

Marisa Meno Bread and Roses Progress Report

For this Bread and Roses fellowship, I undertook a project at Nile Sisters Development Initiative that aimed to assess immigrant and refugee women's perceptions of feminism and women's roles in society. In addition, the project wanted to identify any obstacles or barriers these women face in accessing social services and/or employment. One of the ways I obtained data for the project involved me conducting three workshops at Nile Sisters. The workshops consisted of administering pre and post assessments to measure the attendees attitudes towards feminism, women's roles in society, and obstacles women face. In between the pre and post assessments, I did a small presentation on feminism in order to provide the attendees with new information about the topic or to further their understanding of it. The presentation also included many discussion questions that I posed to the audience in order to have them contribute to the conversation and voice their opinions about feminism and women's rights topics. Each workshop tried to reach out to women from different countries and regions. The first workshop primarily targeted Haitian and Congolese women while the second and third workshops targeted Burmese and Arab women, respectively. In addition to the workshops, I conducted interviews with three community leaders that have worked extensively with the female immigrant and refugee community. Specifically, the community leaders I interviewed worked primarily with Syrian, Iraqi, Somali, and African immigrants and refugees. I also did a shortened version of my feminist presentation at the Karen Organization's Women's Empowerment Summit event. Due to the time constraints I could not distribute the pre and post assessments; however, I did implement many discussion questions in order to gain insights into the audience's ideas of feminism and women's roles in society.

Upon the completion of my project, I have obtained quantitative data through the surveys I distributed at the workshops as well as qualitative data which I obtained through the feedback I received from the attendees at the workshop and event as well as interviews I conducted with community leaders in the San Diego immigrant and refugee community. I have created a Word document that breaks down the data from the pre and post surveys numerically. I also compiled a list of notes that I took during the workshops and interviews that contains the feedback from the participants. Through this project I was able to obtain numerical data that represents the ideas that some immigrant and refugee women have about feminism, women's roles in society, and obstacles that they face. In addition, I was able to talk directly to people who work closely with the female immigrant and refugee community in San Diego and who shared more insight into the struggles that the population currently faces.

This project was conducted in order to provide Nile Sisters with data about the different struggles that immigrant and refugee women face in San Diego in addition to what perspectives they may have on women's roles in society. This data may then be used in order to determine what type of programming may need to be undertaken or further implemented in order to assist immigrant and refugee women. For example, if most immigrant and refugee women felt that women should not work outside of their home, that would be something Nile Sisters would consider when developing career training programs for immigrants and refugees. In addition, identifying the problems immigrant and refugee women face would help Nile Sisters determine any further action that needs to be taken to assist the population.

Taking on this project was immensely impactful on me. While I did know that San Diego had a large immigrant and refugee population, I never really got the opportunity to interact with

them and listen to their stories. During the workshops, I greatly appreciated being able to hear their stories and the types of struggles that they have to face living in the United States. I also enjoyed being a part of a project that will hopefully result in implementing programming that can further help this population and cater to the needs they are currently in demand of. Lastly, I greatly valued being able to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research since that is a career interest of mine. The project gave me a chance to improve my skills as a researcher as well as give me real world experience into what is required in the field. I know I will take these skills I honed and the lessons I learned throughout this research process and apply them to future research projects.