Responding to the Conservative Backlash to Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights throughout Mexico at the State Level through Collaborative Research and Advocacy

**Team, Schools/Disciplines**
- Roula AbiSamra: Rollins School of Public Health, Hubert Department of Global Health, Population and Reproductive Health
- Ruth Dawson: Emory University School of Law; Rollins School of Public Health, Hubert Department of Global Health
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- Maria Presley: Candler School of Theology, Theology and Ethics

**Project Partners**
- The Fund for the Global Elimination of Maternal Mortality from Abortion (GE/MMA)
- Roger Rochat, MD, academic adviser
- Mexican National Pro-Choice Alliance
- Catholics for the Right to Decide (CDD)
- Information Group on Reproductive Choice (GiRE)
- Population Council, Mexico
- National Institute of Public Health, Mexico

**Project Timeline**
- October 2009: Established project objectives with Population Council in Mexico City
- November 2009: Call for student applications, selected team members
- December 2009 - February 2010: Developed project proposal with host organizations
- June - July 2010: Group members conducted individual research, collaborated to create final product, and presented findings and recommendations to members of the National Pro-Choice Alliance

**Project Goals**
Create an evidence-based pro-choice messaging campaign to serve as an advocacy framework that addresses recent anti-abortion backlash in Mexico by:
- Analyzing quantitative public opinion surveys conducted by Population Council, CDD, and GiRE focusing on opinions of Catholics, youth, and residents of the Mexican states;
- Documenting the testimonies of Mexican women pertaining to their first-hand experiences accessing safe abortion;
- Developing arguments from ethical, feminist, and Catholic perspectives in favor of a woman’s right to choose;
- Designing and improving evidence-based communication strategies to reach a broader Mexican audience.

**Outcomes**
De-stigmatize and de-dramatize abortion in the Mexican states by:
- Creating a synthesized messaging campaign using public opinion surveys, Mexican women’s testimonies, and a literature review of feminist theologians’ abortion perspectives;
- Using our improved understanding of religious perspectives, abortion realities, the legality and consequences of abortion, wider sexual and reproductive health issues, and existing public support in the Mexican states to focus a messaging campaign;
- Proposing pro-choice messages that can be adapted to posters, radio, television, and pamphlet materials for the use of the Mexican National Pro-Choice Alliance.

**Populations/Communities Served**
- Women in Mexico City who continue to lack psychosocial support in their abortion decision (despite having the legal right to safe procedures there)
- Women and communities in Mexican states that had passed, or are considering to pass restrictive abortion legislation or initiatives
- State targeting according to the status of this restrictive legislation: none, proposed initiative, or passed amendment
- Community targeting according to urban or rural status

**Progress to Date**
- Completed preliminary analysis of abortion patient and provider interviews
- Completed univariate and bivariate analysis of December 2009 Mexican Catholic Public Opinion Survey
- Completed >100-source literature review of global feminist theologians
- Interviewed 15 prominent Mexican feminist theologians
- Compiled, summarized, and analyzed key findings from several published public opinion and perception surveys across Mexico
- Designed 20 targeted, evidence-based messages
- Presented findings and messages to National Pro-Choice Alliance directors and colleagues

**Next Steps**
- Repackage messages for dissemination as they pertain to each individual organization and desired target group
- Create and conduct Catholic Bible study on moral and ethical foundations for abortion
- Assist in organizing a new GHI GEMMA Team for Summer 2011, and include an intern at Equidad de Género, another National Pro-Choice Alliance member organization
- Develop messages directed at men
- Develop messages to humanize abortion providers