

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile.

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The delegation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA): Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica, and Rev. Raquel Rodriguez with the EPES staff during their visit to Santiago.

ELCA LEADERS EXPERIENCE EPES IN ACTION

A delegation of leaders from the ELCA experienced EPES first-hand during a visit in early December 2016. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Global Mission Executive Director Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, and ELCA Director for Latin America and the Caribbean Rev. Raquel Rodriguez immersed themselves in the urban setting where three decades of EPES' work has empowered scores of women to stand up for their rights for dignified health.

Walking along the streets in the company of health promoters, Bishop Eaton, Rev. Malpica and Rev. Rodriguez experienced a day in the life of La Bandera, a neighborhood where EPES has worked since the 1980s. The ELCA leaders met with health groups who foster healthy nutrition and other promoters who work to prevent violence against women in La Bandera, gaining greater appreciation for EPES' history, current work and challenges. Participating in a variety of activities, they also acquired in-depth understanding of the health teams' campaigns and methodologies.

After visiting the most recent mural painted by health promoter group Llaleta for the November 25th International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Lutheran leaders took paint brushes in their own hands. The murals the ELCA leaders left as a remembrance of their visit portrayed the importance of early breast cancer detection and promoting drinking water over sugary beverages.

"I give thanks for these courageous women and for the opportunity of having worked with them for the last 25 years," posted Rev. Malpica on his Facebook page following the visit.



Group of Health Promoters, Karen Anderson, Bishop Eaton and Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica, Executive Director of Global Mission of the ELCA, at a mural painted by the women from La Llaleta. The mural exposes violence against women.



Rev. Dr. Rodriguez, health promoter Sonia Martinez and Bishop Eaton promoting the importance of drinking water.



Message from the President



Dear friends of EPES and AHA,

EPES is far from resting on its laurels in 2017, the 35th anniversary of its founding as a project of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH)*.

Already this year they have delivered the eighth International Course on Popular Education in Health, (fondly referred to as la Escuela), bringing the total number of trainees since 2010 to 150 (from 19 countries). Talk about ripple effect—that has to be a major splash! The impact of the Escuela has been particularly strong in Kenya, where the Hope Foundation for African Women is replicating the EPES model after founder Grace Mose attended the Escuela in 2010 (followed by five others in 2014).

Also in this Update, you can learn about EPES' continuing activities in emergency

response and advocacy for a tobacco-free Chile, as well as about an exciting healthy schools program that emerged from a 2016 EPES workshop, just to mention a few.

Finally, I draw your attention to the announcement of a benefit concert to mark EPES' 35 years and thank the wonderful donors and supporters who have made it all possible. If you are anywhere near the Twin Cities on September 23, I hope you will join us in celebrating this remarkable journey we have been on together. If you can't be there physically, we will hold you in our hearts with gratitude for all you have done to help EPES fulfil its mission to contribute to health, dignity and justice for the people of Chile.

In gratitude for your continuing solidarity,

Christina Mills MD FRCPC

President, Action for Health in the Americas

EIGHTH CLASS OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATORS

Twenty new community health educators hailing from Brazil, Columbia, Peru, the United States as well as various Chilean cities comprised the eighth graduating class of EPES' annual International Course on Popular Education for Health, held in January 2017.

Since 2010, the annual International Courses on Popular Education for Health have created a powerful network of health educators throughout Latin America and in African communities of Kenya. The women and men who participated in the Course's latest version became acquainted with community participatory methodologies and strategies developed by EPES in its 35 years working in the field. Participants also carried out community actions with the Llaleta, Circle of Women for Health, and David Werner community health promoter groups. The issues addressed included prevention of osteoporosis, creating environmental consciousness regarding the garbage we generate and waste management, as well as fostering community organization to improve our surroundings and guarantee respect of our rights.

As in years past, the Rev. Lisandro Orlov, a theologian and pastor of the Evangelical United Lutheran Church of Argentina, gave the workshop "Faith Communities and the promotion of rights and dignity: Stigmas and discrimination in health and HIV/AIDS." Pastor Orlov, a member of EPES' team of multidisciplinary health educators, approaches health from the standpoint of what he calls a liberation model. He describes this approach as an inclusive, participatory, and community-based health prevention focus. With solidarity as its central characteristic, the liberation model takes into account factors of vulnerability such as poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality, while questioning inequitable structures such as resource distribution.

This year's special lecturer was Dr. Rogério Pinto, a social work professor and researcher from the University of Michigan who spoke on "Community Health Agents of Brazil and Implications of the Development of Similar Programs in Other Countries" at the University of Chile's School of Public Health. Dr. Pinto's lecture contributed to discussion on the incorporation of Community Health Agents in the new Community Family Health Centers, for which EPES was a consultant in the Health Ministry's Primary Care Division.

The Course's eighth graduating class brings the total number of participants to 150 people from 19 countries, who return to their respective communities with new skills and strengthened capacity to effect positive change.





EPES EDUCATIONAL TEAM IN CHILOE

PARTICIPATORY AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIES IN HEALTH SHARED IN SOUTHERN CHILE

In March, EPES staff members traveled to Chiloé, the largest island of an archipelago in the extreme south of this elongated country, to share participatory and community strategies in health. Maria Eugenia Calvin, Angelina Jara, Virgina Norambuena and Maria Stella Toro, who comprise the EPES education team, were asked to orient Chiloé public health employees on the social determinants and rights focus that represent core elements of the EPES methodology. Health care professionals from the Community Family Health Centers, Family Health Clinics, as well as the municipal health department of the ten Chiloé municipalities participated in the week-long session.

EPES EXPERTISE GUIDES NEW HEALTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS



Above: Graduation of the first group of Community Health Agents for the Health Ministry's Primary Care Division. Right Center: Community health activities during training of the Community Health Agents. Right Bottom: The group samples healthy snacks.

Support for the process of incorporating Community Health Agents in new Community Family Health Centers is the objective of a training program combining theoretical and practical elements that EPES developed for the Health Ministry's Primary Care Division.

The Community Family Health Centers are neighborhood facilities intended to introduce greater efficiency and improved access, equipped to serve an average of 3500-5000 people registered with each clinic.

The first training course was held mid-December 2016 by EPES educators Maria Eugenia Calvin and Maria Stella Toro, together with Health Ministry staffer Deiza Troncoso, and concluded with a sample of healthy snacks, group evaluation of the knowledge acquired throughout the course, and certificates for all participants. Highlights of the course were the community health activities carried out with the EPES-trained health teams.

As a consultant for the Health Ministry's Primary Care Division, EPES also developed a manual for Community Health Agents, who are volunteers trained and accredited to provide guidance on preventive health measures at the Community Family Health Centers. The manual presents examples of different public health experiences, primarily in Latin America, highlighting the work of Community Health Agents in improving health at the local level.



OUTPOURING OF EMERGENCY SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF FOREST FIRE TRAGEDY



In mid-January, forest fires once again besieged Chile, as the consequence of the disastrous combination of climate change, forest industry voracity, and lack of governmental planning. This time seven Chilean provinces were affected by intense forest fires that burned uncontrollably during several weeks, destroying homes and countryside.

Multiple causes are to blame for the tragedy. First, it stemmed from conditions attributed to climate: unusually high summer temperatures, low humidity, and wind.

But such climactic conditions were aggravated by factors of human origin: extensive pine and eucalyptus plantations operated by large forestry corporations. These plantations of highly flammable pine and eucalyptus trees are located in close proximity to residential areas, without firebreaks to detain the spread of fire.



Lautaro López Stefoni, EPES Concepción director, heads to the fires to offer the community of Penco emergency support.

Since 2010, when Penco, a locale near the EPES office in Concepción, was severely affected by the earthquake and tsunami, EPES developed an extensive support program to respond to emergencies such as natural disasters. The people of Penco, who lost their homes in the wake of the earthquake 7 years ago, were threatened once more, this time by fire.

Lautaro López Stefoni, EPES Concepción director, noted, "People who lost their homes and the Penco population in general fought to save their homes from the blaze. We will continue to support that community's efforts to reorganize and protect its health with preventive measures on the medium to long-term."

SIEMBRA Y COSECHA WOMEN'S HEALTH GROUP PRESENTS AT HEALTHY SCHOOLS INAUGURATION

Improving the quality of school meals, providing information about the weekly school lunch menu, adapting the lunch space and time to pupils' needs, and removing fast food carts from school premises were some of the demands the Siembra y Cosecha (Sow and Harvest) Women's Health Group requested at the opening of the El Bosque municipality's Healthy Schools Program on April 13.

In 2016, the women participated in EPES' food justice and health promoter training course to foster and recover a healthy diet. The course employed a gender-based approach emphasizing women's rights and inviting the participants to reflect upon the underlying causes of food injustice and poor nutritional health in their communities. After participating in the course, the participants formed a permanent group to share knowledge and to contribute to improving the quality of life of their community.

Municipal health and education officials as well as school principals and pupils were present at the program launch in April when the group's representatives



"Sow and Harvest" Women's Health Group speak at El Bosque's Healthy Schools Program about the importance of a healthy lunch for students.

described the actions they undertook in several public schools the past year. These included interactive presentations about the food industry's misleading labeling of highly processed foods and sugary beverages, as well as a taste of recipes that are appetizing, healthy and easy on the household budget.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH POPULAR EDUCATION



Hope Foundation for African Women (HFAW) continues to implement the popular education strategies learned at EPES International Training Program. In December, they led a 4-day workshop to discuss the topics of Gender-Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Human Rights, and Economic Empowerment with Kisii Mission of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church in Western Kenya. According to the Kenyan Evangelical Lutheran Church website, "At the end of the seminar, participants responded that they learned about legal rights that they did not know they had, including rights concerning their health and their access to social services. Other participants shared that this seminar has inspired them to work together as a community to improve on the economic standing of the whole community, rather than letting jealousy divide them. Lastly, they learned that ordinary people can create change, even if only few resources are available. Together they can protect each other from gender-based violence and insist on their human rights, within their families and their communities."



EPES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS BEFORE CONGRESS

Sonia Covarrubias, EPES Executive Director and coordinator of the Tobacco-Free Chile coalition, an entity organized by EPES, spoke before the Chamber of Deputies Health Committee on December 13, calling on government and Congress to accelerate floor debate on the tobacco bill and not give in to tobacco industry pressure.

Along with Sonia, the Health Committee received professors from Johns Hopkins University, Health Undersecretary Jaime Burrows, and Dr. Paloma Cuchi, Chile's representative with the Pan American Health Organization, to



listen to their opinions and learn about their experience on global health and tobacco control.

The Commission accepted their request, promising to reactivate the bill's legislative process in March 2017. That month Sonia Covarrubias again was invited to present scientific arguments in support of the law that would bring Chilean law in compliance with the World Health Organization's Tobacco Control Framework Agreement.



SINGING TO PROTECT WOMEN'S LIVES

EPES's innovative methodology has long employed art, in the form of murals and street theater, as well as music, to convey its message, empower women, and create bonds among community health promoters. Now it has sponsored the production of a song that aims to become a key asset in its efforts to prevent violence against women.

That song, *Nunca más, mujer* (Never again, woman) presented for the first time May 5 at the national assembly of the Chilean Network Against Violence Toward Women, originated from a workshop for women songwriters organized last November by EPES and the singer, feminist and peace activist Holly Near. The 12 women who participated were challenged to compose women-identified music and to consider including in their repertoire songs that decry violence against women.

Four workshop participants - Claudia Stern, Cecilia Concha Laborde, Jacqueline Castro and musician Christelle Durandy, from the United States - composed the song's simple but direct lyrics. After recording the music track, in late March workshop participants reunited at a recording studio in Santiago to add the vocals. The song's captivating melody begins with solo voices, who are then joined by a soaring choir in crescendo that keeps the listener in flight.

María Eugenia Calvin, EPES founding team member who coordinates initiatives on violence against women, explained expectations for *Nunca más, mujer*, whose production and publicity efforts are funded by EPES. "Culture legitimizes violence against women through images, songs, literature and jokes. We hope this song will become a cultural tool at the service of actions that create greater awareness and mobilize women's organizations fighting for rights and to transform discriminatory power relationships."

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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:** 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.



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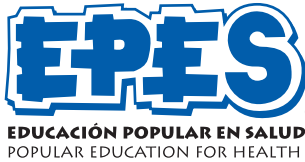
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Action for Health in the Americas (AHA) is the non-profit North American partner of EPES.



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Promoting Health, Hope and Healing

EPES gets
visit from ELCA
delegation!

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 23, 2017

EPES 35th Anniversary BENEFIT CONCERT

long time friends
Holly Near and John McCutcheon
with Jan Martinelli



"Through dictatorship, fire, earthquake and poverty EPES has survived, always there in solidarity with those who get hit hardest by life's challenges. I have visited Chile three times at the invitation of EPES. I have always been inspired."

– Holly Near



"Come join us celebrating 3-1/2 decades of organizing, mobilizing, and inspiring. EPES never forgets that joy...and music!... are an essential part of any change movement. Let's raise our voices with theirs!"

– John McCutcheon

**Join us in celebrating
35 years of working for justice
and dignity in health**

7:00 PM

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