



## Taking Action to Help Our People Today!

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Feliz Dia Internacional de la Mujer! - Marzo 8, 2005  
Happy International Women's Day! - March 8, 2005

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### About Us



**LibertadLatina.org** is a non-profit project that works to end the sexual exploitation of all women and children in the Americas. We focus on building effective defenses against the many forms of criminal impunity that threaten the lives of Indigenous and Latina women and children wherever they may be.

Our work aims to challenge today's *'gender hostile living environment'* that especially impacts the lives of women and children of color. We confront sexist male supremacy, racism, anti-immigrant hostility, public apathy and the 'compassion fatigue' that paralyzes our societies from taking effective action to save women and children in Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada and the U.S. from a fast-growing - yet largely 'invisible' crisis of severe sexual harassment, sexual coercion and rape with impunity.

That *'gender hostile living environment'* has set the stage for a new plague, modern sexual slavery. Human slavery (also called trafficking) is now the third most profitable criminal activity in the world. Over 100,000 Latin American women and underage girls are trafficked against their will each year.

During March of 2005 **LibertadLatina.org** is celebrating its fourth year of existence. March 2005 is also the 11th anniversary of the publication of **LibertadLatina** founder and coordinator Chuck Goolsby's first report on these issues in 1994. We would like to take this opportunity to re-emphasize our message of hope and urgency in regard to the women and children's human rights issues that we advocate for. Exploitation in the Americas is getting worse.

We believe our efforts are having a positive impact in the World. We know that our readers learn-from and use the large base of factual information that we present. We also know that many of you take that information into your own circles of advocates, co-workers, journalists and friends, thus raising the World's awareness of the need for the human race to rise up and act to *end impunity now!*

Thanks to all of you for your support. It is greatly appreciated!

**LibertadLatina.org** is the largest source of human rights advocacy information available on the Internet in regard to Latina and Indigenous women and children's exploitation issues, now with over 500 factual documents. We continue to expand our important mission day-by-day and year-by-year.

The basic mission of **LibertadLatina.org** is simple: to educate the public and society's institutions in regard to these issues; to save lives; and to act to rescue people trapped in exploitation *today!*

### Chuck Goolsby

Founder and Coordinator

[www.LibertadLatina.org](http://www.LibertadLatina.org)

Washington, DC

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International Women's Day



Street Children - Brazil



# Our 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and International Women’s Day 2005 Report Defending ‘Maria from Impunity’

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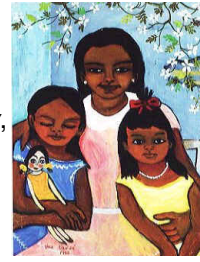
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## Our Mission - Defending 'Maria' from Impunity

First and foremost, **LibertadLatina.org** is *pro-children, pro-Latina (pro-women), pro-Latino (pro-men), pro-Indigenous, pro-Afro-Latina, pro-Latina of every ethnicity, pro-human race and pro-equality*. We stand up to light a path out of the abyss of criminal sex trafficking, rape with impunity and severe sexual harassment that plagues the lives of many millions of women and minor children around the world.



"Familia" by Zelia Lardé  
El Salvador (1901-1974)

Latin America, Latino communities in the United States and also Indigenous communities across the Americas are among the cultures most severely impacted by the aggressive oppression of women and children's rights to dignity and to the sanctity of their own bodies. We at **LibertadLatina** stand up to respond to this growing crisis of 'mass gender violence.'

### 1. Why Do We Focus on Latina & Indigenous Issues?

**LibertadLatina** recognizes that in Latin America, women and girls of all races and social classes face sexual exploitation at a level that most people in the 'developed world' can barely comprehend. Within Latin American societies, poor women and girls, especially those who are of Indigenous and African ethnicity, often face conditions of sexual exploitation that are much worse than the abuses faced by their Latina sisters who may be 'mestiza' (mixed race) or of only European ancestry. Such racial differences also exist in the U.S. and in Canada where violence against women of color is rampant.

Leading World governments as well as global anti-trafficking and women's rights movements have traditionally focused on gender equality issues within the developed world (especially the sex slavery crisis in Eastern Europe). **LibertadLatina** works to educate the public, World governments and advocacy organizations about the fact that impunity is destroying women of color across the Americas.

### 2. Modern Sex Slavery & Latina Women & Girls



A kidnapped 13 year old Indigenous girl forcibly held by FARC Guerrillas in Colombia - 2002.

From: [You'll Learn Not to Cry](#) - A Human Rights Watch Report.

*In Colombia's current civil war, both leftist guerrillas and rightist forces conscript and exploit young girls.*

Latin America is today the second largest global source of enslaved women, after Asia. Millions of women and underage girls are trapped in prostitution. Many of these women have been kidnapped and sold. 'Gender hostile living environments' that view women as being very literally inferior to men, the resulting under-education of girls, poverty, unstable national economies and the immense money power of criminal organizations make Latina women an easy target for enslavement. This is not just a theory, it is a current fact.

Approximately 27 million persons are enslaved in the world today. At least 2 million women and girls are trafficked in forced prostitution (a *low* estimate). Annual numbers of Latina women and children trapped in slavery include:

- 100,000 women and children trafficked across Latin America.
- Up to 2 million child victims forced into prostitution in Brazil.
- 500,000 girls age 16 and under prostituted in northeast Argentina.
- 500,000 minor girls prostituted in Peru. Many were kidnapped.
- 35,000 Colombian women sold (mostly to Holland, Spain and Japan) for annual criminal profits of \$500 million (av. \$14,000 each).
- 18,000 to 20,000 enslaved persons trafficked into the United States.
- 4,600 foreign women sex slaves in the U.S. (CBS News - 3/2005). Most women and girl sex slaves in the U.S. are from Mexico.

Latina women and girls are openly kidnapped or tricked into slavery. They are then sold by slave traders to brothels in big cities and farm labor camps across the Americas and beyond. Destinations include San Diego, Los Angeles, New York, Washington DC, Miami, Amsterdam, Madrid and Tokyo.

### 3. 500 Years of Targeting Indigenous Women



Indigenous women and girls in the Americas face an ongoing wave of sexual harassment, assault and entrapment in criminal sex trafficking that began at least 500 years ago and *has never let-up*. Reports of the availability for sale of 'virgin' 13 year old Mayan girls from Chiapas (state) in Mexico to brothel owners in Europe for \$25,000 each is the tip of the iceberg. Traffickers and other sexual exploiters know that nobody will search for an Indigenous victim!

Approximately 80 million 'First-Nations' ethnic groups live in Latin America, especially in Bolivia (which is 80% Indigenous), Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala (60% Indigenous), El Salvador and Mexico. Women and girls in these nations face sexual exploitation with impunity as a 'normal' part of daily life. Victims are routinely ignored by the political and judicial systems that should protect them.

The soldiers... started grabbing the girls and raping us," recalls Ana, one of a handful of survivors of the massacre. "...All the girls were raped." In total, 177 women and children died that day. The village [of Rio Negro (Black River)] disappeared. – [About the 1982 government massacre of 107 children and 70 women in Guatemala.](#)

In Canada, thousands of 'First-Nations' children were raped (and some were killed) in the mandatory-attendance boarding school system that ended around 1980. In the aftermath of that horror, rape prostitution, and gender murders still plague Native women. 90% of child prostitutes are Indigenous.

In the United States a similar pattern of abuses existed in boarding schools. Indigenous women today face a rate of rape that is 3.5 times higher than that for other U.S. women. The U.S. Justice Dept. reports that white men are the assailants in 80% of such cases, which occur largely in western states.

Anti-Indigenous racism across the Americas conspires to hide and condone the rampant sexual abuse of girls and women even while some national societies begin serious work to end sexual exploitation affecting non-Indigenous women. This indifference to indigenous women and girl victims empowers criminals who know that across the Americas, they can 'safely' target this ethnic group for violence.

The nations of the Americas were founded by violent acts of colonization that once 'gave' Europeans 'sexual privileges of conquest' over Indigenous women and girls. Those 'traditions' continue in 2005. **LibertadLatina** insists that governments act to protect Indigenous women and girls from that impunity.

### 4. African Descended Women in the Americas



Afro-Latina and Afro-Caribbean women and girls are also subjected to conditions of gender and race based impunity in the Americas. Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the English speaking West Indies (Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and other islands), as well as French speaking Haiti and Dominique all have large populations of African-descended women facing severe sexual exploitation. Sex traffickers actively target these women and girls.

**Doctor Maricel Mena López** - An Afro-Colombian Theologian Living in Brazil

La mujer blanca, de clase media, solo sufre sexismo. Las pobres sufren clasismo y sexismo. Para la mujer negra enfrenta, además, otro elemento, que es el racismo.

Middle class white women only suffer sexism. Poor women suffer classism and sexism. Black women face, in addition, another element, which is racism. From: [I Am Black and Beautiful \(In Spanish\)](#).



Child sex abuse and prostitution are rising in Latin America and children are most threatened in Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Cuba, United Nations officials said Wednesday... "Poverty and race...are decisive. It is mainly poor, black women who suffer the worst abuse." – *Brazil's UNICEF delegate [Arabela Rota](#) – Reuters Article, 1997.*

**Libertad Latina** also stands up to address these racial injustices. Our collection of Afro-Latina and Afro-Caribbean issues will grow as we find new materials and network with community activists.

## 5. *Machismo and Hidden Forms of Exploitation*

Few organizations in the anti-trafficking and anti-gender violence movements in the developed world understand these hidden cultural issues... what Cuban-American theologian and ethicist [Dr. Miguel de la Torre](#) calls the "multidimensional aspects of... a paradigm called *machismo*, which [explains] intra-Hispanic oppression." "[Machismo involves] sexism, heterosexism, racism... and classism." Spain's machismo, imported to Latin America, has justified 5 centuries of the exploitation of women of color.

**Libertad Latina** focuses special attention on the ways in which 'negative machismo' creates a social environment where traffickers and other sexual exploiters can engage in '*mass gender violence*' while entire societies do nothing at all to stop their impunity. Machismo 'normalizes' gender oppression. It justifies, in the modern era, the mass-kidnapping, rape and enslavement of Latina women and girls.

## 6. *Defending 'Little Brown Maria' in the Brothel*



A Paraguayan Indigenous girl rescued from sexual slavery in a brothel by Argentine police.

Sexually enslaving young Native girls has been a 'tradition' for decades in Paraguay.

'*Little brown girls*' from Mexico and other countries in the Americas are literally kidnapped, raped and trafficked by the thousands. They are then taken to cities such as San Diego, New York, Washington, DC, Madrid and Tokyo, where they are sold into sexual slavery exactly because they are 'little brown girls' with no representation in the legal and social institutions of the nations that are responsible for their safety. That is unacceptable!

Stated clearly, Latina, African-descended and Indigenous women and girls across the Americas are not defended from exploitation by criminal gangs. Impunity dominates, often motivated by sexism, classism and racism.

One example of this reality becomes painfully clear when we examine the fact that in Mexico an estimated 120,000 children were kidnapped during a recent 3 year period, never to be seen again. Thirteen year old 'virgin' Mayan girls are kidnapped or bought in fake marriages, and are then sold to brothels in Spain. Tens of thousands of other Mexican children are sold to sexual slavery and illegal adoption rings who often take their victims to the U.S. Nobody is looking for those children except for their parents. '*Little brown Maria*' becomes just another faceless victim. Her future includes forcible rape every day of her life, and then death from HIV/AIDS and torture. These realities exist in Latin America *and also* in the U.S.

## 7. *San Diego, California: A Critical Hot-Spot*

If the well known and unfortunate White American child kidnap and murder victims such as Polly Klass, Megan Kanca and Carlie Brucia (may they rest in peace) had been known to have been trapped in a child rape camp in San Diego, California, or in a residential brothel in Queens, New York run by sex traffickers, helicopters and hundreds of police and volunteers would have quickly rescued them. Yet in San Diego County, California, 12 year old kidnapped '*little brown Maria*' is trapped in a brothel. It is known to activists and others that *she will not be rescued by law enforcement. Why?*



The San Diego rape camps have been known to federal and local law enforcement for over ten years. Ten years after learning about the camps, federal, state and local law enforcement conducted a raid of the worst open-air child rape camps. The raid resulted in no convictions of the 40 men apprehended. The 47 enslaved underage girl victims remained silent because they had been threatened with harm to themselves, to their families and to their children, who are sometimes held hostage by traffickers. U.S. federal, state and local law enforcement today know exactly where the traffickers are pimping underage girls who have been kidnapped from Mexico. Yet we see no visible efforts to rescue victims.

Therefore, *We the People* must stand and act in their defense. Only *We the People* can pressure our governments to shut down the child rape camps of San Diego County and across the Americas and the World. **LibertadLatina** would like to see the public join together to hold governments accountable for these child rape camps. We look forward to seeing real results from the \$2 million in federal grants sent in 2004 to San Diego based advocacy agencies and law enforcement. The victims are waiting!

San Diego is part of a growing 'zone of impunity' that is emerging in the U.S.-Mexican border region. Centuries of anti-Indigenous and anti-Latina sexual exploitation is now *enabling* ruthless traffickers.

### **8. Empowering Law Enforcement to Act Against Traffickers Now!**

...Each year an estimated 800,000 to 900,000 human beings are bought, sold or forced across the world's borders. Among them are hundreds of thousands of teenage girls, and others as young as 5, who fall victim to the sex trade. This commerce in human life generates billions of dollars each year, much of which is used to finance organized crime.

...Those who create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. And governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery.

*U.S. President George W. Bush* – Speech to the United Nations General Assembly – September 23, 2003

Police and other judicial forces must be 'authorized' to act by civil government authorities to effectively stop these criminal exploiters. Governments at the national, state/province and local levels in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean and across Latin America must not only be authorized and funded to act, they must be given explicit 'permission' to do so. We have yet to see that 'permission' be given.

Within the United States, anti-immigrant hostility, Spanish/English language barriers, machismo, official indifference and a lack of political will appear to be 'binding the hands' of those concerned law enforcement officials who would like to shut down the rape camps and sex slavery brothels that now exist across the United States. Even in instances where officials know where sex slavery exists, the 'rules of engagement' and the politics of police work sometimes cause police not to act to rescue victims. Activist organizations such as **Polaris Project** are starting to educate local police departments about best practices in how to respond effectively to human slavery cases. The U.S. Department of Justice is now funding regional anti-trafficking task forces across the United States. Non-profit agencies are being well funded to assist victims. The United States, the United Nations and the Organization of American States are now funding initiatives to fight trafficking in Latin America.

Yet San Diego's child rape camps continue to exist. Under-staffed local law enforcement is fighting a losing battle with Tijuana, Mexico based traffickers. Gangs continue to kidnap and enslave young girls with impunity because they know that U.S. law enforcement won't or can't act to shut down the child rape camps and save lives! Across Latin America institutional sexism (and classism and racism), official corruption and the huge profits available from sex trafficking allow these criminals to operate in safety. Leadership from the grassroots will be critical to change these realities. Governments will not act unless they are pushed to do so. *We the People* must unite and demand effective action *now!*

## 9. Being Trafficked is a Death Sentence

### Global mortality rates for trafficked women and children:

A reasonable statistical projection is that 15% of the sexually exploited population, or 30,000 women and children, die every year. Over a ten year span, it is more than those killed by the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is why it is the most compelling human rights problem of our time. Yet, this tragic situation is causing few concerns among most governments of the world.

From: [Cherif Bassiouni](#), President of the International Human Rights Law Institute, College of Law at DePaul University, principal author of: *A Study of the Trafficking of Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in the Americas*.



A young Colombian Girl Enslaved in a Brothel – From El Tiempo– Bogotá

Little is said in most public discussions by anti-trafficking groups and others about the fact that sexual exploitation with impunity in our societies is exposing innocent victims to the risk of an early death. **LibertadLatina** seeks to make these connections not just in regard to trafficking victims but also in the context of the risk to life (from HIV/AIDS) faced by Latina and Indigenous women from coercion and rape in their communities, schools and low-wage workplaces, where exploitation happens every day.

## 10. Community Exploitation in the Americas

Indigenous and Latina women in the U.S., Canada and Latin America face exploitation with impunity in their communities. **LibertadLatina** discusses in detail how that sexual oppression occurs in daily life.

"Society's silence is the main accomplice in allowing widespread impunity. Latin America and the Caribbean face enormous challenges in the prelude to the twenty-first century. The region will have to bring out into the open this increasingly disturbing reality; and it will have to struggle against the high degree to which society tolerates or practices inconceivable forms of aggression against the most vulnerable individuals in society. In commemorating International Women's Day, Executive Director of UNICEF Carol Bellamy said that "it is everywhere, among rich and poor -- at home, in school, in the workplace and in the community. Yet on the eve of the 21st century, the vast scale of this outrage is still not widely acknowledged, nor even truly understood". From: - UNICEF Executive Director [Carol Bellamy](#) – International Women's Day Speech – 1999.

The severe, high levels of sexual harassment and assault faced by adult women and minor girls within the immigrant communities of the United States deserve special attention. The convergence of the impunity of sexist 'negative machismo' (that hides behind a language barrier) with the widespread apathy (lack of knowledge, indifference, and/or anti-immigrant hostility) among many in official positions allow violence with impunity against immigrant women and children to continue virtually uncontested by the framework of U.S. laws that have been designed (in theory) to fight sexual abuse.

The work of **LibertadLatina** grew out of advocacy to defend Latina immigrant workers from workplace sexual exploitation in Montgomery County, Maryland starting in 1986. Responding to disinterest and even hostility from corporate, government and press representatives, our first report was written in February/March of 1994: [The Exploitation of Immigrant Women in Montgomery County, Maryland](#). That report's pioneering analysis of the dynamics of the workplace exploitation of immigrant women remains accurate today. March 2005 marks the 11th anniversary of the release of our 1994 report.



## 11. The Cold Facts About Community Exploitation in Washington, DC

### Exploitation and Impunity in Washington, DC

**Excerpt:**

Over the past two years, I have been observing a systemic pattern of violence committed against girls and young women in our community. This violence involves the sexual abuse/assault against girls as young as 10 years old...

...There have been incidents of date rape, gang rape, abductions, drugging, threats with firearms, etc. The incidents are just as you described in your [\[Mr. Goolsby's \(below\) NCMEC\]](#) letter and have been met with the same level of indifference and dismissal of legal (never mind moral) responsibility on the part of civil institutions -- the police department, public schools..."

...While some do say this is culturally accepted behavior, the reality is that many families -- mothers and fathers alike -- are enraged and wanting to pursue prosecution of the perpetrators, but they find themselves without recourse when the police won't respond to them, when they fear risking their personal safety, and/or when their legal status (undocumented) prevents them from believing they have rights or legal protection in this country. Many girls and young women's families are threatened and harassed by the perpetrators when it becomes apparent that the family is willing to press charges for statutory rape/child sexual abuse.

...The use of intimidation and violence to control girls and their families results in the following: 1) parents/guardians back off from pressing charges, 2) relatives do not inform the police or others of sightings of girls and young women who have been officially reported as "missing juveniles," and 3) the victims of sexual violence refuse to participate as "willing witnesses" in the prosecution/trial process.

*From a 1999 [letter by a Latina social worker](#) and girl's community center director working with young Latina girls and other girls of color in Washington, DC's largest Latino neighborhood.*

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Our letter to [The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#) about child abuse and exploitation in Gaithersburg, MD, and past official inaction in response. (The above social worker's letter responds to this letter).

**Excerpt:**

In 1997 I reported the ongoing, daily sexual harassment of an 11 year old Latin immigrant girl from El Salvador by an adult man, to the Gaithersburg City Police Department. [The officers]... didn't care at all and took no action... [The officers] told me in a matter of fact way that they could not respond to what the county Police Academy had taught them (in cultural sensitivity classes there) was just a part of Latino culture.

The next year, 1998, I again approached the Gaithersburg City Police Force to report that the same adult man was now sexually involved with this now 12 year old girl. The officer whom I spoke with at the city's police station stated to me that "We can't just pick him up, he might sue the city." I demanded to know from this officer whether there were laws against pedophilia and statutory rape in Maryland or were there not? I had to assert myself in the face of this apathy and disinterest, to the apparent approval of the female clerk working at the city's police station.

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"Workers who seek only to earn a living end up in the shadows of American life -- fearful, often abused and exploited. When they are victimized by crime, they are afraid to call the police, or seek recourse in the legal system." [President George W. Bush](#) – *Immigration Reform Speech - 01-07-2004*



## 12. HIV/AIDS and Machismo

**LibertadLatina** seeks to address the serious threat that the HIV/AIDS epidemic poses to all people, and the increased threat that sexual exploitation poses for all Latina and Indigenous women and children in the Americas. Young Latina women and girls are the fastest growing group of new HIV infections in the U.S. according to AIDS health professionals. Within Latin America, the HIV/AIDS epidemic may reach a near Africa level epidemic in certain areas.

Sexual exploitation in daily community life plays a large part in the threat to Latina and Indigenous women and girls of all ages from HIV/AIDS. Our peoples need to recognize this fact and react to this reality by moving beyond the traditional 'code of silence' about sexual abuse and the negative aspects of a machismo that encourages risky behavior. We must begin to develop effective methods of talking about these issues with young people, women and other vulnerable populations. Lives are at risk.

### **What Can We Do to End this Tragedy?**

In recognition of the brutal reality of the enslavement and lifetime sentence of forced rape given to millions of women and children each year, **LibertadLatina** offers this web site to all people of moral consciousness. All who read this information are encouraged to take action today to end slavery. The first step towards taking action is to acknowledge that this wound to the human soul really does exist.

**LibertadLatina** seeks to begin a dialog on these critical issues by involving people of all ethnicities, including: Latino, Indigenous, African and Asian communities throughout the Americas; young people; elders; advocates; women's groups; social service and medical professionals; law enforcement professionals; legislators; international and national governmental organizations; labor groups and academics. By developing a compassionate approach together we can light a path for our peoples out of this crisis. Responding to this emergency will require cross-cultural cooperation, empathy, and a respect for the sacredness of all *voluntary* human relationships.

**LibertadLatina's** perspectives on the realities of sexual exploitation within Latin America, Latin American immigrant communities in the U.S. and Indigenous communities come from 27 years of direct work in Latin-American and Indigenous victim advocacy for women and children.

**LibertadLatina** contributes this web site to the battle to end exploitation now. We encourage you to learn about these issues and then act on that information. Each of us can make a difference.

Please help us in this work by contacting us, by passing the word, and by finding ways to take positive action in your own communities.

Grass-roots activism around the world does make all the difference. 'Find your voice' on this issue. When you do, educate and organize your friends, families, co-workers, neighbors & religious circles.

The victims await our effective efforts to rescue and restore them. The future potential victims deserve our best efforts to defend them from criminal impunity.

***'Maria' prays that somehow, some day, we will rescue her.***

*Can you hear her cries now?*

*Can we agree to unite and help her?*

*The answer must be yes!*

**End impunity now!**

**LibertadLatina.org**



## LibertadLatina Salutes the Work of Dr. Laura Bozzo



The work of *LibertadLatina* would be much more difficult to accomplish without the existence of the pioneering television-based advocacy efforts of Peruvian lawyer and *NBC/Telemundo Network* talk show star Dr. Laura Bozzo. Dr. Bozzo's internationally broadcast program, seen by tens of millions of viewers each day, has literally broken a previously unspoken but enforced 'code of silence' that effectively muffled the cries of adult and child sexual abuse victims across Latin America. We salute Dr. Bozzo!

Before the *Laura en America* show appeared, Latina exploitation victims were rarely taken seriously.

For example, in the Washington, DC region where *LibertadLatina's* founder and coordinator started his Latina advocacy work in the 1980's, it was next to impossible in that era to find community leaders who were willing to stand up and speak out and defend Latina women and minor girls who faced rape, severe sexual harassment and other abuses in the U.S. Capitol region. During the 1980s and 1990s, some community leaders even denied that any advocacy efforts for women were needed. Women felt the need to remain silent as Latino culture demanded of victims. Many male and female leaders within government and community institutions collaborated in suppressing any open discussion of sexual exploitation issues. Men saw no need for change. Female exploitation in *El Barrio* went unchallenged.

Today, those conditions are changing from the grass roots. With a hit TV show shown in two daily time slots and an international TV audience numbering in the millions, Dr. Bozzo has proven with her ratings success that women and girls of all races and economic classes across the Spanish-speaking world strongly support her efforts to break the 'code of silence' about sexual exploitation forever.

Dr. Bozzo's work has provided a role model for women, children and men across the Americas. She has helped Latinas everywhere 'find their voice.' Sexual exploitation is no longer a silent issue.

Dr. Bozzo, who also runs a women and children's family social services agency – *Solidaridad de Familia* (Family Solidarity) is using her international TV platform to educate women, girls, boys and men about women's equality. This is a radically new message in Latin America. Male supremacists who frequently appear on Dr. Bozzo's program openly defend their right to act with impunity and take whatever sexual privileges they want from the women and underage girls who cross their paths. Dr. Bozzo uses her legal reasoning and debating talents to allow all sides in a conflict to express their points of view. Dr. Bozzo then tries conflict resolution, which men often resist. Some cases end with reconciliation. In other cases, the Lima city prosecutor takes abusers from the set straight to jail.

Dr. Bozzo's show often results in finally freeing victims from repeated acts of harassment and rape.

Dr. Bozzo includes professional social workers and psychologists from *Solidaridad de Familia* in her programs, sending traumatized women, children and sometimes men directly to counseling sessions.

The *Laura en America* Show presents literally dozens of first-hand accounts of sexual exploitation (and also infidelity, another major theme of the show) each week. Dr. Bozzo's sensitive interviews, often reinforced by hidden video footage of the abuses, describe clearly the sexual exploitation issues that Peruvian women and underage girls face constantly in daily life. Female and male victims... adults, youth and children, freely describe the horrors of their daily experiences with rape in the home, acquaintance rape, stranger rape, community, school and workplace rape and harassment, beatings, forced prostitution and trafficking. Dr. Bozzo especially emphasizes that these behaviors are *wrong!*

There is nothing more hidden from public view than violent sexual assault and the use of coercion. On the *Laura in America* Show, even 10 year old girls facing sexual harassment and rape have the ability to secretly record and present video evidence of the hell that they live through in their daily lives.



In addition to acts of sexual exploitation carried out with impunity, Dr. Bozzo's show also demonstrates how minor girls who accuse stepfathers and other adult perpetrators are often not believed by their mothers. Women who sell children (even their own daughters) for prostitution are also exposed. The common but 'unspoken' patterns of abuse perpetrated by mothers who abandon their children, or even attempt to harm (even kill) their own children at a new boyfriend's insistence, are also confronted.

Throughout Latin America women and children face sexual exploitation and other forms of physical and psychological violence. Approximately 40 million homeless children live in Latin America. They and millions of other women and children must survive by engaging in prostitution and 'survival sex.' Estimates of the number of children trapped in prostitution include up to 2 million in Brazil, 500,000 in Peru, 500,000 in northeast Argentina, and hundreds of thousands of victims in other Latin American countries. UNICEF also estimates that 80,000 children and youth die annually in Latin America from domestic violence at home. HIV/AIDS may reach 'African' levels in some parts of Latin America. In Peru, 75% of girls have been raped by age 15 and up to 80% of women face domestic violence. Dr. Bozzo boldly dares to openly discuss all of these critical issues, which are still considered to be taboo subjects by many Latino cultural traditionalists. Dr. Bozzo also presents real solutions to her viewers.

Dr. Bozzo's show treats Indigenous, African-descended and all other women and girls with a level of equality, human dignity and respect that does not exist elsewhere in Spanish-language network TV's U.S. and international markets. Peru's multiracial society shines through in the context of female empowerment, a concept we support 100%. Dr. Bozzo's show promotes all forms of equality.

"You are an amazing woman. You are strong and full of love and compassion for people. You are such a blessing in this world. Unlike other talk shows you are truly there to help people, not just to benefit from them for publicity or money. May God bless you Laura..." — From a viewer's letter posted on [LibertadLatina.org](http://LibertadLatina.org).

The Laura en America show and [LibertadLatina](http://LibertadLatina.org) compliment each other. In effect, [LibertadLatina](http://LibertadLatina.org) is the Internet version of Dr. Bozzo's show, and vice-versa. Many viewers of the Laura en America Show visit [LibertadLatina](http://LibertadLatina.org) and write affectionate letters for "Laura." We always post Laura's fan letters.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Bozzo, [LibertadLatina](http://LibertadLatina.org) and sister organizations in the Americas, women of all races and all classes have new-found, powerful voices against impunity. Women and girls in even the most remote regions of the Spanish speaking world can watch *Laura's* show and put gender equality into practice in their personal lives. The women's rights, anti-domestic violence and anti-exploitation movements across the Americas are greatly strengthened by Dr. Bozzo's work.

Dr. Bozzo is a true pioneer in the woman and children's human rights movement!

We desire for Dr. Bozzo complete victory in her unfortunate and long-standing legal problems in Peru. As many activists for human rights know, such 'problems' come with the territory of 'breaking the mold.' In Latin America, defending women and children's rights can cause opponents of those efforts (men who don't want gender equality) to fight back.

Sadly, Peruvians cannot watch Laura en America. The show has been banned by Peru's government!

We at [LibertadLatina](http://LibertadLatina.org) and all of Dr. Bozzo's viewing public especially applaud and support *Laura's* bravery during over 2 years of house arrest (in her TV studio) and during other acts of intimidation.

*Keep up the great work and be strong, Laura! We love you and support you 100! Free Laura Bozzo!*

**Chuck Goolsby**

Founder and Coordinator

[www.LibertadLatina.org](http://www.LibertadLatina.org)

Washington, DC

March 8, 2005

International Women's Day

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