

One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

*Fourth Week of Lent
Wednesday March 30*

Scripture

Hosea 4:3

Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing

Reflection

In South America in 2020 severe droughts were experienced especially in northern Argentina, Paraguay, and the western borders of Brazil. In Brazil alone, the World Meteorological Organization estimated agricultural losses were nearly \$3 billion US. (State of the Global Climate Report 2020). - That's a very high level view, so let's bring it closer. When the land mourns, how are we called to the work of restoration? Quite often we find that the women of the community start with small scale farms and businesses that gradually develop a stable food supply and income. In Edmonton where I live, I have seen many churches giving over their grounds to form community gardens. These gardens not only provide food for local communities they also instill a new sense of wonder and develop skills in tending the land. Such projects have moved some budding farmers into keeping bees and chickens. Urban land which was once major farmland in the region is producing fruit again. In the restoration of the land there is a certain restoration of the soul that takes place.

Prayer

*Holy God,
earth and air and water are your creation, and every living thing belongs to you:
have mercy on us as climate change confronts us.
Give us the will and the courage
to simplify the way we live,
to reduce the energy we use,
to share the resources you provide, and to bear the cost of change.
Forgive our past mistakes and send us your Spirit,
with wisdom in present controversies
and vision for the future to which you call us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Anglican Church of Australia*

Empowering women to take climate change

In the Paramo de Pisba highlands in the Department of Boyaca, Colombia, most people work in either agriculture, animal husbandry or traditional mining. But as mining activities continue to expand into agricultural land, more and more people are being forced to move higher in the mountains to cultivate the protected land in the paramos.

An economy based mainly on mining can be extremely damaging to the life of a community. When mining is the main industry, the environment is destroyed and traditional farming – usually the domain of women – disappears, leaving women without employment opportunities.

Women are then dependent on men's income perpetuating what is locally known as "machista" social patterns. Women have no voice in decision making, particularly in financial affairs and men make household and family decisions.

PWRDF's new partner ILSA (Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un derecho Alternativos) works with local women to address these needs. The program will train women in nine municipalities of Paramo de Pisba and empower them with the skills and necessary funds to create agricultural microenterprises, protect their environment and strengthen their leadership potential in the public sphere.

"The women face economic exclusion and discrimination, condemning them to poverty, unemployment and stripping them of their gender and political rights," says Jeannethe Lara, PWRDF's program coordinator for the ILSA project.

The project has identified 75 women and 400 family members who will take part in training and discussions on everything from women's rights, leadership, agriculture, public policy and environmental protection. These trainings will promote the women's participation in the public sphere and create community campaigns on climate change mitigation and environmental protection.

The women will use their new skills to establish a native plant nursery that will help reforest the land damaged by mining. They will also receive seeds and livestock for their family farms including hens, chickens and sheep, which can be used to obtain wool and bred for additional income.

The identified women will also receive training and coaching on entrepreneurship including financial, administrative and technical information. Together they will establish a "revolving fund" where everyone contributes and has access to a shared pot of money. These funds will allow the women to design and establish collective income generation enterprises in order to provide the women with the income they need.

"The project will improve the quality of life of women, their families and their territory," says Lara. ILSA was formed in 1978 to work with marginalized communities in Colombia, a country with a history of internal conflict leading to people's displacement and human rights violations.

ILSA works with Indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, women and displaced people to ensure their full human rights.

By transforming the leadership norms of rural women, ILSA seeks to work toward the recognition of women's rights to the rural economy and guarantee their economic autonomy while creating initiatives for the protection of their land.

“ILSA is creating an eco-feminist response to climate change in the region of Pisba,” says Lara.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/new-pwrdf-partner-empowers-women-while-responding-to-climate-change/>