



Action for Health in the Americas

Improving health and giving hope in Chile and the Americas

July 2008 Update

founder & director:

Karen Anderson, MEd, MPH

board of directors:

Sonia Covarrubias
EPES Foundation

Roberta Gianfortoni
Harvard School of Public Health*

Julia Ahumada Grob
Youth Organizer

Carol Larkin
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church*

Darlene Midlang, MBA
Thrivent Financial For Lutherans*

Christina Mills, MD, FRCPC
past President, Canadian Public Health Association*

Melanie Nelson
Learning ZoneXpress

Marcelo Venegas, MD
HousingWorks

Gordon Whitman, JD
PICO National Network*

Rev. Dale Young
Lutheran Pastor of the ELCA

advisory board:

Rev. Luther Dale
Incarnation Lutheran Church*

Fernando Leiva, PhD
University at Albany

Fabiola Letelier
Chilean human rights lawyer

Julia Paley, PhD
University of Michigan

Susan Weissert
Director, Maryknoll AIDS Taskforce*

David Werner
Author and Educator, Where There is No Doctor

Peter Yarrow
of Peter, Paul and Mary

*Affiliation for identification purposes only.

Letter from Karen

EPES has been extremely fortunate to expand its mission and programming through the tremendous help of friends of EPES like you. Its implementation of numerous projects, dedicated and talented staff of healthcare professionals, interns and volunteers, and involvement and alliances with sister health organizations has solidified its standing as a leader among community health movements. With your help, EPES has become a leader in improving healthcare access and services in Chile.

Thank you for your continued support on behalf of our friends who work and serve in the shantytowns of Chile. With your help, EPES will continue to help educate and empower people in the poorest neighborhoods throughout Chile.

Karen Anderson

Holly Near's Historic Trip to Chile

For over 30 years, singer/songwriter/activist Holly Near has worked with Latin American artists for social change to protest US-backed dictatorships and police states. A recognized cultural leader in the United States, Holly Near gives voice to issues that seldom get mainstream attention. In recognition of this work, Holly Near was invited to Chile for a series of concerts and human rights events this past December. Holly was joined by the duo, emma's revolution, photographer Donna Korones and EPES founder, Karen Anderson.

"It was a full historical circle to have Holly Near in Chile," said Rosario Castillo, Executive Director of EPES. "During the years of the military dictatorship, her music and solidarity with the struggle of the Chilean people was so important. We were reminded of how the spirit that dances between us goes beyond language barriers and links us together in a common struggle for peace, dignity and justice."



Photo by Donna A. Korones

Holly Near and emma's revolution with the people of EPES who hosted their trip to Santiago, Chile in December 2007.



Holly Near shared her inspiring music with thousands of Chileans in Santiago and Iquique, and joined Chilean folk group Inti Illimani to celebrate EPES' 25th anniversary.



EDUCACIÓN POPULAR EN SALUD
POPULAR EDUCATION FOR HEALTH



Trinity and Prince of Peace members construct a gazebo in memory of Frank Anderson at the EPES Center in Concepción.

A Tradition is Born with a Working Trip

by Jenny Mason, trip leader and former ELCA missionary to Chile

This past January, groups from two supporting congregations of EPES, Trinity Lutheran Church of Owatonna, MN and Prince of Peace, Clifton Park, NY, returned to visit the EPES Center in Concepción. The congregations returned not only to show their longstanding commitment to EPES, but also to complete several building projects that the EPES staff had identified in the newly built Gaston Toledo Educational Health Center in Concepción, including:

- installing paneling on the vaulted ceiling of a large second floor room in the retreat center.
- constructing playground equipment.
- building a gazebo to provide a shaded outdoor spot for conversation and rest.

The work team from the congregations was joined by an exciting group of four college students from the U.S., three Chilean-Americans and one Cuban-American. Even though our group was diverse in gender, age, and life experience, we quickly coalesced as we traveled from Santiago to Concepción by train and bus to begin our brief visit.

Interspersed throughout the week were numerous opportunities for the EPES staff and participants of the health teams to share with us the challenges and opportunities faced by these community leaders. In addition to our physical labor, we also took time to build relationships among ourselves and with the EPES staff and health teams.

In such a short time, an amazing amount of work was accomplished, powerful impressions forged, and deep relationships built. There's nothing like the opportunity to see and experience firsthand the dedication of the EPES staff and the vitality of the health teams as we worked, laughed, and danced together. We felt fortunate to be able to leave

behind some very concrete physical improvements to the EPES Center in Concepción, such as the playground equipment for the children and the gazebo with a carved memorial plaque in honor of Dr. Frank Anderson and a "Spirit That Dances Between" floor mosaic by Scott Duffus.



We feel immensely blessed to have shared so many powerful experiences together and are grateful to Melanie Nelson for organizing the trip. We look forward to the trip that is being planned for January 2010!



Children enjoy the playground constructed by Trinity and Prince of Peace members at the EPES Center in Concepción.

Interns and volunteers aid in



I have volunteered at EPES since November 2007. Since I study Spanish and Women's Health at the University of Michigan, volunteering at EPES was the perfect intersection of my interests. I have been involved with many projects, including assisting with painting educational murals, preparing materials for marches and

EPES' workshops, translating documents from English to Spanish, and numerous EPES' research projects. I am currently working with Sonia Covarrubias of EPES on research related to women and tobacco. Chile has the 4th highest female smoking rate in the world. Working at EPES has allowed me to realize that I would



Leaders work in small groups to learn an educational technique, “Hanging Out Clothes” to put health information in public spaces. This is part of a workshop developed by EPES Concepción staff for leaders of the Community Council of a local health center to learn about community education methods.

Open School Workshops

In March and April 2008, EPES Concepción worked with the local public health service to develop and lead health education seminars for the Institute for Community Leaders that trains leaders from many urban and rural communities in the region. In addition, EPES Concepción hosted an “Open School” which consisted of a series of workshops for employees of the regional health service on EPES participatory educational methodology.

In Santiago, EPES continues the Fund for Women’s Health which provides training and technical assistance to community-based organizations. Currently the fund is supporting local organizations as they develop their own health initiatives. Fifteen community-based organizations are developing healthcare initiatives on such topics as: cancer,

depression, diabetes and obesity, with an emphasis on the promotion of knowledge to improve the quality of life of people facing these issue in poor communities.

Project with the Health Ministry of Chile

EPES is currently working on the development, design and printing of five booklets that share in an accessible and friendly format the national results of the *Quality of Life and Health Survey* conducted by the Ministry of Health during 2006. The materials will be distributed by the Ministry throughout all of Chile.



EPES “Open School” trains regional health service employees in EPES’ methodologies.

EPES Collaborates in New Study

EPES was selected by the Foundation for the Study and Investigation of Women (FEIM), a project supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), to collaborate in a regional study on violence against women and HIV/AIDS among women in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. It is an important acknowledgement by regional and international leaders and will generate even more resources to address these issues in poor communities.

the programs EPES develops

like to continue with my university education in Public Health and has inspired me to stay longer in Chile to volunteer more with EPES.

–Volunteer Kati Crow, University of Michigan

I traveled to Chile in January of 2008 to take a class, and while I was there my class visited EPES. One thing that struck me was that EPES encourages and trains people to work within their communities because they are familiar with the needs of the people in their own neighborhoods, and the people are more comfortable with them than outsiders. EPES is working alongside the people that it serves to meet their needs.

–Alyssa Telander, Luther College



Intern Camila Leiva works with tenth grade women from shantytown communities in southern Santiago in the video workshop “With a Woman’s Voice and Vision” that helps develop media literacy skills. Currently Santiago EPES depends on the support of 10 collaborators, including Chilean students, foreign interns and volunteers.



EDUCACIÓN POPULAR EN SALUD
POPULAR EDUCATION FOR HEALTH

Key Highlights of EPES' Action

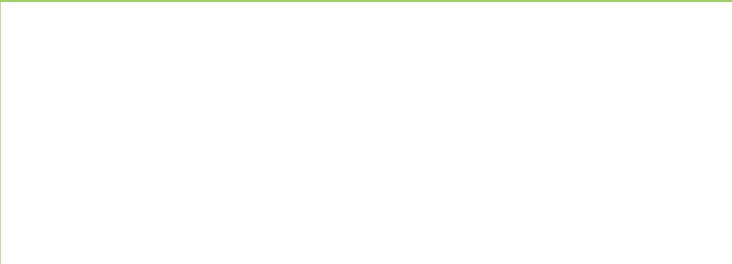
UPDATE



Volunteers from the US work on building projects to help complete the new EPES Health Center in Concepción.

You can make a difference!

Enclosed is an update on a few of the many projects at EPES in Santiago and Concepción. As EPES emerges as one of the leaders in community health movements, you can help expand their work through Action for Health in the Americas (AHA). Your generous donation will help improve lives and promote health, hope and healing in the poorest neighborhoods of Chile.



EPES believes that education and access to health care are fundamental human rights and strives to reduce societal injustice that prevents Chileans from accessing health care and accurate preventive health education.

The Gaston Toledo Educational Health Center in Concepcion provides training and meeting space for hundreds of local residents and organizations.



4 Victoria Drive
Guilderland, NY 12084

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
OWATONNA MN
PERMIT NO 110

URGENT • URGENT • URGENT

Now, more than ever, EPES needs your generous support. The impact of the declining US dollar is having a devastating affect on organizations like EPES, that receive much of their funding in US dollars. The dollar is barely worth 450 Chilean pesos today, compared with 650 pesos two years ago — making it very difficult for contributions to keep pace with a currency drop of 30 percent.

Recent headlines tell part of the story:

- Weak Dollar Hits the Poor
- Rising Energy Prices and a Declining Dollar: A Bad Combination for Chile
- Charities Struggle to Respond to Rising Food and Fuel Costs
- Nonprofit leaders are pressed to meet growing needs, even as costs are ballooning

EPES really needs your help as they face serious financial difficulties. This newsletter shows just a glimpse of the many programs and activities at EPES. Our two centers in Santiago and Concepción are buzzing with activity – education and empowerment that helps local communities work together to address serious public health issues facing the poor. Long-term work is what enables real change.

The AHA Board of Directors is making an urgent appeal for your continued support and asking you to please consider increasing your donation. Donations are tax-deductible and 100 percent of your donation goes to the work of EPES. With your help, we hope to raise the money necessary to continue to create health, dignity and hope for tens of thousands who face critical challenges every day — which becomes increasingly more difficult when the US dollar doesn't go as far as it did a few years ago.