

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile

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EPES WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

In a ceremony held in mid-September in Washington, DC, EPES received the 2012 Clarence H. Moore Award for Excellence for Voluntary Service, from the Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The international award recognizes the contributions of voluntary/nongovernmental sectors to improving the lives of the people of the Americas. The award was presented to EPES in recognition of its 30 years of implementing sustainable, community-based public health initiatives among the poor in Chile.

At the award ceremony, EPES Executive Secretary Rosario Castillo dedicated the prize to the “thousands of women fighting collectively to better their lives and communities by making the right to health a reality.”



EPES directors Rosario Castillo and Dr. Lautaro López traveled to Washington, DC to receive the award.

30TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECT: MOBILIZING FOR JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND HEALTH

Reaching north and south to share community responses to Chile's exclusionary health care system, EPES conducted its 30th anniversary project with hundreds of grassroots leaders.

From Tarapacá, to the Santiago metropolitan region, to the Bio Bio, a total of 43 grassroots groups met first in regional assemblies and, in November, in a national meeting at the University of Chile Medical School. Here they discussed ways to combat discrimination, improve access to health services for poor communities, and obtain quality health care for all. The event brought together a diverse mix of traditional and emerging voices, including local representatives of a national health service workers union, environmental groups, Aymara and Mapuche women, migrant women from Peru and elsewhere, urban youths, feminists, LGBT groups and their families, HIV/AIDS prevention groups, commercial sex workers, EPES-trained health groups, women's and human rights defenders, Lutheran educators and the oldest member of the Senate, a physician respected for his defense of health equity for all.

And moving from words to action, 14 groups received small grants from EPES to conduct their own community mobilization projects between July and September. These included “freedom from violence” workshops with families relocated to emergency housing; activities to protect disappearing wetlands; sex education with youths in Chile's largest shantytown; a clean-up of abandoned common areas near a poor Santiago preschool; introducing health promoters to alternative therapies; seminars with unions; and rights awareness training for transgender communities.



In Iquique, youths from the Alto Hospicio community center worked with peers.



Above: In Santiago, the Chilean Women's Network Against Gender Violence conducted awareness workshops.

Left: At the inter-regional assembly, members of transgender groups meet Senator Mariano Ruiz-Esquivel.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF EPES' COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND DIGNITY

Gratitude for the achievements of the past, inspiration for the challenges to come. Accompanied by the individuals, families, congregations and communities that have helped it to grow, EPES celebrated its 30th anniversary with shared meals, parades, prayers and a deep appreciation for its friends and partners, near and far.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE AND MEAL

The week of festivities began with a church service of Thanksgiving led by visiting Lutheran pastors Jenny Mason (former ELCA missionary to Chile) and Lisandro Orlov, and local pastors Luis Alvarez (President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, IELCH) and Pedro Zavala of the Good Samaritan Congregation.

"Whoever thinks of EPES as a project dedicated solely to promoting health is mistaken," said Orlov. "At its core, EPES is an organization for the advancement of human rights." Delegations from the Owatonna Trinity Lutheran Church (including Sophie Anderson, 92-year-old mother of EPES founder Karen) and congregations in Minneapolis and North Carolina joined the service with greetings and a song to commemorate EPES' 30 years of work for health and dignity. On Thanksgiving Day, EPES hosted a traditional turkey dinner to thank the IELCH and other communities of faith for their support over so many years.

IN CONCEPCIÓN AND SANTIAGO

Health groups marked the anniversary by showcasing their work. In Concepción, the guests visited earthquake resettlement camps and experienced first-hand some of the popular education techniques promoted by EPES.

The Santiago health teams invited visitors to observe health conditions in their neighborhoods and help them spruce up Casa Llaleta. To better understand the context of EPES' early days, the delegation visited the ex-detention and extermination center Villa Grimaldi which is now a Park for Peace memorial and The Museum of Memory and Human Rights.

PARADE AND CELEBRATION

True to popular education precepts, EPES leaders Karen Anderson, Rosario Castillo and María Eugenia Calvin (all members of the founding team) led a march and a skit to launch the main event. On November 23, some 250 guests gathered at the El Bosque Cultural Center and pinned their greetings to the Tree of Hope.

A video history of EPES recalled hundreds of supporters, activities and achievements. Following tributes to departed colleagues, scenes from three decades of day-to-day accompaniment and emergency response illustrated the significance of EPES to grassroots communities. Health promoters Mónica Maldonado (Santiago) and Cecilia Sepulveda (Hualpén) were joined by Benilde Gutiérrez (Penco) in expressing thanks to EPES for its long-term commitment. A salute to the children of health promoters who "grew up" in the EPES family attested to this permanence.

But, as the EPES founders noted, beyond the past lies the future. As Pastor Lisandro Orlov stated, EPES' 30-year anniversary also "launches a new stage of dreams and radical commitment to the rights and vulnerability of all, because we know that tomorrow is possible."



President of the Good Samaritan Congregation, Tulio Farias, welcomes everyone to the church service.



International visitors including former ELCA missionary to Chile Rev. Jenny Mason, offered a greeting and song at the opening church service.



Family of EPES founder Karen Anderson in the Park for Peace.



Created by health promoter Mónica Jeanette, this arpillera tells the EPES story in fabric scraps. Anniversary guests received a poster version.



Visitors to the camps for earthquake victims met this young resident. Her t-shirt says it all: Make things better.



Leading the parade, EPES' María Eugenia Calvin, Rosario Castillo, Karen Anderson and Sonia Covarrubias.



EPES staff Lezak Shallat and Anita Peña Saavedra accompany tinku dancer in carnival dress.



From Hualpén, Haydee Alvial Puñán greets the procession on behalf of the Zenobia Cerda Zapata health teams.



Banner presented to EPES by Valeria García (foreground) and the Lloreta health group: "One woman who stands up, one community that organizes and transforms itself."



Rev. Felix Ortiz, Global Ministries of the Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ, presents EPES with a globe of unity and hope.



Pastor Luis Alvarez, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, adds his message to the Tree of Hope.



Guests from Trinity Lutheran Church delivered good wishes in song.

Monica Maldonado, on behalf of EPES-trained health promoters

Our lives were full of fear, desperation and suspicion under the Pinochet dictatorship and the message was clear: EPES, with its talk of rights and a better quality of life, promotes dangerous ideas and revolutionary methods. Can uneducated, overburdened women really become organized? But EPES brought its magic into our lives, empowering us with our own understanding of what it means to be poor and oppressed, fostering talents and skills we already possessed. We grew alongside EPES, exchanging lessons and love between the people and the professionals.

David Werner, author of "Where There Is No Doctor"

Congratulations for your 30-year struggle to defend the health and rights of people most in need. May your spirit of commitment continue for years to come.

EXCERPTS OF GREETINGS FROM NEAR AND FAR

Pastor Martin Junge, Secretary General of the Lutheran World Federation

I celebrate EPES' 30-year commitment to the inalienable right of all individuals to health and to popular education as a way of relating to people.

Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, Executive Director, ELCA Global Mission (delivered by Kathryn Lawler, ELCA regional representative)

EPES began as a primary health care program and quickly grew into a movement for justice, a process of empowerment, an alternative voice amid horizons closed by the dictatorship. The path has been long and arduous but God is loyal, and EPES is with us today, breaking new ground with new dreams. My gratitude for sharing the tremendous experience of being "the face of God" for those seeking a life of dignity and justice.

NEW EPES PARTNERSHIP WILL TRAIN HEALTH PROMOTERS IN KENYA

A new partnership will bring EPES-style popular education to women in Kenya's Kisii and Maasai communities, thanks to the efforts of Grace Mose, a graduate of the EPES international training course. Mose completed a PhD in Women's Studies at the University at Albany and returned to Kenya to start and direct the Hope Foundation for African Women (HFAW). She learned about EPES through contacts in the US.

"Since participating in the EPES course in 2010, I have nurtured a dream to bring this knowledge home to my communities in Kenya," she writes. "Our goal is to build the capacities of health promoters to bring justice to women who, until recently, have had little decision-making power."

EPES and HFAW are fundraising together to launch "train-the-trainer" workshops in September 2013. These will feature role-playing exercises and storytelling to



Grace Mose, founder of the Hope Foundation for African Women, is inspired by the power of popular education.

engage the community and spark discussion. According to Mose, local women's most pressing health concerns are the traditional practices of female genital mutilation and early marriage, a lack of reproductive health services and high levels of domestic violence.

EPES has contributed \$2,500 of the Clarence H. Moore Excellence for Voluntary Service Award (see story page 1) to the Kenyan NGO. For more information, see the HFAW website: www.foundationforafricanwomen.org

COMING UP IN JANUARY 2013: 4TH INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE

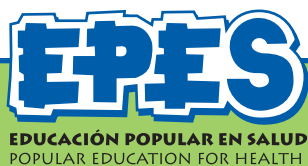


Participants in the 2012 training course take popular education to the local market.

The upcoming 4th EPES International Training Course in Popular Education for Community Health features cultural anthropologist Julia Paley as its guest faculty. Author of "Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile" (2001), Paley is an old friend of EPES and the health teams through her many visits here.

The course will be held in Santiago and Concepción from January 14 to 25.

Launched in 2009 with support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Global Mission, some 60 participants have participated to date, including community health workers from eight Lutheran churches in Latin America. Through them, EPES-inspired methods of popular education have taken root throughout Chile, across Latin America and as distant as the US, Canada and Kenya (see above).



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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; Pamela Eguiguren, University of Chile; Hanni Grunpeter, public health specialist; Rev. Oscar Sanhueza, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile; 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, administration; Susana Jiles, nutrition project; Jorge Olivares, librarian; Anita Peña Saavedra, educator; Héctor Reyes, office manager; Lezak Shallat, communications/tobacco project; **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 and Panoramas Sin Humo de Tabaco



EPES STAFF 30TH ANNIVERSARY RETREAT

Thanks to the generosity of EPES booster Melanie Nelson, the EPES team enjoyed a relaxing weekend at hot springs in southern Chile to celebrate their hard work and achievements before preparing November's festivities. **Top row from left:** Maritza Provoste and her daughter Luna; Michelle Oxley, Pancho Ramos. **Middle row:** Lezak Shallat, Aldo Merlin Martínez, Karen Anderson, Marta Acuña, Anita Peña Saavedra. **Front row:** Virginia Norambuena, Lautaro López, Héctor Reyes, Sandra Castañeda, María Teresa Fuentealba, Angelina Jara, Sonia Covarrubias. **Not pictured:** Rosario Castillo, María Eugenia Calvin, Susana Jiles, Jorge Olivares.

SUPPORT EPES

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

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