

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile

No 15: December 2016



The graduates of the second group of women trained to strengthen the community work in nutritional health and rights advocacy.

Obesity has more than doubled worldwide since 1980, with diseases associated with excessive weight skyrocketing. Chile confirms this trend, as the Health Ministry reported in 2013 that 26.5% of children entering first grade were overweight. In 2011, EPES launched its Nutrition, Justice and Human Rights program. In the last six months, the program has made important strides in developing a new approach for the fight against this urgent public health issue that affects every segment of the population. The diverse activities carried out in the past year, noted below, exemplify our participatory methodology.

FIRST GRADUATION OF NUTRITIONAL HEALTH PROMOTERS

The core of EPES popular education for health hinges on community health promoters with the capacity to shape health practices locally. This past year, for the first time, a group of fifteen women were trained specifically as nutritional health advocates to inform, orient and encourage their own neighbors to adopt healthier food habits.

The unprecedented course, running from April to June 2016, equipped participants with tools for nutritional health advocacy from a rights and social determinants of health approach, with the added dimension of a gender focus.

The participants were women from El Bosque, a largely working-class district of southern Santiago where EPES has helped build community organizations over the past 30 years. While the terrain is familiar to EPES, the innovation lies in the nutritional health focal point and that participants were parents or guardians of students at four public schools.

During each of the 11 sessions, they studied social factors that influence the likelihood of becoming overweight or obese. They also reviewed proposals to modify the causes of obesity and recover the population's nutritional health. The workshop included field trips geared to facilitating participants' recognition of health problems and the community's overexposure to food advertising. Following on-site visits, they planned and carried out a community action designed to promote healthy nutrition.



Above Top: Women from the first group of nutritional health promoters presenting the recipes they prepared for the graduation ceremony. Above: Promoters at the community action at the city hall.

Oriana Contreras, Director of José Martí School, valued the EPES course for alerting parents and children to the pressing issue of healthy nutrition as a way to fight child obesity. "It opens a window onto a long process that will improve our nutrition, as we raise awareness from one person to another about changing eating habits."

One of the new health promoters, Karen Bolbarán, 38, noted that "the course opened our eyes about food industry advertising. You tend to believe whatever they claim and have no idea it is completely false. We learned the importance of understanding the new food labeling system. In our family, we are now changing our diet with recipes we learned in the course."

Public school principals and EPES staff attended the graduation ceremony, featuring a sampling of healthy dishes, all easy to prepare and inexpensive, including small zucchini pizzas, green pepper and eggplant sandwiches, and lentil and garbanzo dips.

The 7 new community health promoters will continue to meet as a group twice a month at their children's schools to apply what they have learned.

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Message from the President



Dear friends of EPES and AHA,

As 2016 draws to a close, many of us are feeling downhearted and anxious about the future. I hope this EPES Update will lift your spirits. Now completing its 34th year, EPES continues life-altering work in education, community development and public health advocacy, inspiring hope and optimism about the chances for real change.

Educational activities undertaken this year included a national program to train Community Health Agents for the new Community Family Health Centers the Ministry of Public Health (Minsal) is establishing throughout Chile; training Minsal employees (including clinic directors!) in community-based participatory strategies for health; and applying EPES' methodology to train health promoters on specific issues, such as nutrition and justice, the right to health, and violence against women. Following such training, the groups formed receive two years of mentoring and support from EPES to implement actions using skills developed during the training.

And of course, there was the 7th International Training Course in Popular Education in Health, which this year drew 20 participants from 9 countries.

Two weeks ago, EPES sponsored *Singing for Our Lives*, a workshop with singer/songwriter/activist Holly Near, where women songwriters and storytellers shared and created songs to contribute to the struggle against gender-based violence. Holly Near is a longtime EPES supporter; this, her second visit to Chile at EPES' invitation, is part of EPES' ongoing work on gender as a social determinant of health.

EPES continues to play a leadership role in mobilizing around issues of health and human rights, as in the Fifth Regional Conference on Justice and Dignity in Health, in Concepción, which reached an agreement to develop a national multisectoral platform (from a gender perspective and based on determinants of health) to provide an alternative to the health system's reigning model based on market and profit. This year a related issue where EPES' leadership is making itself felt is pension reform, as thousands of Chileans demand an overhaul of the system; privatized by the Pinochet dictatorship, the system basically acts as a mechanism to transfer funds from the pockets of the poor to the wealthy owners of private companies that administer pension funds (AFPs). The average pension currently is less than minimum wage, while the for-profit AFPs earn billions for their owners.

AHA members have been busy too. In November we held our second #ChileTuesday campaign for Giving Tuesday, part of ongoing efforts to diversify funding so that EPES can remain strong and independent.

As ever, huge and heartfelt thanks for your continuing support for EPES and the communities it serves. Your solidarity contributes to bringing health, dignity and justice to the people of Chile! Have a joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

Christina Mills

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

NUTRITIONAL HEALTH WORKERS IN SCHOOLS



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EPES nutrition project coordinator, Susana Jiles, said the course optimized Chilean culinary culture in the context of a broad range of factors that shape our food choices. Nutritional health, she affirmed, "is not only a matter of consuming nutrients but also is influenced by our economic resources, our access to a variety of food, advertising, as well as the time we have for purchasing, cooking and consuming food."

The second component of EPES methodology—neighborhood-level initiatives that raise awareness and modify health practices—is also visible in the nutritional health program. The new health promoters carried out four educational actions in El Bosque public schools, installing a display about the food industry's

misleading advertising of soft drinks and high sugar content foods. In October, EPES held a second workshop with the previously trained promoters while incorporating six more women from the participating schools to learn about the right to nutritional food and health and form a group in the community to monitor the current food labeling and advertising regulation. As a result of this workshop, on November 29th the women ended the year by painting images on neighborhood walls portraying social determinants of health and food industry strategies that promote the consumption of unhealthy products. With that activity the new nutritional health group was ushered in as the latest generation of health promoters to use a time-tested and proven popular education tool: the community mural.



Anthropologist Susana Jiles presented EPES' training model at the World Nutrition Congress in Capetown, South Africa (left) and was on a panel at the FESAL Festival (First Right to Health Festival) in late October (right) where she discussed how social, economic, political and cultural conditions play a role in one's nutritional well-being.

Initiatives to influence public health policy, the third component of EPES' work, also were clearly present in the Nutrition, Justice and Human Rights program this year. In late October, EPES had a table at the *First Right to Health Festival* and a month later held a workshop on food and health for Arturo Prat University in Santiago employees. Most notable, however, was Susana Jiles' participation at the 2016 *World Nutrition Congress* held at Cape West University in Capetown, South Africa. As Nutrition and Health Project coordinator she was invited to talk about EPES "Training model for nutrition and health promoters, from a social determinants of health and human rights focus."

In light of the obesity and overweight epidemic plaguing many societies today, Jiles, an anthropologist, pointed out that the act of eating and one's

nutritional well-being depend on the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of people's lives. Governments, she insisted, must protect the right to adequate cultural and nutritional eating. To fight this epidemic requires a social determinants and human rights focus because this is an approach that goes beyond simple lifestyle options.

In the past 30 years Chile has experienced significant demographic and epidemiological changes, resulting in an alarming rise in obesity and chronic non-communicable diseases. The World Health Organization suggests that the recovery of traditional foods is key to tackling this problem. However, tensions exist between how we eat and gender roles. This leads Susana Jiles to pose the following question: Who will be doing the cooking?



FIGHT FOR HEALTH RIGHTS

JUSTICE AND DIGNITY IN HEALTH UNITE PEOPLE IN CONCEPCIÓN

The Fifth Regional Conference on Justice and Dignity in Health, held at Biobío University in Concepción, concluded with an agreement to build a national multisector platform that incorporates a rights and social determinants of health approach, from a gender focus. Organized by the Biobío Regional Health Coordinating Board and EPES, five working committees were formed to analyze public health issues in Chile such as the causes of the public system's deficiencies and factors to support building a regional and national campaign to fight for health rights. The initiative's underlying goal is to replace the existing market and profit-based public health care model.

HOLLY NEAR SONGWRITERS WORKSHOP



SINGING FOR OUR LIVES WITH HOLLY NEAR IN CHILE

Noted singer, feminist and peace activist Holly Near, who forged a close relationship with EPES 10 years ago, was in Chile mid-November to run a women songwriter workshop, "Singing for Our Lives." With organizational support from EPES, Chilean female songwriters came together with Holly for a weekend master class on composition and feminism at the Tremohue retreat center up in the mountainous Cajón del Maipo area south of Santiago. With the sound of the Maipo River in the background, each participant composed a song and then the group collectively composed lyrics to give greater visibility to violence against women.

For 40 years, Holly Near's music has been a galvanizing force for peace and social change, often from a gender perspective, a calling that now has been passed on to Chilean performers as well.

Inspired at Holly's workshop, Chilean folk musicians Vasti Michel and Cecilia Concha Laborde share lyrics and music of new songs they are writing about violence against women.

• SAVE THE DATE •

September 23, 2017

*EPES 35th Anniversary Concert with
Holly Near and John McCutcheon
at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Circle Pine,
Minnesota. Celebrate 35 years of working for
justice and dignity in health.*

GENDER VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN EL BOSQUE



Graduates of the training course to prevent violence against women.

WOMEN EMPOWERED TO PREVENT GENDER VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Four months' training in gender violence prevention culminated with the formation of a permanent group in El Bosque prepared to identify situations of violence against women in their community, assist women who are victimized and facilitate access to support services. EPES will provide guidance and resources for two years to enable implementation of the activities defined during the training course.



Participants of the workshops to prevent violence against women take their message to the streets, and form a circle of solidarity. This group of women will work for two years, with the guidance and support of EPES, to implement actions they defined during the training course.



COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENT QUALIFICATIONS DEFINED WITH GUIDANCE FROM EPES

Community organizations and public health employees came together July 13-14 for "Participatory Construction of Community Health Agent Qualifications" organized by the Chilean Health Ministry with support from EPES. During two days, participants defined qualifications for the community health agents to be added to the 50 new family clinics that were opened in this year throughout the country.

1 NUTRITION, JUSTICE & HEALTH PROMOTERS PROGRAM

EPES' nutrition and justice program trains women to become promoters of good health and nutrition in their communities.

2 FOR ME, FOR YOU, NO MORE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

EPES leads the charge in the prevention of gender violence by providing educational workshops for women's organizations, training healthcare employees and informing the public on the issue.

3 CHILE'S NUTRITION CRISIS

2 OUT OF EVERY 3 CHILEANS (67%) OVER 15 YEARS OLD ARE OVERWEIGHT & OBESE

CHILE IS THE WORLD'S #1 CONSUMER OF SUGARY DRINKS

SOURCE: CHILEAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH & A WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

4 PARTICIPANTS LEARN

PRACTICAL SKILLS
cooking lessons, recipes and low-cost healthy meals

SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF FAMILY NUTRITION AND NATIONAL FOOD POLICIES
gender roles, advertising, international trade agreements, etc.

SINCE 2011 **12+** WORKSHOPS AROUND SANTIAGO AND CONCEPCIÓN
100+ WOMEN TRAINED

5 1 OUT OF EVERY 2 WOMEN EXPERIENCE VIOLENT SITUATIONS IN INTIMATE PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

SINCE 2010, BETWEEN 45 AND 65 HAVE BEEN MURDERED EACH YEAR

SOURCE: CHILEAN NETWORK AGAINST VIOLENCE TO WOMEN

Violence against women is not duly punished in Chile.
The Femicide Law omits women and girls who are raped and murdered by acquaintances, friends, strangers, clients and hate crimes against lesbians.

6 SEPTEMBER 2016 PROGRAM WORKSHOPS

23 WOMEN PARTICIPATED

20 WOMEN COMPLETED THE 15-SESSION COURSE

For Me, For You, No More Violence Against Women program participants develop strategies that seek to denaturalize violence against women.

7 TOBACCO FREE CHILE

EPES' leads the Tobacco Free Chile coalition to advocate for tougher tobacco control measures.

40% OF THE CHILEAN POPULATION SMOKES
Compared to 16.8% of the U.S. population

66% OF SMOKERS UNDER AGE 18
48% OF WOMEN SMOKE MENTHOL CIGARETTES
*SOURCE: LEFT: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
SOURCE: RIGHT: TOBACCO FREE CHILE STUDY, MAY 2015*

The Tobacco Free Chile coalition is working to pass an unprecedented law in the region: **to ban menthol and flavored cigarettes.**

SUPPORT FOR EPES' TOBACCO FREE CHILE PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- World Health Organization
- Pan American Health Organization
- 5 former Chilean Ministers of Health

8 INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE, OR SIMPLY "THE ESCUELA"

Developed and delivered by EPES staff, the International Training Course brings students, professionals and activists from varied fields* together to learn how to build and sustain community health promotion teams.

*public health, medical and social science, social work, community organizing, women's studies, church and global mission work, international development, social justice

9 THE THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE ESCUELA

Build a more just world

Guarantee the human right to health

Work for equity in systems and institutions

SINCE 2010, EPES HAS HOSTED 7 INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSES CONSISTING OF 14 WORKSHOPS OVER 2 WEEKS FOR 130 PARTICIPANTS FROM 18 COUNTRIES

For Chilean public health workers, EPES has hosted a condensed, one-week Escuela 7 times over 2 years.

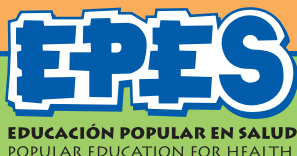
10 WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

In the spirit of justice and solidarity, we invite you and your community to support ours.

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; Maria 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: María 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
4 Northcrest Drive
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Make checks payable to: "Action for Health in the Americas"

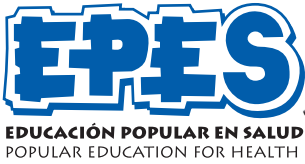
Action for Health in the Americas (AHA) is the non-profit North American partner of EPES.



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EPES focuses
on Nutrition in
this Update!

This holiday season, help EPES continue to expand its mission throughout Chile, the Americas and beyond! Your gift helps strengthen and empower local communities in their fight for health, dignity and justice.



To make a donation:

1. fill in the tab of the enclosed remittance envelope, tear it off and place it in the envelope with your check
2. donate online at www.actionforhealth.org