Serving Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs

Azusena Favela & Rudy Espinoza
May 16th, 2019
The work we do at LURN is about people.

We are people-centered and people designed.

Our work is informed by our personal histories.
We recognized that what our Moms’ experienced was not unique.

Their experiences were shaped by poverty, immigration policy, and a work environment that wasn’t kind to unskilled, uneducated workers.
Our careers and our organization is focused on addressing the challenges that our families and many other families face in cities.
ABOUT LURN

Policy Advocacy
• LA Street Vendor Campaign
• Free Lots Angeles/Adopt-A-Lot

Economic Development Strategy
• Semi’a Fund
• (Re)Store Fund
• COMPRA Foods
• Community Owned Real Estate (CORE)
Why Street Vendors?

• There are an estimated 50,000 vendors in Los Angeles.

• Street vendors generate over $500 million in economic activity annually.

• Vendors sell food and merchandise in neighborhoods with limited access to retail.

• Many of them are over the age of 36.

• An estimated 75% of them are women.
Snapshot:
LA County Health Indicators

• Percent of Latinas living in poverty is **22%** compared to white (10.6%) women.

• A lower percent of Latinas 25 years and older (58%) have a high school education or higher compared to Asian (86%), black (91%), and white (94%) women.¹²
• Latinas 16 years and older who worked full-time, year-round in the past 12 months have the lowest median earnings ($27,339) compared to black ($41,532), Asian ($47,882) and white ($57,432) women.\textsuperscript{12c}

• The wage gap between women by race/ethnicity and white men is highest for Latinas (0.381) and lowest for white women (0.799).\textsuperscript{12c,12e}
Despite these things, we still see women leading!
Los Angeles Street Vendor Movement: Movimiento de Vendedores Ambulantes de Los Angeles
NO ROBAMOS

SÓLO TRABAJAMOS
LOS ANGELES STREET VENDOR MOVEMENT

Movimiento de Vendedores Ambulantes - Los Angeles
Editorial Legalize street vendors

In the protracted, years-long effort to legalize street vending in Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti and City Council members have often praised sidewalk selling as the first rung on the entrepreneurial ladder and vendors as hardworking Angelenos just trying to make an honest living.

So why, then, is the City Council developing a street vending law that would let established vendors, but not new ones, operate the same way? Opponents of the bill (including L.A. City Councilman Paul Koretz, who opposes it) say it means too much is being given too soon to existing vendors, which will allow them to lock up a market that would otherwise be open to everyone.
Victories

Local Level
- Street vending was legalized! The City is now working on a permit system which is expected to be in place next year.
- Supported the County in gathering input from street vendors to inform their policy.

State Level
- SB 946 (D: Lara) was signed by Governor Brown on September 17, 2018. Decriminalized street vending and expunges past violations.
Street vendors are the foundation of a strong economy.
Policy is not enough.
We also have to think about capital.
Semi’a Fund

- A micro-loan program available to micro-entrepreneurs and offers technical assistance
- Loan range: $1,000-$36,000
- Annual Interest: 8%
- Opportunity for interest “rebate”
- Term: 1-3 years
- Application process prioritizes character
Semi’a Fund

• Deployed over $400,000 in loans.
• Average loan size is $10,000.
• Repayment rate almost perfect, 95%+.  
• Hundreds of hours of business coaching delivered.
We think we’re making an impact.
How is this different?

• Informed by our advocacy alongside entrepreneurs.
• Character-based.
• Alternative credit.
• Low-interest.
• Relationship driven via our business coaching.
• We have a “disruptive” agenda - The industry needs to change.
We need to serve more people, but we could never serve everyone. We need to think about how we can impact “the system” that is leaving vulnerable people behind.
What does the future hold?
Thank you!

Rudy@LURNetwork.org
Azusena@LURNetwork.org