

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile.

No 17: Nov 2017



Above is the billboard at the National Stadium which reads: "National Stadium, National Memorial. A people without memory is a people without a future. Visit this memorial site." Right: Posters of people disappeared under the dictatorship asking, Where are they?



LEST WE FORGET

Keeping alive the memory of human rights violations and the suffering systematically caused by the military dictatorship is a prerequisite for healing Chilean society. On every anniversary of the September 11, 1973 military coup, EPES pays tribute to victims, while also examining today's challenges to human rights protection.

This year, which marked 44 years since the tragic event, the community health teams and EPES staff visited the National Stadium. Immediately after the military coup, the National Stadium became the country's largest concentration camp, but today it has been declared a memorial site. EPES staff and health promoters visited seven sections of the stadium, where more than 20,000 women, men and children (including foreigners from 38 countries) were imprisoned. The visit was a moving experience that helped reclaim historic memory and promote protection of our fundamental human rights.



EPES staff and health promoters begin visit of the National Stadium, which was the largest concentration camp during the early days of the dictatorship. Today, it is the site of a memorial.





Message from the President



Dear friends of EPES and AHA,

EPES has been busier than ever in the last half of its 35th anniversary year.

In September, we celebrated this special anniversary with a concert in Minneapolis featuring longtime allies, Holly Near and John McCutcheon. More than 300 of EPES' friends and supporters from ten states and three countries gathered in Circle Pines, Minnesota for an evening of music, laughter, fellowship and reflection. It was a fitting celebration, both of EPES' work for justice and dignity and of the people who have made it possible over these 35 years. Including you!

In this update you'll also read about EPES' activities related to immigrant rights, domestic violence, tobacco control policy, nutrition and justice, fire prevention and health worker training. Such news is a welcome antidote to the cynicism and despair that can overtake us when we're continually barraged by news of injustice, indifference and catastrophe. I don't know about you, but I need to hear this good news, that EPES is in it for the long haul.

Wishing you peace and health in 2018, with heartfelt thanks for your continuing solidarity,

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

SOLIDARITY BETWEEN NATIONS: FOR THE RIGHT TO IMMIGRATE



Eighty people gathered in September at EPES to discuss immigrant rights. A woman from Haiti speaks to the group in her native Creole about the challenges they face as immigrants.



Days after the National Stadium visit, EPES and health promoters held their 27th annual human rights forum. This year's focus was expressed by the slogan "Solidarity between nations: For the right to immigrate," inviting participants to consider our own geographic origins and to debunk myths associated with immigrants.

The issue has special urgency in light of the great numbers of immigrants from other Latin American countries who have arrived and continue to arrive in Chile in the last 15 years, visibly changing demographics and contributing to cultural diversity. Chile is widely regarded as one of the region's most stable and peaceful countries, attracting people who are compelled to leave their native lands due to political, economic, personal, and family reasons—just like immigrants everywhere.

The notable presence of Peruvians, Haitians, Columbians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, Dominicans, Cubans, Venezuela and even Syrians sometimes challenges the traditional notion of Chile as a welcoming nation. Although a few municipal governments have developed programs to assist the new arrivals, unfortunate expressions of xenophobia and discrimination have also cropped up.

These concerns motivated 80 people to participate in the EPES forum on immigrant rights. In keeping with EPES' popular education methods, a panel discussion was complemented by educational games. The health promoters also reflected critically on Chile's response to immigrants and read out poetic statements about immigration, some containing uncomfortable truths, such as:

- They carry suitcases filled with courage. The force that

drives them to travel so far to start a new life is a great expectation called Chile.

- Immigrants don't always encounter the same hospitality thousands of Chileans found in so many countries around the world when the dictatorship forced us into exile.
- We here believe in a world of many colors. Uniting different people and cultures, we can change our history.
- This is an invitation to transform the world into a more open place. We all have the right to move, migrate and live a dignified life.

To finalize the activity, the health promoters made yardstick-long whispering tubes into which people alternately whispered into another's ears phrases such as: "People are like birds; their flight is different but both have the right to fly." Whispering tubes have become a powerful consciousness-building tool for community work, enabling the communication of messages in an intimate and quite moving space.

Chile immigrant stats at a glance:

- Chile is the destination for the most immigrants in Latin America.
- 477,000 foreigners reside in Chile, representing 2.8% of the total population.
- 60% live in the Santiago Metropolitan Region.
- 123% rise in immigrant settlement occurred 2005-2014; 27% 2010-2015
- 60% of Santiago natives believe immigrants are a positive contribute for the country.



Health promoters used whispering tubes to transmit messages into the ears of forum participants.

EPES' 35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED IN MINNESOTA

The EPES Foundation celebrated its 35th anniversary with a concert by musicians Holly Near and John McCutcheon at Our Savior's



Lutheran Church in Circle Pines, Minnesota. Hundreds of friends traveled from ten states as well as Canada, Chile and Kenya to participate in the celebration. The concert was organized in conjunction with the Minnesota Friends of EPES Committee. From the beginning days of EPES during the military dictatorship, the ELCA Global Mission, Lutheran congregations and many individual friends of EPES have accompanied us on this journey for health, justice and dignity. We sincerely thank you all for walking with us and hope you continue for another 35 years!



Celebrating together in Minnesota at the concert were (l-r): Dr. Grace Mose, founder and director of Hope Foundation for African Women in Kenya; Dr. Christina Mills, AHA president; Karen Anderson, ELCA Global Mission Personnel in Chile and EPES founder; musicians Holly Near and John McCutcheon, and EPES founding member Rosario Castillo.



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Photos of celebration: 1) Janet Lestock, Melanie Nelson and Maren DeLaitsch. 2) Karen Anderson with Pastor Steve Sylvester of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. 3) Roberta Dale (Karen's sister and key concert organizer), Holly Near and John McCutcheon. 4) Doris Young, Rev. Jodi Barry and Rev. Jenny Mason. 5) Friends of EPES with anniversary t-shirts that say in Spanish: Celebrating 35 years of working for dignity, justice and health. 6) Mary Graves and Rosario Castillo, EPES. 7) Ron Harten and Roxanna Anderson. 8) Members of Western Iowa Synod (Dee Vaage, Cindy Wells, Jan Rosdail Aegerter) with Rosario Castillo and Karen Anderson from EPES and Paulina Dassé from the ELCA Global Mission. 9) Joan Gemmill and Jim Roberts, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Clifton Park NY. 10) Dr. Paul Floy, Maren DeLaitsch, Rev. Amanda Weinkauff and Bonnie Korblick from Trinity Lutheran, Owatonna, MN. 11) Betsy Grob, Julia Grob, Camila Leiva Anderson and Barbara Loste. 12) Dr. Carol Winter and Dr. Kirk Dornfeld.



LABEL MONITORING PROJECT LAUNCHED

Health groups, EPES-trained community nutrition promoters, local leaders, as well as public health and municipal school employees designed and implemented a citizen monitoring project of a new food labeling law (Law 20.606) in Chile. The law arose in response to alarming statistics signaling an increase in obesity and noncommunicable diseases associated with poor nutrition. Chile has one of the highest childhood obesity rates in the world. The Health Ministry has ordered labels to be placed on food that is high in sugar, calories, sodium or saturated fat. The project seeks to exercise citizen control of the law's implementation in the municipality of El Bosque. Monitoring project findings will be harnessed to develop a proposal for diminishing disparities in access to the right to quality nutrition at the local level, to be presented to municipal officials.

In mid June, the women conducted a community action in repudiation of the ultraprocessed food industry which produces products high in sugar, sodium and fats. The ultraprocessed food industry targets boys and girls through the use of misleading advertising. The workshop reinforced women's capacity to continue working on these issues.

COMMUNITY NUTRITIONAL HEALTH GETS A BOOST

In the largely middle- to lower-middle-class municipality of El Bosque, a number of public schools have incorporated healthy eating practices thanks to EPES. In November, a group of women whose children attend those schools participated in an EPES workshop to learn how to promote nutritional health throughout the community, employing a human rights and social determinants of health focus, with an emphasis on gender.

RIGHT TO HEALTHY NUTRITION UNDERSCORED AT SEMINAR ORGANIZED BY EPES

"Nutrition as a right: Recovering out nutritional health" convened a seminar on October 2 to spark reflection and debate on economic, social and cultural factors that shape our eating choices, from a perspective that integrates social determinants of health, human rights and gender focuses.

The EPES-run seminar brought together national organizations to discuss the influence exerted by the multinational ultraprocessed foods industry on scientific bodies, the importance of strengthening family small-scale agriculture, as well as opposition to free trade agreements such as the Nagoya Protocol, widely regarded as a threat to Chilean sovereignty. An international perspective on the issue was added by the Mexican organization Consumer Power, whose representatives shared their experience in civil society public health work. Consumer Power's major achievement was the implementation of a tax on sugar-based beverages in 2014.

COMMUNITY FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM LAUDED

Women from Villa Montahue, a neighborhood in the town of Penco, south of Concepción



rebuilt their homes and their families' lives after the earthquake and tsunami of 2010. After living for four years in an emergency camp, they moved into their new permanent homes in 2014. Unfortunately, earlier this year they faced yet another natural disaster: forest fires raging out of control threatened to destroy their community. But fire prevention measures they implemented saved their neighborhood and people's lives. On October 19, these women community leaders described their successful strategy at the First American Continental Seminar on Popular Education and Critical Pedagogical at the Metropolitan University of Education Sciences. Their efforts were honored and their community fire prevention plan, developed with support from the EPES Concepción team, has become a model for other communities.



GRADUATION OF THE COURSE "COMMUNITY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN"

Striving to prevent a recurrent situation that seriously affects the life, health and human rights of women, EPES taught a course on community prevention of gender-based violence. The participants graduated after four months of theoretical and practical training to strengthen their abilities to identify situations of violence in order to promote and protect women's human rights. The group will receive ongoing technical and resource support from EPES for two years as they set in motion a community strategy to effectively deal with this serious problem in their neighborhoods and communities.



Angelina Jara with fellow attendees at the prestigious Coady International Institute's Leadership for Global Change Program in Nova Scotia, Canada.



EPES EDUCATOR CHOSEN AS EMERGING GLOBAL WOMAN LEADER

The psychologist and EPES educator Angelina Jara completed the Coady International Institute's Leadership for Global Change Program, held July 14 to August 2017 at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Women from 19 countries strengthened their leadership abilities, with an eye to helping contribute to innovation and social change of the organizations and communities they represent. Angelina Jara was one of only two Latin American participants to attend this prestigious program. We are so proud of Angelina—she was chosen from over one thousand applicants from around the world!

Tobacco-Free Chile, an initiative of the EPES Foundation, participated in a Johns Hopkins University research study conducted in four Latin American countries. The study confirmed that the tobacco industry places an assortment of flavored cigarettes at points of sale near schools accompanied by special advertising to entice young people and children into nicotine addiction.

EPES CONTINUES TRAINING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Twenty-four primary care professionals employed by the North Santiago Metropolitan Health Service graduated from the course "Participatory and Community Strategies in Health," given by EPES in October.

As a part of the hands-on approach to learning, the participants and health teams carried out three community actions on the last day of the course. With the Circle of Women for Health Team, a group of participants shared information at an outdoor market on how to face depression. According to the World Health Organization, 17 percent of Chile's population suffers from depression, the highest rate in the world.

In another neighborhood, participants and the David Werner Health Group created a mural to promote recycling and actions to reduce environmental pollution. In La Bandera, the Llaretta Health Team and course participants carried out actions to raise awareness about the poor state of the sidewalks, a problem that especially harms people with disabilities. Activities included a petition signature drive to demand a repair plan from the local authorities.

At the graduation ceremony, participants described the lessons they learned, the experience of working with the community health teams, and the feasibility of incorporating popular education methodology in public health centers.



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:** Hanni Grunpeter, public health specialist; Rev. Oscar Sanhueza, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile; María del Carmen Cortés, director IES Santiago, international exchange program; Adriana Gómez, journalist and women's health advocate; Andrea Muñoz, professor of public health at the University of Chile School of Dentistry, Universidad de Chile; Jorge Olivares, EPES staff representative. **Executive Committee:** Sonia Covarrubias, Executive Director; Dr. Lautaro López, Director EPES Concepción, María Eugenia Calvin, Director of Planning; Rosario Castillo, education team; Virginia Norambuena, education team.

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; María Stella Toro, educator; Katie Bubriski, educator; Paulina Rojas, educator. **CONCEPCIÓN:** Sofía Uribe, 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
4 Northcrest Drive
Clifton Park, NY 12065-2744 USA

Make checks payable to: "Action for Health in the Americas" (AHA) a non-profit North American partner of EPES.

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Go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice, or call 1-800-847-4836 to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to AHA.



CHURCH SERVICE CELEBRATES 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

The President of Chile, Dr. Michelle Bachelet, participated in the joint church service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) and the Lutheran Church in Chile (ILCH) in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Upon her arrival, Dr. Bachelet was greeted by the bishops of both churches, Rev. Alexis Salgado (ILCH) and Rev. Oscar Sanhueza (IELCH); and during the service, she delivered a greeting and received a gift from the churches.

EPES staff members were present to celebrate with members of the IELCH and representatives of various evangelical churches and other faith traditions.

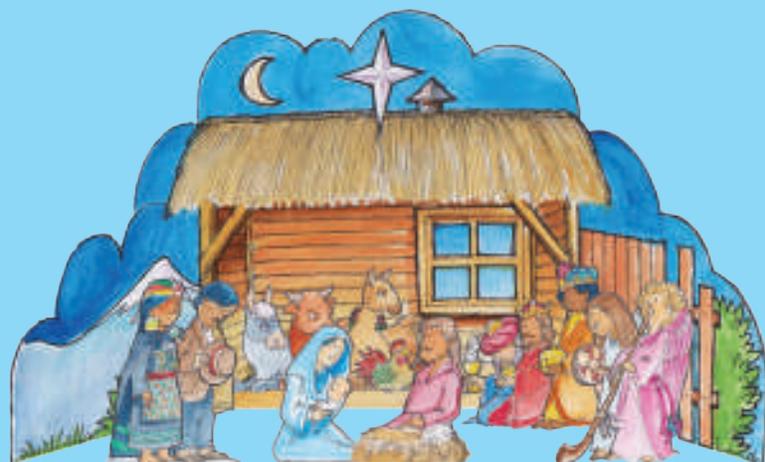


Top: Bishop Oscar Sanhueza of the Evangelical Lutheran in Chile (IELCH) delivered a powerful sermon about what the Reformation means today. Rev. Sanhueza has been a member of EPES' board of directors for 15 years. Left: EPES Executive Director Sonia Covarrubias and ELCA Global Mission Personnel Karen Anderson, joined members of the IELCH in celebrating the 500th anniversary. With Sonia and Karen (middle) are (l-r) Pablo Pavez, Soledad Puebla, Tulio Farias (President of the IELCH) and Rev. Marco Garrido. Right: Bishops Salgado (ILCH) and Sanhueza (IELCH) give President Bachelet a gift.



LIBERATED
BY GOD'S
GRACE

2017 - 500 YEARS OF REFORMATION



FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN...
~ ISAIAH 9:6
Have a blessed and joyous Christmas!