

THE 10TH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ON POPULAR EDUCATION IN HEALTH, EPES FOUNDATION

CROSSING CONTINENTS III

January 6 – 16, 2019 | Santiago and Concepción, Chile



School participants at the mural "Another world is possible" at EPES in Santiago.

Community leaders and advocates from Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, United States, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Chile participated in the EPES Foundation's 10th International School on Popular Education in Health, in Santiago and Concepción, January 6 - 16. Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) provided key support that made the school possible.

It was the third time the International School, popularly known as *Escuela*, had crossed continents. In 2014, women from Uganda and Kenya, participated and in 2016 organizations of Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe

sent representatives. In its 10 years, 187 people from 25 countries have participated in the school that imparts the principles and techniques of participatory and community strategies for health. These comprise the cornerstones of popular education, a methodology that has made significant inroads in upending social injustice.

The women and men who spent eleven intense days at the school learned how to form community health promotion groups, worked with local organizations, explored role of churches in the struggles for the right to health and reflected about factors that ensure organizations a sustainable future.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 10TH ANNUAL ESCUELA

WELCOME



Educator Angelina Jara leading an introductory group exercise.

The Chilean percussion group Los Fi gave a rousing welcome to participants arriving from afar. In her keynote words, EPES Executive Secretary Sonia Covarrubias spoke of the enduring effectiveness of popular education as a participatory methodology with transformational capacity in the framework of conservative trends that have gained ground regionally.

Grace Mose, founding director of Hope Foundation for African Women (HFAW), also participated in the opening ceremony. She described the impact participation in EPES' inaugural International School of 2010 had on her work in Kenya. That experience provided the tools and concepts that enabled her to create HFAW, which now has more than five years working in the community and applying popular education methods to protect the rights of Kenyan women.



The performance of the Chilean urban percussion group "Los Fi" was part of the opening day.



Sonia Covarrubias



Grace Mose

THE EPES MODEL



Karen Anderson leading the session.

The first day focused on the EPES Foundation training model. International School director and EPES founder Karen Anderson (ELCA Global Mission Personnel in Chile) underscored that processes of change centered on people's needs depend upon the participation of those people. Such processes also require the generation of forms of organization and mobilization that foster the exercise and reclaiming of people's rights, she explained.

Valeria García, health promoter of the La Bandera neighborhood's historic Llareta Group, shared her moving testimony of the radical change EPES training signified for her life. Becoming a health promoter forged an unswerving commitment to social transformation that brought about dignified quality of life for her community and her own family.



Tools for community work

The International School on Popular Education in Health included courses on participatory social assessments and methodology, given by EPES staff educator and sociologist Virginia Norambuena. Her sessions combined theory with practice that provided popular education tools to carry out community work from a participatory and democratic focus.



PROFESSORS FROM ARGENTINA AND KENYA

Two guest professors from Argentina and Kenya complemented EPES' educators.

Rev. Lisandro Orlov, Pastor of the United Lutheran Church of Argentina and Uruguay, has taught every year since the school started. This year, he presented "Faith Communities and rights promotion. Health without stigmas or discrimination: HIV and AIDS." Orlov emphasized that educators should protect the dignity of people living with HIV and provided a critical look at the prevailing discourses around the pandemic, endorsing the liberating model, over the medical and ethical-legal models.



Rev. Lisandro Orlov.

Grace Mose, HFAW Executive Secretary, described her organization's efforts in villages of Kenya to eradicate female genital mutilation, a cultural practice that violates girls' rights. Mose also lectured on "Building a Popular Education Organization in Kenya", held simultaneously with the workshop on "Methodology for Nutritional Health Promotion and Recovery", presented by EPES educators Susana Jiles and Katie Bubriski.



Grace Mose with translator Camila Leiva.

"Methodology for Nutritional Health Promotion and Recovery" was one of the simultaneous workshops.



Katie Bubriski teaching how to read processed food product labels.



Susana Jiles, coordinator of EPES' Nutrition, Justice and Health Program.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

The importance of drinking water, having a healthy diet and a unified community that can work together to defend and transform the environment and denounce the privatization of public goods, like water, were some of the ideas promoted in community actions carried out by International School participants, accompanied by community health teams. Two stands were set up in outdoor produce markets of El Bosque, coordinated with the David Werner and Women's Circle for Health groups. In La Bandera, participants painted a mural together with the Llareta health team.



Participants paint a mural in La Bandera with Llareta health promoters.

CULTURAL NIGHT

The rhythms of Latin America and Africa characterized the Crossing Continents' Cultural Carnival held at the Llareta health promoter group's neighborhood center in La Bandera.



School participants shared presentations representative of the culture of their countries.

The event began with a moment to reaffirm our commitment to justice and the value of human rights.

Posters portrayed the faces of community leaders, environmental activists and Mapuche indigenous people killed in Chile in recent years – Macarena Valdés, Camilo Catrillanca, and Alejandro Castro – as well as Honduran environmental activist Berta Cáceres. Llareta health promoters and EPES staff members read the introductory narrative to Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman's documentary "The Pearl Button" that tells of the decimation of indigenous peoples of Patagonia, in the far-southern tip of Chile. That ancient group associated their existence in the cold, harsh climate to the sea, and believed that in death every person transformed into stars in the sky. Through music and theater, members of the community health teams dramatized the plight of indigenous peoples.



Juan and Rosa Troupe in the streets of La Bandera.



Presentation of the health groups.

CONCEPCIÓN

After a week in Santiago, the 10th International School moved location five hours south to the Biobío region. The three days housed in the EPES building in the Hualpen district of Concepcion included classes, ice-breaking exercises, working in small groups and a Chilean cultural celebration.



Popular Chilean Culture Night.



Dr. Lautaro López leading the session.

During the first session participants became acquainted with the work EPES carries out in that region. EPES Concepcion coordinator Lautaro Lopez conducted the class "Popular Education, the environment and social-natural disasters." Students conducted a collective mapping of critical socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

Women leaders of the Health and Environment Committee of Villa Montahue also received the International School participants. Most of the families of that working class district lost their homes as a result of the 2010 earthquake and tsunami. In 2017, they once again faced a potential disaster when forest fires destroyed hundreds of acres, endangering the new community.



School participants at Villa Montahue.

As they walked along the neighborhood lanes, participants learned about the long post-disaster recovery process and the subsequent fire prevention program installed with support from the EPES Foundation. The Villa Montahue program, featuring community actions in conjunction with pertinent institutions, has made neighbors proactive in fire prevention and strives to prepare them proactively for any future emergency. With a leisurely stroll along the beach and dinner in Penco with Villa Montahue women, the Escuela concluded its Biobio Region component.



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Students and EPES team.

One of the final activities involved the designing of action plans to apply in each community the lessons learned at the school. During the presentation of these projects, EPES staff and fellow participants provided feedback.

The 11-day International School drew to a close with a graduation ceremony, highlighting the personal strengths and leadership qualities of each student.



Participants of programs supported by the ELCA in various African countries, with ELCA Global Mission staff members from Chicago, Cameroon and Chile.



Patricia Ramírez Álvarez and Walter Estrada Rodríguez, from Familias de Esperanza in Guatemala, with Karen Anderson.



Karen Anderson and Grace Mose

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It is the hope of the EPES Foundation that the *Escuela* may help expand and strengthen community, participatory experiences for social change that strive to build a more just and compassionate world.