The series “Fortaleciendo mi mundo interior” (Strengthening My Inner World) consisted of five prerecorded Zoom interviews in Spanish with three renowned psychotherapists. The topics addressed how to connect with your emotional strength, regain your emotional balance, learn to listen to your body, heal emotional wounds and rediscover your inner light, self-efficacy and resiliency.

Following each episode Giselle facilitated twenty-five virtual sessions in Spanish with immigrant women who reside in five counties: Grays Harbor, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Walla Walla. Each group met five times every other week using platforms such as Messenger Rooms for Groups and Zoom. Each virtual meeting strengthened the concepts learned in each episode, processed new insights and discoveries and built a virtual space for emotional growth.

Participants appreciated having newfound tools to continue their journeys. “This series has helped me to understand my inner world, to see it differently and to interact differently, with love, with patience for myself and others. It has given me tools for my daily life.” (Participant from Walla Walla)

The women also learned to cultivate empathy, “It is very important to be attentive to the changes that we regularly have. Not only for the ability to know each other, but also to understand that another human being has the same capacity as us, the same rights to not feel well, the right to cry and not have a good day. This learning helps us to love others and give ourselves permission to stop and process our emotions.” (Participant from Olympia)

They were proud that they had learned new ways to be with and build community, “I am very happy to have shared this experience from what we are and not from what we do I live and feed from other people’s energy. This gives me very rewarding energy. We have reflected, wept and laughed together. The community is not only built from the outside, there are strong ties that come from within. I am very proud of our group, of the women who have accompanied us.” (Participant from Everett)

The series had great reviews and it was viewed in more than ten Latin American countries. To access the pre-recorded videos in Spanish, go to: https://www.ipjc.org/justiceforwomen/fortaleciendo-mi-mundo-interior/
In the fall of 2020, Justice Circle materials in English and Spanish were adapted to a user-friendly online version with colorful and visually enticing digital handouts that can be accessed from a desktop, laptop or cellphone. In order to avoid digital fatigue, Circle sessions are now 90 minutes, 30 minutes shorter than the ones conducted in person. In virtual settings, groups also tend to be smaller which facilitates the creation of an interactive virtual community. We continue to explore ways to bridge the digital gap, improve digital access and literacy and facilitate the formation of more Circle processes. Strengthening My Inner World participants were invited to form Circles!

**MT VERNON** took place in partnership with Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington. The Circle was conducted in Spanish and was comprised of Latino mothers of school-aged children who attend the Mt. Vernon School District. According to Public School Review, minority enrollment in the Mt. Vernon School District is 61% (majority Latino) and 22% of Latino parents in the District don’t speak Spanish as their first language but Triqui or Mixtec, both indigenous languages predominantly spoken by immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico.

Circle participants, including some who spoke Mixtec as their first language, mentioned that the school district was not offering trained people to provide interpretation for indigenous parents but asking already overburdened staff to fulfill interpretation duties. The Circle chose to advocate for expanding language access and translation and interpretation services for all Latino parents, including those who speak Triqui or Mixtec. Participants have created interpretation request cards that parents can carry in their wallets to show to school officials to require interpretation and advocate for their rights. Cards are in Spanish, Triqui and Mixtec. The goal is to finish distribution of the cards before the beginning of the school year. The women are planning to involve school administrators and staff and advocate for what is right. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, school districts must provide language assistance to Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents by offering translated materials or language interpretation. School districts are required to hire competent interpreters who are versed in the ethics of interpreting and translating and are readily available.

**EVERETT** Residents from Casino Road were concerned with the lack of access to mental health services for the Latino community so they conducted a needs assessment and asked the community about their interest in participating in a mental health support group and petitioned their local community organization for funds to hire a psychologist. The community partner agreed and, together with the mental health professional, helped design eight support group sessions. These sessions took place once a week and created space to speak about feelings, depression, anxiety and more. The Circle registered women from the community and the support group, “Floreciendo con mis Emociones” (Flourishing with my Emotions), was successfully launched at their local community center. In this support group, the
participants found an opportunity to be heard, to learn about mental health, and to make connections. The Circle is now thinking about organizing a second support group to continue investing in emotional wellness activities that will impact a larger number of residents of Casino Road.

ABERDEEN Last April, Latino Circle participants from Aberdeen Women’s Justice Circle organized locally to become application assistants for round three of the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund (WIRF). The fund was set by Governor Inslee to assist workers who were ineligible for federal stimulus funds or unemployment benefits because of their immigration status. Circle participants ensured outreach information and materials were culturally and linguistically accessible to Spanish-speaking community members, became fund application assistants and promoted the relief fund through several media channels.

TIGARD, OR A Circle was formed outside of Washington State in partnership with St. Anthony Catholic church. The Circle decided to focus on mental health resources for Latinos in Tigard. Circle participants designed an action plan, including a social media information campaign to educate the Latino community about mental health, workshops in Spanish about related topics in partnership with local universities and colleges, and a mental health support group for Spanish-speaking parishioners. Now, the women are working to expand their efforts and advocate for their community needs.

COLQUEPATA, CUSCO – PERU Adelaida is a bright, charismatic and talented 18-year-old who finished school last year and works as a rural educational promotora and dreams of becoming a teacher. She lives with her widowed mother and younger sister in Colquepata, a small rural farming community with a population of less than 11,000 people that is located 12,000 feet above sea level in the Andean region of Cusco, Peru.

The inhabitants of Colquepata are mainly indigenous citizens of Quechua descent. Quechua has the status of an official language in Peru and Bolivia. In rural areas, it is used for everyday communication in informal contexts. Since most native speakers of Quechua are illiterate in their native language, it remains largely an oral language.

Adelaida, who is bilingual in Quechua and Spanish, made it possible for us to have our first online facilitator training for Quechua speakers. Camila, Adelaida’s mom, was one of the eager participants in the training. She told us her story of survival: she was forced to cohabitate with an alcoholic and abusive partner, gave birth to four daughters, became a widower fifteen years ago when her oldest was in second grade and her youngest was two months old and she raised her four daughters selling food and clothes in the local plaza. Camila wishes to become a Circle facilitator in order to build space for herself that will allow her to have real and honest conversations in Quechua with other women who might be struggling with gender violence, domestic abuse and other injustices. She would like to empower other women to stand up for what is just, speak truth to power and become agents of change. During the Circle, the Quechua women raised awareness about domestic violence and advocated for gender equality.
WORKSHOPS FOR EMERGING LEADERS

Leadership Development Training at Sacred Heart Church, Holy Family Parish, New Brunswick, NJ.

First Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) Statewide Gathering at Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA.

Leadership Development Training for PREPARES volunteers in Yakima, WA.

Immigration presentation at Princeton High School, Princeton, NJ.