

Pizcando Sueños /Harvesting Dreams

The Voices of Mexican Migrant Women

"Salir adelante. Luchar por mis hijos, sobre todo mi niña. Y si mi esposo quiere seguir conmigo y si no al final del tiempo, pues apartarnos, apartame de él y luchar por mis hijos. Por que lo más importante para mi son mis hijos, tal vez por eso él esta frustrado o se siente un poquito bajo. Por que yo siempre he dicho y le digo a todo el mundo, que quiero a mis hijos, con él o sin él. Voy a salir adelante."



"To move forward. To struggle for my children, my daughter most of all. And if my husband wants to continue with me, or if not, if in the end we separate, I will separate myself from him and struggle for my children. Because the most importante thing is my children, maybe that is why he is frustrated or feels inferior. Because I have always said to him and to the whole world, that I love my children, with him or without him. I am going to move forward."

Salir adelante, to move forward, is a “dream ” voiced by the women of the *Pizcando Sueños* Project. The “dream” is the strength, faith and hope that has been the motivation for Mexican migrant women as they make the dangerous border crossing and in their daily life as they struggle to survive the reality of life hidden behind the “American Dream.” But the question arises, is this the “Mexican Dream?”

Pizcando Sueños, developed by the Rural Women’s Health Project , allows the Mexican farmworking women to express their dreams and share their hopes for their future as well as the future of their daughters. No longer will the Mexican migrant farmworking women have to carry their stories in solitude.

Pizcando Sueños: Women's Oral Histories...

The *Pizcando Sueños* project has documented twenty Mexican farmworking women's journey to Florida and their reality of forging towards a new set of dreams, in a new culture. *Pizcando Sueños* serves to preserve the women's deeply profound beliefs as well as giving voice to these women to share their struggle and to pass on their cultural legacy to future generations who are living within two cultures. These oral histories reflect how these women's values and beliefs are consistently challenged by such issues as migration, new roles and responsibilities, the challenging *comadre* systems and the fast-paced and materialistic life in the United States. All of this is compounded by the difficult and rapid acculturation of their daughters.

Of the two key objectives of *Pizcando Sueños*, the mothers have embraced the celebration of the relationship of mother and daughter and how this project provides a mechanism for passing on their dreams. For the Mexican farmworking women, *Pizcando Sueños* means that their stories of life in Mexico and their immigration experiences will be preserved.

An Invitation to be Heard

Often, studies concerning Mexican immigration, migration and the effects of acculturation, have focused on the male experience. The methodology used in much of this research utilizes formal techniques that both collect and then disperse the results, often leaving the target community unaware of conclusions. In contrast, *Pizcando Sueños* relies completely on the stories of the women and will utilize *fotonovelas* as the medium to return the stories to the women's community, service providers and researchers. These oral histories will shed light beyond the perceived barriers of language, socio-economic status and religious affiliation. For fellow Mexicans at home, *Pizcando Sueños* will provide an insight to the journey and the reality of forging towards a new set of dreams, in a new culture.

Throughout this project, as the women embraced the oral history process, they were clear that they would only share their stories if they would be heard by their sisters, so that it might

make a difference in other women's lives. *Pizcando Sueños* is an invitation made by the women themselves: to be heard, recognized and to be considered sisters and mothers.

“Pensé que íbamos a venir un año y íbamos a regresar al rancho, y así, pero no fue distinto, porque ya después nació mi'ja y pues yo dije tiene que ir a la escuela y tiene que irse superando, y mas por eso es que estamos detenidos aquí, por los hijos que uno quiere que sigan adelante.”

“I thought that we would come for a year and then we would return to the *rancho*, like that, but no it was different. Because after my girl was born, I said that she has to go to school, she has to go to school to better herself, and for this we are here detained, because for the love of one's children, one has to move forward.”

In the next five issues excerpts of the voices of the women of the *Pizcando Sueños* project will be shared. Each issue will give voice to a different issue and a different step in the journey of the Mexican farmworker women.

Pizcando Sueños is a project Fabiola del Castillo, Fran Ricardo and Robin Lewy of the Rural Women's Health Project