



# Community Organizing in Peru

## Los Martincitos

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### Peru, Lima-Villa El Salvador

Villa el Salvador is an urban, largely residential coastal district on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. It began as a shanty town in the empty sand flats of Lima in 1970 because of housing needs of immigrant families who left the highland pueblos. Historically a community with community organizing upbringing. Villa el Salvador still has strong community organizing values and members hold onto these traditions.

### Elderly in Peru

Peru is confronting an aging society, like other areas of South America. The elderly in Peru receive minimal to no governmental support. The proportion of those over 60 is projected to double by 2050. Programs like Los Martincitos that provides services to the aging population are rare in Lima.



### Field Placement

In partnership with Cross Cultural Solutions, I spent 13 weeks working at Los Martincitos.

### Los Martincitos/ CCS

Located in a sprawling shantytown on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Los Martincitos Senior Citizen Center goes quietly about the business of providing the most basic of daily needs to 100 indigenous elderly.

### Outcomes

Over the course of 13 weeks I was able to engage with the community members and the larger community on various community development projects which included but not limited to:

- Assisted the on site social worker with conducting research for best practices on program evaluation.
- Provided staff support during programming, assisting with workshops and providing meals for the community members.
- Facilitated small group discussions.
- Assisted the program director with a community mapping project and conducted survey during home visits.
- Researched and gathered information on other organizations that are also serving the aging population to look for best practices.

### Skills Utilized/Developed

- Developed and deepened my understanding of strong community organizing skills.
- Strengthened my rapport building skills.
- Strengthened my passion for global social work and working with the Latino/a community.
- Developed a strong appreciation for the indigenous population.

### Classroom Connections

- SW 521: IP with Individuals, Families and Small Groups**-*deepened my skills of establishing rapport with individuals and small groups*
- SW 683: Program Evaluation in Social Work**-*enhanced my understanding of evaluation*
- SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work Practice**-*set the foundation for my experience abroad*
- SW 651: Planning for Organizational and Community Change**-*deepened my understanding of CO*

### Lessons Learned

- From this global field placement experience I enhanced the following abilities:
- Leverage support of stakeholders and community members
  - Build strong community relationships
  - Engage in community organizing efforts
  - Appreciate the role of global social work and my role in a global context
  - The importance of assessing community needs from a community members lens rather than my own.



### Career Connections

This experience affirmed my passion to continue to work with the Latino/a community both here in the US and also globally. I learned that I am deeply passionate about learning how to build strong organizations that work effectively to provide resources and services to marginalized communities.

### Advice

If you have the opportunity to go abroad take it. There's so much that you learn about other communities but also about yourself. Getting a global perspective only broadens your experience as a social worker.

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