

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile

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In Tongoy, EPES administrator Hector Reyes (left), educator Monica Arancibia (center) interview with Alejandra Guerra (right).



Photo Credit: Associated Press

Tongoy: Tsunami waves destroyed livelihoods as well as homes.

RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTER

Helping communities rebuild after a natural disaster is a relatively new area of work for EPES in its 33-year history. When in 2010, EPES Concepción found itself at the epicenter of a massive earthquake/tsunami, we conducted relief efforts as we do all our projects: as a long-term grassroots community organizing effort and an opportunity to identify and train community leaders to participate in the rebuilding. Since then, EPES has used this template to respond to two more recent emergencies: the tsunami that hit northern Chile last Sept. 16 and the fire that swept the Valparaíso hills in 2014.

TONGOY STARTS TO REBUILD AFTER 8.4 EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

Within days of the earthquake and tsunami in Tongoy, a fishing village in northern Chile, EPES had staff there conducting a needs-assessment among the families hardest hit. Monica Arancibia, a health promoter trained by EPES, interviewed dozens of people to determine their most immediate needs and coordinate delivery of material relief. This included construction materials to rebuild homes, repair vendor stands, and replace the cooking utensils that the mostly female vendors need to cater to the tourist trade that constitutes their livelihood.

VALPARAISO: IN AFTERMATH OF FIRE, WOMEN MARCH AGAINST VIOLENCE

In April 2014, a fire of tragic proportions engulfed the hills of Valparaíso, leaving 12,500 people homeless. EPES responded by partnering with a community center in Cerro Las Cañas, one of the neighborhoods most affected, to distribute humanitarian assistance and accompany residents through the rebuilding effort.

A new activity in 2015 was a ten-month course led by local women trained by EPES: the "Women Share with Women" workshop on emotional recovery, self-care and stress management. In August, participants took to the streets to make visible a persistent obstacle to all their recovery efforts: the multiple forms of violence faced by women, from physical aggression to institutional barriers to accessing quality healthcare.



"Jealousy is not part of love. Freedom is." Workshop participants with EPES staff and ELCA's Rev. Raquel Rodriguez (center) preparing signs to take on a March Against Violence through the streets of Valparaíso.

Both emergency relief efforts have been conducted with support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (See related news.)

EPES' WORK FEATURED IN "PSYCHOLOGY TODAY" BLOG

With the title "Building Resilience after Trauma: Lessons from Chile," a feature story in Psychology Today (online blog) takes an in-depth look at the ways EPES' model of community organizing builds resilience.

Posted on Nov. 16, the article is written by psychologist Lisa Aronson Fontes, of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. A frequent collaborator to EPES' work, Fontes was in Chile in October to conduct workshops on domestic violence prevention.

"I have learned life-changing lessons about coping with trauma during the 20 years I have been traveling to Chile to collaborate with EPES," she writes. "The examples of EPES shantytown health promoters and their neighbors have provided me with lessons that enhance my work with trauma victims in mental health settings in the United States, too."

Fontes summarizes these lessons as: "Don't go it alone. Create order out of the chaos. Nurture hope. Commit for the long term because recovery takes time. And reclaim your dignity through helping others."



Message from the President



Dear Friends of EPES and AHA:

We hope you like the new format of the EPES Update! This version is more streamlined and has fewer “pieces” for you to keep track of—allowing you to focus on the amazing accomplishments and ongoing efforts of EPES and, hopefully, remind you of how far your donations can go.

This past year has highlighted how valuable EPES’ work can be:

- Leveraging their community-level disaster response and recovery capacity to work with victims of the September 2015 earthquake and tsunami—even while rebuilding from the April 2014 fire that devastated the poorest neighborhoods of Valparaíso continues.
- Planning for the seventh International Training Course on Participatory and Community Strategies for Health—which will be held in January. Interest and participation in this annual course continue to grow every year. In the first six courses, there have been 110 participants from 15 countries. EPES’ training model is being replicated in many places in Latin America and all the way to Kenya!

- Becoming a strong voice in Chile for health as a human right and mobilizing many organizations, communities and individuals to fight for this right.

In 2015, AHA has also sought to revamp our role as EPES’ advocates in North America. You’ll read about the exciting new #ChileTuesday campaign in this Update, but we’re also working to improve our website and provide more updates electronically—please share your email address with us if you haven’t done so already (either by noting it on the mailed donation form or when you make an online donation). We welcome your ideas for how AHA can continue to be a strong voice for EPES in 2016 and beyond!

As always, *muchas gracias* for your ongoing commitment to the work of EPES. In this world where there is so much suffering and need, we know that there are many demands on your compassion (and pocketbook). Have a happy holiday season and a healthy and peaceful 2016!

Christina Mills

Christina Mills MD FRCP
President, Action for Health in the Americas

TRAINING HEALTH WORKERS



Intensive training programs with public health personnel in Santiago and Concepción have kept EPES busy over the past several months. These courses were modeled on EPES’ annual International Training Course on Participatory and Community Strategies for Health (coming up in January 2016).

Workshops with primary health care providers from the Northern Santiago Health Service (SSMN) took place in the El Bosque district, where EPES is headquartered, and featured community actions in the local market in conjunction with three



EPES-trained health education teams.

With the National Service for People with Disabilities (SENADIS), EPES delivered a series of three courses in Santiago and the southern Bio Bio region in 2015. Participants developed strategies to generate community mobilization for access to health care and housing and ways to guarantee implementation of Chile’s new anti-discrimination law guaranteeing equal opportunities and social inclusion for people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY HEALTH TEAMS MARK ANNIVERSARIES



“CIRCULO DE MUJERES POR LA SALUD” Women’s Circle for Health
“Forever Rebels” reads a banner celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Women’s Circle for Health, a community health team trained in 1985. EPES staff surprised the team with a mural commemorating their thirty years on the wall of a local public health clinic. Women’s Circle for Health organized a community celebration that included the launching of a book, written in verse, recounting the group’s history and an appearance by the mayor of El Bosque. The mayor praised the groups’ role in defending and promoting the health of their community over these three decades.

VISITS AND SUPPORT

ELCA GLOBAL MISSION LEADERS VISIT COMMUNITIES, CONGRESS

A delegation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) office of Global Mission that has stood beside EPES since its inception paid a visit to Chile in November to see how EPES is helping disaster-struck communities rebuild. Rev. Raquel Rodriguez, ELCA Global Mission director for Latin America and the Caribbean; Vitaly Vorona, director of ELCA's international disaster response program; and Rev. Justin Eller, regional ELCA representative, traveled to Valparaíso to meet with leaders of

the Las Cañas Community Center where EPES has been working since the April 2014 fire. Rev. Eller and Vitaly Vorona also traveled north to Tongoy to meet with recipients of EPES' support. They also visited Chile's National Congress to observe the legislative advocacy work being conducted by the EPES initiative Tobacco-Free Chile.



Above: In the scorched hills of Valparaíso: Mauricio Salazar (far left) and Camila Jorquera (center), leaders of Las Cañas Community Center; Monica Arancibia, (2nd from left) and Karen Anderson (3rd from right), EPES; Rev. Raquel Rodriguez, Vitaly Vorona and Rev. Justin Eller of ELCA. Photo taken at the illegal garbage dump where the fire began, as the community center leaders describe their dream of converting the site into an environmental preserve.



Right: Along the tsunami-wrecked coast of Tongoy: ELCA's Vorona and Eller visit rebuilding efforts.



EPES staff member Marta Acuña and guest speaker Jane Sullivan-Davis.

WORKSHOP ON FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Expert advice for non-profits on securing financial sustainability through endowments was the subject of a workshop organized by EPES for its local partners. The expert in question was Rev. Jane Sullivan Davis, Executive Director for Resource Development, for Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) long-time EPES supporter who lived in Chile for a decade when she was regional representative of Church World Service.

CHILETUESDAY RAISES US\$47,000

Giving Tuesday is a global day dedicated to supporting nonprofits held on December 1, 2015. This year, friends of EPES around the world helped us turn Giving Tuesday into #ChileTuesday by raising \$23,540 for our programs. Nineteen friends signed up as fundraisers and each ran individual campaigns to raise awareness for our work, encouraging family and friends to get involved. In total we received 190 individual donations, and thanks to a generous matching grant from EPES benefactor Melanie Nelson, all gifts were doubled and over \$47,000 was delivered to EPES! Join us in congratulating and thanking these generous campaigners for flying the AHA / EPES flag and now let's see if we can build on this success to reach our 2015 fundraising goal!

HEALTH GROUP "DAVID WERNER" TURNS 20!

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Health Group "David Werner" the EPES team gave them an intimate surprise party at the community center where they meet regularly. We gave them two gifts - a bench with a plaque recognizing their 20 years of work for the community and we planted a tree native to Chile at the community center.



TOBACCO FREE CHILE: AT THE CUTTING EDGE



On the streets: Demonstrating for healthy hearts in a Santiago park.

The *Chile Libre de Tabaco* (Tobacco Free Chile) alliance led by EPES continues to build on its successes in advocating for tough tobacco control measures. Chile's 2013 bans on advertising and indoor smoking set a regional standard, but tobacco consumption still remains high. To tackle this, the initiative is working for a law – unprecedented in the region – to ban menthol and flavored cigarettes. Its May survey on menthol use (one of the first in the region) determined that 66% of smokers under age 18 and 48% of women smoke menthol cigarettes. The law would also adopt plain packaging of cigarettes, a measure currently implemented only by Australia.

Among the high-level supporters of the campaign is the World Health Organization's Tobacco Free Initiative, the Pan American Health Organization office for Chile and five former Chilean Ministers of Health.

Arguments in support of this legislation were the focus of an international seminar hosted by EPES to launch a study of cigarette advertising targeting children in 14 Latin American countries.



At Congress: EPES' Sonia Covarrubias (2nd on right) and international tobacco control experts (left to right): Regina Blessa (Retail Institute, Brazil); Dr. Mariela Alderete (InterAmerican Health Foundation, Argentina), Antonio Zavala (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Mexico) and Jim Thrasher (Univ. of South Carolina, USA).

NUTRITION WORKSHOPS IN EL BOSQUE



Nutrition workshop participants learn to understand the food environment and make healthy choices. And they also learn to cook!

The connections between nutrition, social determinants and gender underpin the nutrition/cooking workshops conducted by EPES over the past four years. Since 2011, more than a dozen workshops have taken place around Santiago and Concepción, and over 100 women and girls – plus a few men – have completed this innovative combination of learning to cook while learning about the social contexts that shape our nutrition options. The latest round of workshops took place recently at two primary health centers in El Bosque.

The workshops also train participants to take an active role in ongoing legislative battles for stronger food labeling regulations and limits on junk food advertising directed at children. EPES belongs to the *Frente por un Chile Saludable* (Coalition for a Healthy Chile), a coalition of public health groups and professionals involved in this advocacy campaign.

Future activities include: training of grassroots nutrition educators and the release of a new EPES board game on the subject. Once Chile's new food labeling regulations go into effect, the community members will begin to monitor their implementation at the local level.



In an EPES led workshop, migrants from Peru, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, work in small groups to identify barriers to health care their communities face.

EPES IDENTIFIES CHALLENGES TO MIGRANTS

The Santiago municipality of Huechuraba hired EPES to conduct a participatory assessment on obstacles that block access to care among the district's growing population of migrants. The "Intercultural Dialogue and Diagnosis: Challenges to Integration" event brought together women from Peru, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, local officials and community leaders. The top three challenges identified: language/cultural differences; bureaucratic obstacles to accessing health care; and discrimination.

8TH ANNUAL SCHOOL FOR WOMEN LEADERS

The EPES School for Women Leaders, held annually since 2008, trains emerging community leaders to mobilize and coordinate local efforts for quality health care. Participants come from the El Bosque and San Ramón districts of Santiago, and a version of the course is also conducted at the EPES center in Concepción. EPES team member Angelina Jara coordinates the eight-week series of workshops, now in their eighth year.

EPES DONATES AIDS GAMES TO LOCAL SCHOOLS



Eleven public schools in El Bosque, the district where EPES is based, received its "Learning about HIV/AIDS" board game. EPES has been creating board games since 1987.

Attention Thrivent Members! (formerly Thrivent Financial for Lutherans)

USE THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF EPES!

If you are a Thrivent member, you may be eligible to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars. For more information, go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice, or call 1-800-847-4836. Mention "Thrivent Choice" and ask if you are eligible to designate dollars. If you are, Action for Health in the Americas (AHA) is one of many choices.



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EPES was created in 1982 to promote health with dignity for the poor through empowerment, mobilization and collective action. It began as a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and maintains close ties nationally and internationally with the Lutheran church and is an ELCA Global Mission supported ministry. EPES became an independent, non-profit Chilean foundation in 2002.

THE EPES TEAM

Founder: Karen Anderson, Director, EPES International Training Course (ELCA Global Mission). **Board of Directors:** Ricardo Barra, University of Concepción; Jaime Bravo, GESTRA Consultores; Hanni Grunpeter, public health specialist; Rev. Oscar Sanhueza, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile; María del Carmen Cortés, director IES Santiago, international exchange program; Adriana Gomez, journalist and women's health advocate; Jorge Olivares, EPES staff representative. **Executive Committee:** Rosario Castillo, Executive Director; Dr. Lautaro López, Director, EPES Concepción; María Eugenia Calvin, Director of Planning; Virginia Norambuena, Education team, EPES Concepción; Sonia Covarrubias, Education team, EPES Santiago. **Administration/Education: SANTIAGO:** Marta Acuña, accountant; María Teresa Fuentealba, secretary; Angelina Jara, educator; Susana Jiles, educator; Jorge Olivares, librarian; Héctor Reyes, office manager; Isabel Díaz, communications coordinator; **CONCEPCIÓN:** Sandra Castañeda, educator, Maritza Provoste, administration.

LEARN ABOUT OTHER EPES ACTIVITIES AT:

www.epes.cl or Action for Health in the Americas (AHA): www.actionforhealth.org or Chile Libre de Tabaco: www.chilelibredetabaco.cl **On Facebook:** EPES Fundación; Action for Health in the Americas; Red Chile Libre de Tabaco.



SUPPORT EPES

To give to EPES, **donate online at www.actionforhealth.org**, or send your tax-deductible contribution to:

Action for Health in the Americas
c/o Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
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Clifton Park, NY 12065-2744 USA

Make checks payable to: "Action for Health in the Americas"

Action for Health in the Americas (AHA) is the non-profit North American partner of EPES.