

Things to remember this Earth Day weekend

Sharon Abercrombie | Apr. 20, 2012 Eco Catholic

For women in Guatemala, a good Earth Day can mean simply holding onto a parcel of land that is legally theirs. Historically, however, women have little power in this Central American country. For example, a 2005 newspaper survey reported that men regard the ideal woman as "meek, docile, sweet and submissive," -- traits that do not bode well for women in property disputes. During negotiations, a woman's concerns around access to drinking water and inheritance rights are usually ignored, reports Dan Sadowsky of Mercy Corps.

But changes are happening for the better.

Mercy Corps is now training women in techniques of conflict resolution. Since their first class last fall, the eight Mercy-hired and Mercy-trained female mediators have already resolved three land conflicts, with seven more in process, Sadowsky writes.

"Even more impressive are the number of people the mediators have reached through trainings in topics such as self-esteem, alternative dispute resolution, local governing structure and land issues: 158 women who were selected by their communities to become leaders in mediation and another 1,800 women who have been trained by those leaders," he writes.

[Find the full report here](#) [1].

As we mark Earth Day this weekend, don't forget our precious honeybees. They are in serious danger of dying out. When these little pollinators go, our food supply will dwindle as well.

In 1923, Rudolph Steiner, a scientist, philosopher and social innovator, predicted that in 80 to 100 years, honeybees would be in crisis. It is now happening with Colony Collapse Disorder, a situation where bees are mysteriously disappearing in mass numbers from their hives. The [Organic Consumers Association](#) [2] is calling on people to demand that the EPA suspend use of Bayer manufactured pesticide, clothianidin, which is linked to the honeybee crisis.

Following the Organic Consumers Association will take you to information about "[Queen of the Sun](#)," [3] a documentary by filmmaker Taggart Siegel. Siegel takes us on a trip through the beehive world and tells the story of the struggles of beekeepers, scientists and philosophers from around the world. Michael Pollan, Gunther Hauk and Vandana Shiva lay out the problems and how we can help the bees.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.mercycorps.org/guatemala>

[2] <http://www.organicconsumers.org/>

[3] <http://www.queenofthesun.com/>