

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile.

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More than 40 leaders of member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) from Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada visited the EPES center in Santiago on May 11th, where they learned about EPES' work for health and dignity developed over the past 40 years with low income communities. Representatives of the Women and Gender Justice Network and the Youth Network of the LWF participated in the meeting, as well as key regional leaders such as Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla, Executive Director, Service and Justice, ELCA; Izani Brunch, Bishop of the IELCH and recently appointed Chaplain of La Moneda; Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada; and Marco Garrido Espinoza, Pastor of the IELCH, who is part of the EPES Board of Directors. The session was facilitated by Karen Anderson, founder of EPES and ELCA global mission personnel in Chile and EPES staff member Angelina Jara García. During the activity, the leaders put into practice and shared their impressions about educational resources and participatory methodologies of EPES.



Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla and Karen Anderson.



EPES and Coady International Institute of Canada held the second version of the Leadership, Participation and Community Work course, November 8–26. Women tuned into this virtual format course from Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Haiti, and Chile.



Immigrant women of El Bosque met November 22, 2021 to talk about mental health, in a session coordinated by the EPES Foundation. The gathering identified situations that affect our daily lives that generate stress and anxiety. The forum was designed to consider mental health from the perspective of social determinants of health, and taught simple techniques that can help us feel better.

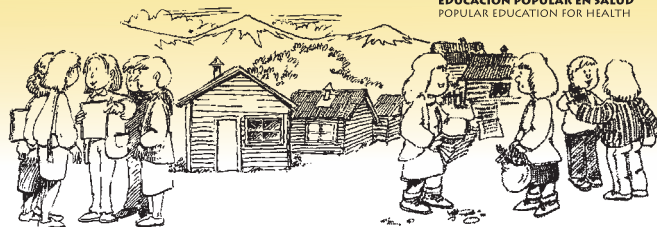
Highlights of EPES' four decades working together for justice, dignity and health

EPES was created in 1982 to promote health with dignity for the poor through empowerment, mobilization and collective action. EPES began as a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile. Now a ministry supported by ELCA Global Mission, it maintains close ties nationally and internationally with the Lutheran Church.



1980s Building community capacity in health

- Launched our community health promoter training program throughout Santiago and Concepción
- Developed and distributed health fliers, board games, and posters
- Conducted hundreds of workshops for community and church groups
- Stood with Chileans in the fight to defend human rights and a return to democracy



1990s Responding to the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic

- Founded and led several **Action Networks for HIV/AIDS**
- Organized the first **National Ecumenical Gathering around HIV/AIDS**
- Published and distributed a packet of nine educational games
- Led successful environmental health campaigns, **The Bio Bio River Says NO to Rats** and **Save the Wetlands**
- Launched our book, **Health Promoters and Journeys of Participation**



2000s Building services for women victims of violence

- Developed the first quantitative-qualitative research to determine the incidence of conjugal sexual violence in San Ramón
- Managed and implemented the first services to care for women victims of violence in San Ramón with the community network
- Trained staff and health promoters for the Lutheran Church in Resistencia, Argentina
- Built retreat center in Concepción and inaugurated powerful mural by Chilean and Minnesotan artists
- Started **Action for Health in the Americas (AHA)**, our US counterpart
- Produced Spanish edition of **Contact**, a World Council of Churches' health magazine, and distributed it in Latin America

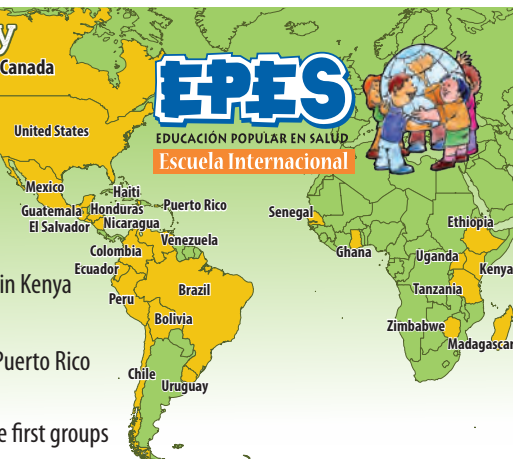


Action for Health in the Americas



2010s Expanding our impact nationally and internationally

- Launched our **International Training Program for Popular Education in Health and Community and Participatory Strategies for Health**, to date has had 205 participants from 25 countries and 18 Lutheran churches in the Americas and Africa
- Developed long-term emergency response model for earthquakes and other natural disasters
- Adapted **Comfort for Kids** materials and program from Mercy Corps for hundreds of children
- Supported training and start of **Hope Foundation for African Women** with Grace Mose and her team in Kenya
- Changed national laws around tobacco use in public spaces through advocacy initiative **Smoke-Free Chile**
- Provided training and support for community-based responses to massive fires in Valparaíso and Hurricane María in Puerto Rico
- Led two national programs for the Ministry of Health - **Community Health Agents** and **Rural Health Paramedics**. Developed the programs, wrote the health manuals that are used throughout Chile, and trained the first groups of community health agents and rural paramedics



2020s Thriving through the pandemic

- Adapted training programs for online workshops during the pandemic
- Supported emergency relief efforts for hundreds of families during the first year of the pandemic
- Began family community gardening projects with community health promoters in Santiago and Concepción
- Developed and led two grassroots **Women's Leadership Programs** online for 40 women from 12 countries

Thank you to all the friends, congregations, artists and allies who have accompanied and supported us during these four decades. We couldn't have done it without you!



To learn about EPES' 40th anniversary celebration go to actionforhealth.org

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISM



On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 25, 2021, Newen Domo (Community Violence against Women Prevention Group) and EPES painted a mural in El Bosque with the message “Somos + defendiendo la vida y nuestra libertad” (More of us defend life and our freedom). At its center, the mural depicts women holding up a banner that decries all forms of violence. The following week the David Werner, Llaleta and Círculo de Mujeres por la Salud health promoter groups met to paint a mural of their own to highlight the same demand.



EPES endorsed and joined a campaign called 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, promoted by ELCA in Latin America and the Caribbean. On December 10, International Human Rights Day, EPES underscored that “when the state fails to pass laws, fails to provide adequate services to protect the lives of women and sexual diversity, it thereby tolerates impunity for aggressors, and, in so doing, structural violence.”



As part of its commitment to further the protection of women's rights, on March 8 the EPES Foundation participated in public actions, including marches, to call for violence-free lives for women. The various activities were held both in downtown Santiago and in El Bosque to strengthen organizations locally.

“Without Women and without organizations, transformation is not possible!” was the slogan EPES promoted on this International Women's Day.



On World Health Day, April 7, EPES publicly called for a new Constitution to guarantee the right to health and bring an end to the inequitable, profit-based health model that prevails today in Chile. It joined throngs of people gathered in front of the former seat of Congress, where the Constitutional Convention opened its assembly last year, and is slated to conclude its writing phase on July 4. A national referendum will be held September 4 on whether to adopt this new constitution.



In November, EPES staff visited Iquique and the municipality of Alto Hospicio in the northernmost region of Tarapacá, on the border with Peru and Bolivia. In this district, home to a vast shanty town encampment, they assessed the problems and health needs of immigrant communities. On the basis of the information collected, EPES implemented a program in partnership with AMPRO, Asamblea Abierta de migrantes y promigrantes de Tarapacá, to provide concrete solutions for the marginalized and impoverished people who enter the country through informal routes, in what has become a humanitarian and immigrant crisis in northern Chile.



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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.

SUPPORT EPES

To contribute to EPES, make a tax-deductible donation online at www.actionforhealth.org, or mail your contribution to:

Action for Health in the Americas
c/o Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
4 Northcrest Drive
Clifton Park, NY 12065-2744 USA

Make checks payable to: "Action for Health in the Americas" (AHA)
a non-profit North American partner of EPES.

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Go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice, or call 1-800-847-4836 to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to AHA.

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.



During this critical time, your generous donations will keep EPES' work going to support women and families and to fight for justice and equity in health.

TO DONATE: Mail your check in the enclosed remittance envelope, or donate online at: www.actionforhealth.org



At the EPES Foundation community center in Hualpén, a nine-session course to train Nutrition and Community Action Promoters drew to an end on December 14. A diverse group of women, of different ages and from different municipalities—Hualpén, Talcahuano, San Pedro, Concepción and Chiguayante—participated. Employing a combination of in-person and virtual formats, participants met to share knowledge regarding the rights to nutrition, health and food sovereignty.



More than 60 children gathered to celebrate Christmas in a neighborhood center of El Bosque on December 26. The activity was organized by the Union for Haitian Progress in Chile (UNHAPROCH) with support from the EPES Foundation.



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A delegation of unions, community organizations, faith groups and academics from New York and Minnesota visited the EPES center of Santiago on March 30, to learn about our work and popular education methodologies. The group, which included people from Puerto Rico, visited Chile to become acquainted with different organizational models for building social movements, unions and cultural production. They were also interested in learning about the process currently underway to draft a new constitution.

The EPES Foundation and the Siembra y Cosecha Salud (Sow and Harvest Health) Group held a workshop on how to dehydrate food November 9 and 16 of 2021. Katherine Román, coordinator of educational vegetable gardens in the southern city of Villarrica, led the sessions in a combination in-person and virtual format. Participants learned how to make food last through tools—such as the construction of a homemade dehydrator—that enable better household budget management.