the women's lives are visibly improved.

Although many of the responses were in financial terms, it is important to realize that slight financial flexibility has been achieved. This control over even a small amount of one's income to spend on what the women themselves determine as important outside of bare necessities may be a step toward a strategic goal. Although
flowers, piñatas, and special hair cuts are not essential, it is the power and freedom of spending a little extra cash which is significant.

This line of questioning seems to demonstrate that significant strides have been made in the participants lives because of Solitas. Yet, there are more intangible changes which may need to be gained before these women are liberated from their bonds of poverty.

Lifestyle Lapse

One question asked the respondents to give the percentage of project participants that would resort to their former lifestyles (usually prostitution) if the project were to leave today. This is an important indicator of the effectiveness of the project, as well. Five of the respondents answered that up to 50% of the participants would go back to their former lifestyles which they had before they participated in Solitas (the remaining one respondent chose “up to 70%”).

The respondents attributed this high percentage to two reasons. First, many indicated that because the project had only been in contact with the women for less than five years, there is a need of longevity in the project in order for its training exercises to become every-day routine. In addition, the skills which the women are learning are not embedded in their daily lives to the point which if CRWRC were to leave, the women would practice those without encouragement from the project. One woman stated that the project was simply not there long enough yet to have a total effect on these women.

These responses seem to indicate that the longer a project is present, the better the participants will remember and be encouraged to practice the skills they have learned. This may not be the only explanation of engrained skills, however. The familiarity with the skills or the frequency of practicing the skills may also lead to lesser percentage of women resorting to former lifestyles without encouragement from the
project coordinators. Yet, as the CRWRC has indicated in its goals, it does not want to encourage dependency on the organization. This balance is a tricky one for NGOs, but is vital to the success and empowerment of the women.

**Level of Skills Reached**

A group of questions in the questionnaire was aimed at the percentage of participants (in the last year) who learned skills and to what level those skills have been mastered. This line of questioning is vital in that the women must be able to master the skills and pass them on so independence from the project can one day be achieved. It is also a mark of empowerment if the women are taking the initiative themselves to mentor younger women and their children in these skills. The results below have been averaged between the percentages given by the various respondents.

A summary of the number of participants who attend particular training sessions will be helpful. It is reported that ninety-eight percent have attended sessions on counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support. Eighty-nine percent attended sessions on training in income earning and productions skills. Eighty-one percent of the participants have attended sessions regarding activity planning committees. Sixty percent have attended leadership or communication skills sessions, while just over fifty percent have attended both first aid, nutrition, and hygiene sessions and accounting skills training. Thirty-six percent have attended literacy training.

Another question focused on the percentage of the participants who have learned these skills to the point they can perform them without aid from project coordinators or administrators. The respondents reply that Ninety-three percent of the participants can perform leadership or communication skills learned in those sessions. Sixty-eight percent can perform skills learned in activity planning committee seminars. Skills learned through income earning and production sessions can be performed by
eighty-five percent of the participants. Skills acquired by counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support seminars can be practiced by fifty-two percent of the participants. Forty-eight percent of the participants can perform skills learned in literacy sessions, while roughly forty-five to forty-seven percent of the participants can perform accounting or first aid, nutrition, and hygiene skills.

Finally, a question was posed to the respondents as to the percentages of the women participating in the project who have mastered particular skills to the point of being able to teach them to other women and children. Sixty percent of the women have the ability to teach income earning and production skills. First aid, nutrition and hygiene can be taught by forty-three percent. Thirty-six percent can teach counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support skills. Activity planning committee skills can be taught by twenty-six percent of the participants, while twenty-four percent can teach leadership or communication skills. Accounting skills can be taught by twenty percent. Literacy education can be taught by fourteen percent.

These numbers indicate that although a large percentage of the women attend about 1-2 hours of training per week in a variety of sessions, many areas need more mastery in order to pass on the skills. In order to achieve other goals in the training sessions, literacy rates must rise. While upwards of fifty percent of the participants attend literacy training and can may be able to read and write on their own, only fourteen percent are at a point where they can teach other women and their children those skills. Because of the lack of literacy data from the CRWRC, it is hard to tell the significance of these numbers.

Another interesting area is that of first aid, nutrition, or hygiene. Almost all of the women who participate in these sessions not only can practice the skills on their own, but can perform them to the point that they are able to teach skills to other women or their children. There is only an average of twelve percentage points between those
who participate in these sessions and those who can teach them. This may indicate an area where CRWRC can begin turning over the leadership and training to women entirely, while only using formal staff to bring the women up-to-date on new practices or research. The women may then have the flexibility to adapt these skills efficiently while continuing the emphasis of these skills with simply encouragement from project coordinators.

Areas of Change in Decision Making

Another group of questions is actually a scale divided into several categories on which the respondents were asked to rate the level of decision making power of the participants before and after training in Solitas. The questionnaire then asked the respondents to explain those areas which had the most and least change, respectively.

The respondents targeted the following areas which saw the most increase in decision-making power. First, the child care and participation in groups areas had increased in decision-making. In addition, the income, education for self and children, and buying food had increases in decision making. The income earning area was attributed most often to the credit groups set up through Solitas. Education was attributed to the emphasis and understanding the need for this area to be important. This area is interesting as it is an area of concern above. Finally, child care was attributed to the better nutrition and hygiene practiced by the women and their families.

The areas in which decision-making has not changed since women participated in the Solitas are mostly attributed to the government system, the women’s situation, or the project’s lack of addressing the issue. The main areas are as follows: buying clothes, organizing, planting gardens, and working for a salary/employment. One woman stated that no decisions could be made about buying clothes as the women simply have no clothes to buy nor enough money with which to buy them. It is
possible that this reality motivates and reflects the desire the women expressed in the CRWRC Base Study to acquire skills in sewing.

From this group of questions, it is noted that in many areas, the women have gained substantial decision-making roles. They are more educated to make decisions about such issues and have the resources to respond to the needs of their family. Yet, many cultural and societal problems still exist which prevent the women from making decisions which affect their lives and their children’s lives. Although some broad societal problems which prevent women from making these decisions were discussed earlier in this study, specifics go beyond the scope of the questionnaire.

**Decision Making Positions**

Some questions which were asked in order to target the amount and type of decision-making the women participate in, indicates that several women have moved up from simply participants in the project to positions of decision-making power for *Solitis*. When asked whether this power is “*poder authentica*” (true power), the respondents overwhelmingly answered “yes” and attributed this to the responsibility given to these women. In addition, the women who have achieved these positions are said to exercise their power effectively because of their desire to carry out the responsibility which had been given them. In addition, four of the six respondents felt that an average of eighty percent of the decisions made by the project are directly and originally influenced or articulated by the women participating in *Solitis*.

These numbers indicate an important achievement by this project has been the passing on of the administrative and decision-making power to the local population. Women who are now beginning to gain decision-making power in their homes, are allowed to use their new-found skills to help their fellow women through the project.
These skills can be applied in many areas outside the project, if the women choose to use them in diverse ways and if the society will allow this expression.

**Practical Leading to Strategic Needs**

The respondents were also asked if any independent organizations had begun to develop from the practical skills the participants were learning, an indication of practical skills leading to strategic goals. Five of the six respondents answered this question. Of the five, four answered "no", the women had not organized themselves without CRWRC's help for any economic, political, or social goal. Three of the four attributed this phenomena not to the fault of the project, but to the social environment of Honduras.

This may indicate more time is needed to see a demonstration of practical needs leading to strategic gender needs. It may also indicate (although less likely) that these skills will not lead to any political, economic, or social organizing by the women for reaching strategic goals.

In the conclusion, recommendations and comments will be made in light of these evaluations.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Resolutions

It is important now to return to the inquiries which were extracted from the theories and approaches presented at the beginning of this thesis. These questions need to be examined in light of the findings in this study to ascertain whether this study has resolved any of them.

One of the areas which needed to be examined in this study was whether the project relieved some of the burden of women or simply shifted it to another sphere of the women's lives. In the past, NGOs have often simply shifted the burden by requiring too much of the women's time in the workshops. This does not seem to be a major problem with Solitas. With only one to two hours per week on average time spent in workshops, there does not appear to be a problem with spending an excessive of time for the project. A question which stems from this finding is whether this time per week can be increased in order to expand some of the programs which need more emphasis (literacy) without over-extending the time spent with the project.

One of the major goals which the approaches outlined in this thesis called for was the active participation of the women in the decision-making process for the project. There are many instances found throughout this thesis and the evaluations and questionnaires where the success of Solitas in this area is very clear. Women are an active part of the local market; they are being given the tools to track their progress themselves. Although the project seemed to come more to the women than the women
organizing first and asking for CRWRC's help, the women have begun to be empowered with leadership, planning and implementation skills which have a direct impact on these areas. Former participants are becoming leaders and important decision makers in the project.

In addition, the different or similar role men and women take in development and the triple role theory which Moser advocates for women which involves the reproductive, productive and community roles for women and mentioned previously in this thesis, is an area which needs to be evaluated in light of this thesis. In respect to the three roles of women which Moser presents (1989), Solitas attempts to incorporate some skills and empowerment at each level. It is important to note that Solitas is an exception to Moser's model that women are usually secondary income earners. In Solitas, the women are the primary income earners for their families and therefore the emphasis on this role is (appropriately) great. The health programs focus on childbearing and care of the future work force. The literacy, income earning and credit workshops target the productive income earning role. The committees and leadership training focus on the community development role. These skills revolve around each of the roles which Moser suggest and therefore give women the resources to develop these roles as needed.

Another concern which has evolved from former approaches to women in development is whether the Western countries are shifting Western values of consumerism on a society which can not support that type of system. Although one of the indicators of improvement in the participant’s lives was a little extra cash to buy flowers or piñatas, it is not evident that a major attitude change has come from this project whereby the women now have simply adopted Western tastes. One of the safeguards against this is the fact that the women’s skills are being used in the pre-existing (before the project) market. A related concern is the acquisition of debt and whether the
small loans given to the women are recuperated in a timely fashion. According to the questionnaires, almost 100% of the funds are recuperated on a weekly basis.

In addition, cultural and gender relationship concerns which NGO approaches have struggled with in the past must be dealt with in Solitas. As in every culture, there are cultural, political, and social barriers to women's liberation, such as machismo in Latin America. While these attitudes have been destructive, there are other sociological institutions which have been good for the society and need to be encouraged. One of these positive structures is the tradition of extended families. Another positive institution is the unique mentoring relationship between the younger and older women in the barrios. It is not clear from this study how many of these relationships are being broken or nurtured. A further sociological study is needed for such results.

One of the major hypotheses put forth by the theorists examined in this thesis is that practical skills may lead to meeting strategic needs of the women. Some strategic activities are taking place. First, the women are making decisions within their credit groups on how to spend the money they have saved and have organized a way to share the work of fetching water. In addition, women outside the project have seen the success of the participants and want to begin credit groups of their own. These changes indicate that although isolated, some organizing is beginning. It is not clear, because of the youth of Solitas, whether the practical needs are directly influencing strategic needs. Yet, as mentioned, this spontaneous organizing may be an indicator or impetus for strategic change in the society.

In addition, whether the skills which the women are learning are useful and can be absorbed by the market without the support of the project should be a major concern for NGO approaches. Because Solitas is based on an already existing local market, there does not seem to be any perceived problems with a self-supporting market. Yet,
It may be useful to explore the capacity this market in supporting the growing number of skilled merchants and workers.

Implications for Expansion of Solitas and Other Projects

As a result of this study, it is clear that this project which targets women raises the women's standards of living, gives some degree of empowerment, and reaches practical, if not some strategic gender needs. There are several implications for extending the work of Solitas.

First, an NGO should commit to a long-term project focusing on women. Without this commitment, the skills learned by the participants will not be passed on or practiced. As mentioned, this must be balanced with the necessity of independence from the project. It is recognized that this is a tough balance, but one that is necessary for the empowerment of the participants.

Second, one success of Solitas is that the women are integrated into the local market. This is another important factor in remaining independent of the sponsor. If the project were to leave, the women's business does not depend on the project coordinators supporting them. Instead, the women are part of the local market. This gives the women a place to apply the skills they learn in a real-world setting. This is an element which other NGOs should learn from and use in their projects.

Third, projects should encourage women to organize outside of the project itself. There was very little of this in Solitas, mostly attributed to the government system and cultural barriers for women in Honduras. Yet, NGOs should prompt women to choose appropriate activism once skills are reached to maintain and organize such activities. It is hoped that eventually women will take the initiative to change the society they live in so future generations do not feel the trap of no representation in decision-making.
Fourth, education must be a primary focus for projects such as *Solitas*. Emphasis on literacy is needed in order for skills to be passed down to the next generation. The cycle of poverty can begin to be broken with these skills. *Solitas* in particular, needs more participants in this aspect of their programs. Possibly through promoting education or developing a creative way to integrate literacy into the seminars which have very high percentages of participants, more women, and then children, can gain this needed education.

Fifth, this project has begun to use past participants in the project as key decision-makers for the project. The next step in this process may be the training of these leaders to take over the work of the project coordinators. Training the women in social work skills, teaching skills, and as resource managers will not only decrease the dependence of the women on the sponsors, but also empower the women integrate the skills they have learned as they feel fit in the project programs.

Finally, many of the participants are at a skill level where they can now teach others the skills they have learned. This is especially evident in the area of health, first aid, and hygiene. It was reported that almost all the women who received the training have the ability to teach the skills to others. This is an excellent opportunity for CRWRC (and other organizations when similar results occur) to take advantage of local resources. Creative remuneration can be given to those who take time out of their day (only 1 - 2 hours per week) to teach others. Incentives can be built in for others to become experts in certain skill areas.

In summary, if NGOs are going to target women in their projects, they must commit to long term programs, promote integration into local society and markets, and encourage organization of the women. In addition, these NGOs must focus on literacy and the passing on of the skills, encouraging local decision-making, and using the
women who have already acquired skills to continue teaching others. These elements can combine both practical and strategic gender needs into effective development.

Conclusions

Although it is impossible for this thesis to advance every theory and approach mentioned in this paper which affect NGO activities, it is the belief of the author that this thesis can help NGO projects in many ways. First, it demonstrates the need to focus on both practical and strategic goals in the project. This is opposed to an approach which expects strategic goals to spontaneously follow after practical needs are met. This project shows that while every practical need of the women has not yet been achieved, some recognition of strategic needs have begun to emerge. Yet, meeting of these practical needs does not guarantee the meeting of strategic ones. Therefore, NGOs which target both practical and strategic needs in tandem may in fact have greater success at meeting both types of needs.

Secondly, the lack of literacy skills in this project presents another observation which may affect future gender-specific approaches. Literacy is a vital link in the emancipation of women, who are often cheated in the market and other spheres simply because of their lack of reading, writing, and math skills. As an African remarked “If we are not literate, we do not exist” (Pam De Wilde, August 1996). Without literacy, notices of possible aid are ignored and laws are overlooked. In addition, running the literacy program as a separate entity from other programs, does not draw the sheer numbers of participants as the other workshops. Motivation to learn to read and write must be explored elsewhere, but for the purpose of this thesis it is important to understand that unless literacy is woven into the high-participant programs, it will be lost. An attempt should be made to integrate literacy into the other areas. Other CRWRC projects have had success in doing this (CRWRC Conference, August 1996).
Therefore, as the women learn accounting, they learn to write and add; while forming savings groups, the women learn organization, leadership, and decision-making skills. They are required to record their own results. These types of innovative integration techniques should raise the number of literate women and children in the project.

There is still the question of whether focusing on women as opposed to both women and men in a development project makes a difference. It is certain from this study that the focus on women has benefited them. Yet, even as an NGO targets women, it must not ignore men. This project is very unique in that there are, for all practical purposes, no men present. Men, as mentioned in the body of this thesis, are affected by the project, however. It is vital for an organization to evaluate the impact on the men not only in the immediate proximity (household, neighborhood, market) but also the attitudes which those men (however physically invisible) represent. An example would be finding out how the men feel about their mates having "free-time". If it is possible for the NGO to access these feelings in the initial stages of the project, future conflict and resentment may be avoided.

Hopefully, this thesis has brought some of the questions, which the theories surrounding women and development suggest, into the forefront of evaluating NGO projects. Despite the limitations of a study such as the one included in this thesis, NGOs may be able to keep some of the suggestions, conclusions, and implications found herein in mind as they design and implement gender-sensitive projects. These projects are helping women rise in status in their countries.
Appendix A

Focus Questions
In order to evaluate these two projects on my own, I needed to ask questions which get at my basic research questions stated at the beginning of this proposal. Although some goals came to mind as I study each project in more detail, below are some sample questions that may be used. They are stated with the understanding that they may change as the project progresses. These questions are the themes around which the questionnaires were created. The questions are divided into the research goals I have enumerated above. Please note that some questions can be used to answer several of my research questions.

1. Are current development projects teaching skills which are useful for women’s needs, which will last after the project leaves the area, and are environmentally sound?

   After learning the skills taught by the project, are the women independent of the organization or are they tied to it in some way? For how long are they dependent on the organization?

   What, if any, observable positive or negative environmental effects do these projects have?

   Of these women how many have defaulted or paid off loans?

   If the project would leave the area, would the women go back to prostitution and other meager income earning or can the economy support their new-found skills?

   Without CRWRC in the area, would the women go back to other means of living and lifestyle choices because of cultural pressures? For example: boys leaving their families when they reach a certain age to find work in the city; women pursuing men to find financial security.

2. Are Strategic gender needs being met (empowerment, organization)? Are these an outcome of meeting practical gender needs (health, food, housing) which are proposed by the agency?

   As a result of or during training are the women gaining more decision-making skills? Are the women empowered with the skills the project leaders have? Are the leaders delegating their skills to the women so the organization could go on without them? Are the women in positions of power within the structure of the organization which holds real decision-making?
Have the women organized or become part of any political group or movement?

Are these homes simply subsistence level? kitchen? plumbing? electric? How many rooms? Construction material?

3. Are projects actually relieving the burden of women or simply shifting the burden to another sphere of their life?

   How much time are the women spending at the training? How is the training affecting other duties which they have at home?

   Are these women simply shifting their dependence on men to a dependence on the project or are they truly becoming independent?

   Does the spiritual element of the goals of CRWRC seem to help or hinder the women and the other goals of the project? Is this element important? Why?

4. Is the project teaching and education determined by a need foreseen by the women themselves or are they being taught skills for which the agency determined the need?

   Who determined the need for the project training programs?

   What kind of programs are implemented or planned and how were they chosen? Did the women identify which programs would be most helpful?

   What was the women’s situation before these homes? cardboard boxes? rentals? slums/tenant buildings?

   Did the women on the street organize before CRWRC came?

5. How can Western NGOs make projects to be more gender sensitive?

   How many women have gone through this program and have actually received housing?
Appendix B

Questionnaires: English and Spanish Versions
The purpose of this questionnaire is to help indicate how Non-government organizations attempt to target gender needs in a development project. Please answer the questions as completely and honestly as possible. Thank you for your participation.

Section A. Please circle the letter which indicates your response.

1. What is your connection with Solitas?
   a) I am an employee of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)
   b) I am an employee of another Non-government organization which works with Solitas (NGOs)
   c) I am a volunteer who works with Solitas
   d) Other, please explain:

2. How long have you (did you) work(ed) with Solitas?
   a) < 6 months
   b) 6-12 months
   c) 1 year - 3 years
   d) > 3 years

3. When you work(ed) with Solitas, in which activities do you participate? (Circle any which apply).
   a) Helping women set up their stands in the market
   b) Administrative work; please explain:
   c) Organize credit groups
   d) Help women with their daily tasks (food preparation, water retrieval, etc.)
   e) Speak directly with women about their needs
   f) Articulate needs to the appropriate project coordinator or administrator
   g) Organize ways in which women’s needs can be integrated into the project
   h) Distribute resources to the women
   i) Teaching literacy skills to the women
   j) Teaching income earning skills to the women
   d) Teaching health and hygiene skills to the women
   l) Other; please explain:

4. Did the women organize in any way by themselves before Solitas was formed?
   Yes, please explain what type of activities were organized:
5. "There are many goals in this project, as with other projects." Have you seen a change in emphasis from one goal to another in the time you've worked with Solitas?

Yes  No

6. If you answered "yes" to #5, to what do you attribute this change? (*Circle all which apply.*)

a) Change in leadership  
b) Change in women’s needs  
c) Change in project’s allocation of funds  
d) Other, please explain:

7. If you answered "yes" to #5, what was emphasized in the last three years? (*Circle all which apply.*)

a) Activity planning committees  
b) Training in leadership or communication skills  
c) Training in first aid, nutrition, or hygiene  
d) Training in accounting skills  
e) Literacy education  
f) Training in income earning and production skills  
g) Counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support

8. If you answered "yes" to #5, what has been emphasized in the past year? (*Circle all which apply.*)

a) Activity planning committees  
b) Training in leadership or communication skills  
c) Training in first aid, nutrition, or hygiene  
d) Training in accounting skills  
e) Literacy education  
f) Training in income earning and production skills  
g) Counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support

Section B  Please circle the letter which indicates your response.

9. What percent of the women have received public utilities such as electric, water or plumbing as a direct result of Solitas?

a) 0-10% of the women have received at least one of these utilities  
b) 10-30%  
c) 30-50%  
d) 50-70%  
e) 70-90%
10. What percentage of the women participating in *Solitas* (in the last year) attend sessions concerning:

a) Activity Planning Committees: _________%  
b) Training in Leadership or Communication Skills: _________%  
c) Training in First Aid, Nutrition, or Hygiene: _________%  
d) Training in Accounting Skills: _________%  
e) Literacy education: _________%  
f) Training in income earning and production skills: _________%  
g) Counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support: _________%  
h) Other; please explain:

11. What percentage of the women participating in *Solitas* (in the last year) have gained the following skills to the point they can perform them without aid from project coordinators or administrators?

a) Activity Planning Committees: _________%  
b) Training in Leadership or Communication Skills: _________%  
c) Training in First Aid, Nutrition, or Hygiene: _________%  
d) Training in Accounting Skills: _________%  
e) Literacy education: _________%  
f) Training in income earning and production skills: _________%  
g) Counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support: _________%  
h) Other; please explain:

12. What percentage of the women participating in *Solitas* (in the last year) have gained the following skills to the point where they can teach the skills to other women or their children?

a) Activity Planning Committees: _________%  
b) Training in Leadership or Communication Skills: _________%  
c) Training in First Aid, Nutrition, or Hygiene: _________%  
d) Training in Accounting Skills: _________%  
e) Literacy education: _________%  
f) Training in income earning and production skills: _________%  
g) Counseling, crisis intervention, and spiritual support: _________%  
h) Other; please explain:

13. How much time do the women participating in *Solitas* spend in training sessions, away from child-rearing or income-earning activities each day?

a) 1-2 hours on average per day  
b) 2-4 hours
14. Of the women who participate in credit groups what percentage pay back their short term loans without extensions?

a) 0-10% of the women pay back their short term loans without extensions  
b) 10-30%  
c) 30-50%  
d) 50-70%  
e) 70-90%  
f) Over 90%

15. Of those women who participate in credit groups, to whom do they pay back their loans?

a) The CRWRC  
b) Another NGO working with Solitas  
c) Other women who participate in Solitas  
d) An bank, independent of Solitas  
e) Other, please explain:

16. How do the participants use the loans?

a) For businesses in the marketplace  
b) To educate themselves or their children  
c) To buy material goods for their home  
d) Other, please explain:

17. Do all the women in the income earning sessions learn the same skills?

Yes, the women learn different income earning skills  
No, the women learn the same income earning skills

18. What types of skills do these women learn in the income earning sessions? (Circle all which apply.)

a) Accounting skills  
b) Skills of salesmanship  
c) Skills to buy goods from suppliers  
d) Other, please explain:
Section C

19. One of the goals of Solitas is to train women for “alternatives for self-sufficiency which contribute to bettering their quality of life and raising their living standards.” Do you think this goal is being realized?

Yes

No, please explain:

20. If you answered “yes” to #19, what kinds demonstrates your answer? Please use space below to explain your answer.

21. Is there a market or need for the income earning skills independent of the organization?

Yes, please explain:

No

Section D. Please circle the letter which indicates your response.

22. How many of the decisions made by the organization concerning Solitas are directly and originally influenced or articulated by the women participating in the project?

a) 0-10% of the decisions made by the organization are originally articulated by the women
b) 10-30%
c) 30-50%
d) 50-70%
e) 70-90%
f) Over 90%

23. Please put an “X” on the scale to indicate the amount of decision-making power the participants had/have in the following areas. Note: “Before” signifies before the women participated in Solitas and “After indicates after the women have participated in Solitas. “1” indicates no decision-making power; “2” indicates a small amount of decision-making power; “3” indicates that decision-making power is equal to another person in the household; “4” indicates a lot of decision-making power; “5” indicates total decision-making power.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Before</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for children</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disciplining children</td>
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<td>Growing a garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buying consumer goods for family (furniture, blankets, radio)</td>
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<td>Budget/Expenses</td>
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<td>Education for herself</td>
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<td>Education for children</td>
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<td>Participation in a group or organization (church, women’s group)</td>
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Buying food for the family

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Planning meals

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Buying clothes for the family

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Income earning/Employment

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24. Please explain the three areas with the most change:

1. Area:  
   Explanation:  

2. Area:  
   Explanation:  

3. Area:  
   Explanation:  

25. Please explain the three area with the least change:

1. Area:  
   Explanation:  

2. Area:  
   Explanation:  

3. Area:  
   Explanation:
26. Have the women participating in Solitas moved into positions of power within the structure of the organization/project because of their training in the project?

Yes

No, Please Explain:

27. If “Yes” to #26, do you feel these women have real decision-making power in that position?

Yes, Please Explain:

No, Please Explain:

Section E. Please circle the letter which indicates your response.

28. What percent of the women participating in the project currently pay 100% of their milk/soy subsidy?

a) 0-10% of the women pay 100% of their milk/soy subsidy
b) 10-30%
c) 30-50%
d) 50-70%
e) 70-90%
f) Over 90%

29. If the project were to end today, what percentage of participants would resort to their former lifestyles?

a) 0-10% of the women would resort to their former way of life
b) 10-30%
c) 30-50%
d) 50-70%
e) 70-90%
f) Over 90%

30. Have you seen the women organize themselves (without the help of CRWRC) for any social, economic, or political goal?

Yes, please explain:

No, please explain:

31. Do you feel this is a result of the indirect influence of Solitas?
Yes, please explain:

No, please explain:

32. If Yes to #30, what types of groups are they forming? *(Please keep in mind this applies only to those activities which are formed INDEPENDENTLY of NGOs and the formal structure of Solitas.)*

*Please circle all which apply.*

a) Political protest groups  
b) Religious groups  
c) Credit groups  
d) Literacy training groups  
e) Political movements  
f) Groups which discuss the rights of women in their region/country  
g) Other, please explain:
CUESTIONARIO

El intento de este cuestionario estudiar los factores que emplean las agencias de desarrollo en satisfacer las necesidades específicas de las mujeres. Reponde completamente y honradamente, por favor. Gracias para tu participación.

Sección A. Cerque la letra de la repuesta, por favor.

1. Que es conexión a Solitas Usted
   a) Soy empleado/a del Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)
   b) Soy empleado/a al otro organizaciones no gobernamentales (NGO’s)
   c) Soy voluntario/a para Solitas
   d) Otro; explica, por favor:

2. Cuantos años ha empleado de Solitas Usted
   a) < 6 meses
   b) 6 - 12 meses
   c) 1 año - 3 años
   d) > tres años

3. Cuando trabajaba con Solitas Usted, en que actividades participaba (Cerque algunas letras que aplica.)
   a) Ayuda/ayudaba las mujeres en el marcado
   b) Estoy/estaba oficinista; explica, por favor:
   c) Organizo/organizaba los grupos de credito
   d) Ayudo/ayudaba con haceres domesticos (preparacion de la comida, ir a buscar al agua, etc.)
   e) Discuto/discutia con las mujeres de necesidades especificas de las participantes
   f) Discuto/discutia con los administradores de las necidades especificas de las participantes
   g) Integro/integraba las necidades especificas de las participantes en los objetivos del proyecto
   h) Distribuí/distribuía recursos a las mujeres
   i) Enseno/ensenaba las destrezas de leer y escribir
   j) Enseno/ensenaba las destrezas trabajar por sueldo
   k) Enseno/ensenaba sanidad y higiene
   l) Otro(s); explica, por favor:

4. Se organizaron las participantes antes de sus actividades con Solitas
   Si; explica las actividades, por favor:
No

5. "Hay muchos objectivos en este proyecto, como otros proyectos." Ha observado algunos cambios en los objetivos durante el tiempo que ha trabajado con Solitas Usted

   Si                                      No

6. Si la respuesta es "Si" para el número cinco, ¿Cuál es la causa de estos cambios?
(Cerque algunas letras que aplica.)

   a) Un cambio en la dirección del proyecto
   b) Un cambio en las necesidades específicas de las participantes
   c) Un cambio en la asignación de dinero
   d) Otro; explique, por favor:

7. Si la respuesta es "Si" para el número cinco, ¿Cuál fue el énfasis en los tres años pasados?
(Cerque algunas letras que aplica.)

   a) Comité para planear actividades
   b) Educación en dirección o comunicación
   c) Educación en primeros auxilios, nutrición o higiene
   d) Educación en contabilidad
   e) Educación en las destrezas de leer y escribir
   f) Educación en las destrezas de trabajar por sueldo y producción
   g) Consejo, intervención en una crisis, actividades religiosas promovidas por Solitas
   h) Otro; explique por favor:

8. Si la respuesta es "Si" para el número cinco, ¿Cuál fue el énfasis en el año pasado?
(Cerque algunas letras que aplica.)

   a) Comité para planear actividades
   b) Educación en dirección o comunicación
   c) Educación en primeros auxilios, nutrición o higiene
   d) Educación en contabilidad
   e) Educación en las destrezas de leer y escribir
   f) Educación en las destrezas de trabajar por sueldo y producción
   g) Consejo, intervención en una crisis, actividades religiosas promovidas por Solitas
   h) Otro; explique por favor:

Sección B. Cerque la letra de la respuesta, por favor:
9. Que porcentaje representa el número de las mujeres con utilidades públicas a causa de Solitas
   a) 0-10% de la mujeres con utilidades públicas a causa de Solitas
   b) 10-30%
   c) 30-50%
   d) 50-70%
   e) 70-90%
   f) Over 90%

10. Que porcentaje representa el número de las participantes astistieron cursos educacionales (en el año pasado)
    a) Comite para planear actividades
    b) Educacion en dirrecion o connicacion
    c) Educacion en primeros auxilios, nutricion o higiene
    d) Educacion en contabilidad
    e) Educacion en las destrezas de leer y escribir
    f) Educacion en las destrezas de trabajar por sueldo y produccion
    g) Consejo, intervencon en una crisis, actividades religiosas promovia por Solitas
    h) Otro; explica por favor:

11. Que porcentaje de las participantes (en el año pasado) pueden usar las destrezas han adquirido
    a) Comite para planear actividades
    b) Educacion en dirrecion o connicacion
    c) Educacion en primeros auxilios, nutricion o higiene
    d) Educacion en contabilidad
    e) Educacion en las destrezas de leer y escribir
    f) Educacion en las destrezas de trabajar por sueldo y produccion
    g) Consejo, intervencon en una crisis, actividades religiosas promovia por Solitas
    h) Otro; explica por favor:

12. Que porcentaje de las participantes (en el año pasado) pueden enseñar estas destrezas a otras mujeres o los niños
    a) Comite para planear actividades
    b) Educacion en dirrecion o connicacion
    c) Educacion en primeros auxilios, nutricion o higiene
    d) Educacion en contabilidad
    e) Educacion en las destrezas de leer y escribir
    f) Educacion en las destrezas de trabajar por sueldo y produccion
    g) Consejo, intervencon en una crisis, actividades religiosas promovia por Solitas

13. Cuantos horas las participantes asisten los cursos educacionales (por termino medio) todos los dias
   a) 1-2 horas por termino medio todos los dias
   b) 2-4 horas
   c) 4-6 horas
   d) > 6 horas

14. De las participantes en los grupos de credito, que porcentaje restituyeron los prestamos sin extensiones
   a) 0-10% restituyeron los prestamos sin extensiones
   b) 10- 30%
   c) 30- 50%
   d) 50-70%
   e) 70-90%
   f) > 90%

15. A quien restituyeron los miembros del grupos de credito los prestamos
   a) El CRWRC
   b) Al otro NGO
   c) Las consocias en los grupos credito
   d) Un banco, independencia de Solitas
   e) Otro; explica, por favor:

16. Como usan los prestamos (*Cerque algunas letras que aplica.*)
   a) Para los negocias en el marcado
   b) Para la educacion para las mujeres o sus hijos
   c) Para mercancias en las casas de las mujeres
   d) Otro(s); explica, por favor:

17. Todas las participantes en los cursos de las destrezas de trabajar por sueldos aprenden las mismas destrezas
   Si, las mujeres aprenden las mismas destrezas
   No, las mujeres aprenden las destrezas diferentes. Explica, por favor:
18. Que tipos de las destrezas aprenden las participantes (*Cerque algunas letras que aplicas*)

   a) Las destrezas contabilidad  
   b) Las destrezas ventas  
   c) Las destrezas de compra  
   d) Otro(s); explica, por favor:

**Seccion C.**

19. *"Un objectivo de Solitas es para educar las mujeres en ‘alternativas para independencia que contribuye a mejorar sus niveles de veda.’"*
    
    Piensa que este objectivo esta realizando Usted

    Si  

    No; explica, por favor:

20. Si la repuesta es "Si" para el numero 19, que demonstra este? Explica abajo, por favor.

21. Piensa que hay un marcado o necesidad para las destrezas de trabajar por sueldos independencia de la organacion

    Si; explica, por favor:

    No

**Seccion D. Cerque la letra de la repuesta.**

22. Cuantos decisiones del proyecto determinan de las participantes directamente

   a) 0-10% determinan de las participantes directamente  
   b) 10-30%  
   c) 30-50%  
   d) 50-70%  
   e) 70-90%  
   f) Over 90%

23. *Pone un “X” en la escala que indica la cantidad de poder de decidir en las siguientes temas. Nota: “Antes” significa antes de la participacion de las mujeres en Solitas y “Despues” significa despues de*
la participacion de las mujeres en Solitas. “1" significa no poder de decidir; ”2" significa un pequeño cantidad de poder de decidir; ”3" significa que el poder es igualmente con otra persona; ”4” significa mucho poder de decidir; y ”5” significa poder de decidir total.

Cuidar de las hijos
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Disciplinar los hijos
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Cultivar un jardin
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Comprar mercancías para la familia (muebles, mantas, un radio)
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Presupuesto
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Educar para sí
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Educar para los hijos
Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Participacion en grupos o organizaciones (de iglesia, de mujeres)
Comprar la comida para la familia

Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Planear los comidos

Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Comprar la ropa para la familia

Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

Trabajar por sueldo

Antes: 1 2 3 4 5
Después: 1 2 3 4 5

24. Explica los tres temas con los mas cambios:

1. Tema: 
   Explica:

2. Tema: 
   Explica:

3. Tema: 
   Explica:

25. Explica los tres temas con los menos cambios:

1. Tema: 
   Explica:

2. Tema: 
   Explica:
3. Tema: Explica:

26. Las participantes movieron en unas posiciones de responsabilidades en la organización a causa de los cursos educacionales del proyecto
   
   Si
   
   No; explica, por favor:

27. Si la respuesta es “Sí” para el número 26, piensa Usted que las participantes tienen poder auténtico de decidir en las posiciones de responsabilidades
   
   Si; explica, por favor:
   
   No; explica, por favor:

*Sección E. Cerque la letra de la respuesta, por favor.*

28. Que porcentaje las participantes pagaron en total los subvenciones de leche a este tiempo
   
   a) 0-10% pagaron en total los subvenciones de leche a este tiempo
   
   b) 10- 30%
   
   c) 30- 50%
   
   d) 50-70%
   
   e) 70-90%
   
   f) Over 90%

29. Si el proyecto termine hoy, que porcentaje de las participantes retrocedan a sus vidas antes de sus participaciones en el proyecto
   
   a) 0-10% retrocedan a sus vidas
   
   b) 10- 30%
   
   c) 30- 50%
   
   d) 50-70%
   
   e) 70-90%
   
   f) Over 90%

Explica, por favor:
30. Ha observa Usted la participantes han se organizando independentemente del CRWRC o los otros NGO’s durante sus participacion en el proyecto

Si; explica, por favor:

No; explica, por favor:

31. Es este un resultado de influencia de Solitas

Si; explica, por favor:

No; explica, por favor:

32. Si la repuesta es “Si” para el numero 30, que tipos de grupos? (Nota: estos grupos son independentemente de CRWRC, los otros NGO’s o Solitas. Cerque algunas letras que aplica.)

a) Grupos politicas protestas
b) Grupos religiosos
c) Grupos de credito
d) Grupos/clases de las detrezas de leer y escribir
e) Grupos politicas movimientos
f) Grupos politicas de los derechos de mujeres
g) Otro; explica, por favor:
Appendix C

Protocol Clearance From the Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board
Date: January 26, 1996

To: Tara Vette

From: Richard Wright, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 96-01-23

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Two NGO's and their impact on Latin American women" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you must seek specific approval for any changes in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: January 26, 1997

xc: Sushi Datta-Sandhu, POL SCI
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