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20,000 Peruvian women trained for jobs at Condoray

For over 40 years Condoray has been providing job training for women who have no resources of their own. An interview with the program's assistant director.

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More than 20,000 women have passed through the training programs of Condoray, a Peruvian institution that advances women --

many of them indigenous -- and gives them a greater sense of their own self-worth. For Condoray's assistant director, Ana Lucía Aguayo de Rosell, women play a fundamental role in transmitting the faith in Latin America. "You could say that in our continent the preservation of the faith depends on their piety, their personal holiness, the example they give within their families, and their dedication to the Christian education of their children."

Ms. Aguayo speaks about the work Condoray carries out in the region of Cañete.

Training 20,000 women is easy enough to say. But how have you done it?

--*Ana Lucía Aguayo*: Yes, it's easy to say, but it's very different actually to achieve it. Condoray was started in 1963 with the mission of providing an integral education for the women

of Cañete and, through them, to contribute to the socio-economic development of the region and of the families living here.

Throughout the 44 years of its operation, Condoray has employed a model of development which revolves around women, who are also its goal. We are not simply an intermediary that tries to achieve projects of development more efficiently. Our mission is to form persons who assimilate a certain way of working along with certain human and Christian values, and then exercise a positive influence on their own families and on the entire province of Cañete.

We want the women to grow in their sense of self-worth, to learn to recognize their talents -- and their defects -- and to be able to set their own goals and work to achieve them.

In this way they can become the agents of their own development.

An important factor for the success of this model is what we call Rural Promoters. These are women from the farm communities of Cañete who come to Condoray and receive the formation we offer, and then return to their communities to give that same training to the women there. Their goal is to have the whole community participate in projects that improve their education, their families and in general the level of their society. In this way we are able to carry out stable, lasting programs of development. The Rural Promoters have a multiplying effect on the work we do at Condoray by bringing it to numerous women throughout the whole area.

What do you most value about the indigenous women?

--*Ana Lucía Aguayo*: Let me say, first of all, that Condoray does not work only with indigenous women.

Because of its location in the central coast of Peru, the students of Condoray represent a rich diversity of races which includes the indigenous, blacks, mestizos, etc.

Our experience has led us to value many traits in these women: their capacity for leadership, their tenacity, their strength and drive to achieve what they set out to do. But we should especially point out their generosity and their spirit of solidarity. When someone suffers an illness, or has financial problems, it is very normal for the neighboring women to come together immediately and organize activities (usually selling food) to get the money and the help that person needs. Or, if the mother needs to work or has to be away, they take care of the children.

We also admire their ability to undertake projects and be undaunted by difficulties once they know what they want. Another trait is their abnegation and their dedication to their families. The need to provide their daily food has, in a way, contributed to their organizing themselves very well so that they don't neglect their family obligations but rather harmonize them with the productive activities which help support their households financially.

What is the role of women in the re-evangelization of Latin America?

--Ana Lucía Aguayo: It's impossible to measure their contribution, because the future of humanity is written in the family. In the family the woman is the principal transmitter of human and Christian values. It is the woman who inculcates the faith and instills Christian virtues in her children. It is

she who unites the members of the family, and this unity is a great good for the Church and society.

Moreover, the family is the community that passes on a society's spiritual and cultural inheritance. It ensures that persons are strengthened in their convictions and it teaches social responsibility and solidarity.

Women, by their innate qualities, know how to accept each individual and enter into their inner world. With their femininity they bring to the Church modes of living reciprocity with others, of accepting those who are different, of undertaking projects for those who are most in need. By their moral strength and innate tenderness and by this facility for being concerned about each person, women can care for the "Domestic Church" which is the family but also the whole Church.

You could say, then, that in our continent the preservation of the faith depends on their piety, their personal holiness, the way they form families, the example they give within their families, and their dedication to the Christian education of their children. It is from authentic Christian families that there will come the virtuous, integral citizens who give light and breath to society.

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