



# Action for Health in the Americas

Improving health and giving hope in Chile and the Americas

Dec 2008 Update

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of Peter, Paul and Mary

\*Affiliation for identification purposes only.

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, Educación Popular en Salud (EPES), a small health promotion-training project begun in the darkest days of the Chilean military dictatorship, has become an independent foundation that continues empowering individuals and transforming lives and communities in Chile's poorest neighborhoods after 27 years.

Thanks to you, EPES' educational and outreach activities reach over 180,000 individuals in poor communities every year, at a cost of barely \$2 per person reached.

Thanks to you, EPES health promoters and shantytown health teams have:

- cared for sick neighbors
- run workshops for local residents on teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, breast cancer and more
- worked on city wide coalitions against violence against women
- led coalitions to eradicate illegal dumps
- presented policy proposals at local, national and international meetings
- written books and gone to college

I am writing to you now to ask you to help us with a special year-end gift so that EPES can continue empowering individuals and communities and leading the struggle for health and dignity in Chile and Latin America.

While many of us are affected by a struggling economy, the global financial situation has had a profound impact on EPES and the Chilean families that are trying so hard to survive each day. EPES can help these families to improve their health, rise out of poverty, and live with dignity—but we need your help.

As costs of the simplest needs, such as a bus fare and a loaf of bread, rise, the women and families we work with are finding it harder to make ends meet. EPES will do what it takes to continue to empower the people in the communities we serve, so that they can decide their own futures and are able to lead healthier and more dignified lives. Your support is what makes this possible.

May the joy of this Christmas season renew our commitment to working together for peace, hope and justice.

Que Dios Les Bendiga,

Karen Anderson

Action for Health in the Americas (AHA)



**EDUCACIÓN POPULAR EN SALUD**  
POPULAR EDUCATION FOR HEALTH





Health promoters painting educational mural for World AIDS Day, December 1, 2008.

Murals are so much more than art.



Women participants in the EPES workshop "Women Talk about Sexuality" in the VI Region of Chile painted a mural on the wall of the rural health center to commemorate World AIDS Day.



In 2008, the painting of health promotion murals by community groups in four Santiago neighborhoods addressed topics such as the intersection of violence against women and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The murals were supported by the distribution of educational materials in the community, reaching at least 10,400 people.



Above left: Seniors in southern Chile participate in focus groups to evaluate education materials produced by EPES for the Ministry of Health.



Above right: A wide variety of community organizations carried out projects to promote health rights under EPES support and supervision.



Left: Participants in a health promoter training course in Concepción.



Right: Women participants in the workshop, "Women Talk about Sexuality" learn about HIV/AIDS through playing an educational board game developed by EPES.





Above: Health promoters Cecilia and María, distribute flyers in downtown Concepción about femicide in Chile on the international day to eliminate violence against women.

Center: Yarly and Carla, health promoters from Concepción, practice first aid in a course led by EPES entitled "Sharing and Refreshing Our Knowledge."

Workshop in Santiago – women participants in a workshop on domestic violence as a risk factor for HIV/AIDS in women.

## Highlights of EPES in 2008

In 2008, EPES expanded its work throughout Chile carrying out health education workshops in the far northern city of Iquique as well as in Santiago, Rancagua, Concepción and far to the south in Osorno. Here are some of the highlights of the year:

- On an international level, EPES is working with three other institutions from Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay on a project that addresses the intersection of violence against women and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. This project is financed by UNIFEM, a United Nations organization that works on women's issues.
- A workshop called "Mobilizing Faith Communities Around HIV/AIDS: Addressing Critical Issues," was created and held with Lutheran churches and ecumenical groups, reaching nearly 576 people from Santiago and the southern regions of Chile.
- Workshops with poor women in the city of Concepción on HIV/AIDS prevention reached over 1,183 women and health care workers in the region.
- The implementation of two projects directed at community organizations called "Promoting Health Rights," financed a total of 19 health projects, and reached 4,790 people in Concepción and 9,446 people in Santiago.
- Four workshops called "Friends, Let's Talk about Sexuality," were attended by 606 housewives and housekeepers from four cities throughout the region.
- Four workshops entitled "Citizen and Leadership Formation for Women" were led in collaboration with SERNAM Women's Ministry and The Bolivian University (Universidad Bolivariana) in the northern regions of Chile, resulting in 949 women in three cities receiving valuable information.
- EPES created a set of 13 pamphlets based on Ministry of Health research on the quality of life and health in Chile. Over 25,000 copies of these pamphlets are now being widely distributed throughout the entire country.
- EPES designed and developed five workshops that focus on the quality of care in health care facilities. More than 60 emergency-room health care workers from the largest and most important hospital in Chile are being trained in these workshops.



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# Key Highlights of EPES' Action UPDATE

We need your support to continue to touch lives.

## You can make a difference!

For 27 years Educación Popular en Salud (EPES) has touched lives in Chile's poorest communities. Take, for example, Miriam and her two children. When Miriam first attended EPES' health promoter training in 2000, she was struggling to support her family. With an absent husband, Miriam scraped by, fixing and re-selling donated household items. After becoming a health promoter, Miriam applied her new knowledge and skills to move her own family out of the poor and unsafe neighborhood in which they lived to her own house in a safer place. Miriam then set out to help those in need, serving as a caretaker for the disabled and elderly, teaching preventive health measures, and administering medicine to sick individuals. But the most inspiring aspect of Miriam's story is her transformation into a confident, optimistic and strong woman.

There are many women who have similar stories... and even more who are waiting for their story to begin. Your gift to EPES is a long-term investment that will help many women like Miriam transform their own lives, the lives of their children and life in their communities.



Cecilia, president of the coordinating team of health promoters in Concepción lights a candle in the name of the 57 women assassinated during 2008 in Chile by their husbands or partners.



4 Victoria Drive  
Guilderland, NY 12084



Health promoters participating in a march against violence against women in downtown Concepción, shouting together, "Women who get organized don't put up with beatings."

*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.*

Please print, cut and mail the following donation card with 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

4 Victoria Drive | Guilderland, NY 12084 | phone: 518.456.1553 | email: actionforhealth@gmail.com | www.actionforhealth.org

**yes!**

I want to help EPES continue their work in Chile. Enclosed is a donation of:

\$35    \$50    \$100    \$200    \$500    other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Please make checks to AHA** (Action for Health in the Americas). **All donations are tax deductible.** Complete and mail this card with your check to: Action for Health in the Americas, c/o Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 4 Northcrest Drive, Clifton Park, NY 12065-2744

Keep this portion for your records.

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \_\_\_\_\_



Tax-deductible donation.

**You can make a difference!**