

# Nueva Esperanza

A Year's Worth of Growth



## Ripple Effects of Community Healers

The Nueva Esperanza team has varied and exciting updates to report from the last year! Six young women whose education is sponsored by Nueva Esperanza have advanced another year in their university degrees. As part of their formation, these women, referred to as “community healers,” play an active role in facilitating the following community endeavors:

- The community **youth group** is up and running, providing a safe space for teens to meet regularly to grow in relationship, leadership, and conflict resolution.
- The **women’s group** is active and engaged in supporting each other socially, emotionally, and financially. The group operates its own savings and lending fund to increase their families’ financial stability, and have even mobilized to meet with other such groups from neighboring communities and collaborate with them!
- Part of the house used for Nueva Esperanza activities has now been converted into a **free library** for anyone to use - the first and only library readily available to the community!
- The library provides space for a **children’s group** to regularly meet, play, and grow together.

## Who We Are

Designed to support young Salvadoran leaders in enriching the grass-roots community initiatives they have begun, Nueva Esperanza offers pathways for continued purpose-based learning, trauma healing, and leadership. Nueva Esperanza recognizes the power of youth change agents working in the context of their own communities, doing the work that they are uniquely positioned to do as community members themselves, and seeks to ally with and support them in deepening this work.\*

## Newsletter Highlights

**Ripple Effects of Community Healers**

**Holistic Well-Being**

**Our Context: A Country in Turmoil**

**Your Involvement Fuels Healing & Transformative Work**



- Neighborhood youth have participated in **local community meetings**, thus exercising more agency and leadership in their community.
- The Nueva Esperanza community has developed a structured process for **non-violent communication and conflict resolution**. They have then been able to bring these practices to their own families, which has **positively affected the wider community**.
- Conversations have begun with a **group of men** on how to transform patterns of toxic masculinity that adversely affect the community. \*



## Holistic Well-Being

Nueva Esperanza does more than simply provide tuition to the community healers; our philosophy is one of holistic well-being and leadership. In order for these women to be able to foster greater healing and peace in their community, we know that they must experience their own healing. Once a month, the community healers gather together with program coordinators Magda and Xenia to reflect on their university studies, discuss what they are learning, and seek support dealing with challenges. They have developed a helpful structure for giving and receiving feedback that facilitates constructive communication and fruitful self-reflection. While all involved have benefited from this, one community healer in particular has overcome many personal challenges through the supportive structure and constructive communication that the circle process offers. In the past, she struggled to express her needs and participate in the community, and she isolated herself. Through the accompaniment of one-on-one mentors, community support, and the feedback framework described above, she has realized the power of her own voice and agency. Slowly, a dramatic change occurred and she now participates much more actively in her studies, as well as in the community endeavors. Her personal transformation has been a powerful witness for the community healers as they recognize interconnectedness and collective liberation as the primary purpose and vision of their work to foster greater healing and peace in their community. \*

## Our Context: A Country in Turmoil



Our work in El Salvador has kept us well apprised of the country's situation, but it has not been on everyone's radar here in the U.S.. In a terribly misguided effort to quell gang violence, El Salvador's government declared a "State of Emergency" in March of 2022, thus suspending many civil liberties for Salvadoran citizens, such as habeas corpus. Meant to be temporary, it has been extended

five times. Between March 26th and November 14th of this year, 57,493 Salvadorans have been incarcerated, many unfairly so and subject to human rights abuses. In her article, "From Bad to Worse: Behind the Scenes of El Salvador's 'War on Gangs,'" Nueva Esperanza co-coordinator, Jenna Knapp, writes about the gravity of this human rights crisis toward



which many have turned a blind eye. Our work takes place in one of the communities that has been heavily targeted by the government's mass arrests, which makes our work all the more challenging and necessary. While the repressive measures engender a great deal of collective fear and mistrust within marginalized communities, those involved in Nueva Esperanza's

women's group and youth group have managed to create a sense of safety in community and connection, despite the ongoing repression. They are actively building a sense of resilience and community care as they face the myriad of ongoing challenges brought on by the state-sponsored violence, both past and present, that their community has endured. \*

## Your Involvement Fuels Healing & Transformative Work

Nueva Esperanza is seeking your support for the upcoming year. We recognize that structural violence and oppression have created a world in which some of us have access to resources to pay for things like higher education, therapy, and personal/professional development training, and others lack resources to cover basic needs.

Redistribution of resources is an essential part of healing the wounds resulting from a scarcity of access to opportunities as well as the wounds resulting from an endless accumulation of wealth. In releasing our grip on resources, we open to the possibility that security and wholeness may rest less in wealth and more in lives of meaningful interconnectedness and responsibility toward those who lack access to such resources.

Please consider joining us in this healing journey by doing one of the following:

- **Contributing to our general operating expenses by clicking our QR code below.** Two young women are ready to enter the scholarship program in the new year given adequate funding!
- **Purchasing a used laptop** for our community healers to access their university studies.
- **Sharing about our work** with those in your networks who may be interested in collective healing and liberation.
- **Sharing your gifts with us!** We are particularly looking for those interested in helping us raise programming funds, plan virtual learning and awareness events, and support our team with Internal Family Systems training. If interested, please contact us at [nuevaesperanzabecarios@gmail.com](mailto:nuevaesperanzabecarios@gmail.com). \*

