

Gender training

Kerlin works for FESPAD, a Christian Aid partner in El Salvador. She is a specialist in the criminal justice programme especially with violence against women. She explained how they put a great deal of effort into educating women of their rights in law. She explained how many



men feel above the law. Women who have been assaulted often do not know the changes in the law and therefore do not file complaints. The woman used to have to go to the police to file a complaint but now they do not always have to do so. This change is not well known so FESPAD arranged training by producing a CD so that women know their rights and can defend them.

Many see the Municipality as a protector so they will go to the Mayor for help. Each Municipality must now have a centre to help women who have been abused.

Municipal groups in Ciudad Delgado, made up of women from different organisations, have been set up to provide training on the legal framework and legal rights. Firstly, they work with the women to empower them but have started working on gender awareness in men's groups. The progress is slow as some men will not come if they know what the topic is. Masculinity training, called 'Strong Families' looks at the different roles within a family and other styles of leadership. The whole family can take part in this one day workshop. They divide into different groups but come together to share how they feel and what they have learnt. They then look at the problems and try to think of ways to minimise these. There is a great need to get this education out into society, especially amongst the least educated. It is also recognised that council members need training too.

Although a successful lawyer, Kerlin does not see herself as equal in society as the gender divide is so ingrained. However, she feels that her role in life is the bigger battle of tackling the higher authorities on gender issues.

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