

NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE FOR INTERCULTURAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH, Civil Association

INTRODUCTION

Happy New Year dear friends! From INESIN and its entire staff, we are pleased to send you many greetings and wish you all the best for the beginning of 2009. We are returning with energy and faith to our activities and are anxious to start new ones. During the next months we hope to live new challenges, and many more moments of sharing and learning. Meanwhile we would like to share with you about our activities during the last weeks of 2008. We are, as always, very grateful for your support in our work.

EDITORIAL

Closing circles

Months and years pass by but it is only when we stop and look behind that we can see the route we've been walking on and all the achievements we've obtained. That is exactly what we had the chance to do as the staff of INESIN with our annual evaluation session at the end of October 2008. This exercise also allowed us to start planning the coming new year with a clearer mind.

But before this, at the beginning of October, we welcomed a new colleague, **Blaise Obrist**, civil service volunteer from DM-exchange and mission (Switzerland). He'll help us with awareness building workshops on the environment with secondary school students in the Sierra region. We're glad to welcome him and wish him a nice time with us.

In October and November we celebrated 2 sessions of our training courses (Pastoral Accompaniment in cases of Domestic Violence and Pastoral Reading of the Bible), which are important meetings and were attended by many people in a very successful way.

November was also a month for making contacts and public relations with the participation of our team in meetings like the International Congress of Liberation Psychology in San Cristóbal, the Annual Meeting of Peace Builders in Comitán and the Ecumenical Mayan Indian Theology Meeting in Sibah'a (Ocosingo).

Finally in December we closed the year with a very nice picnic with the whole team.



Sharing seeds in San Gregorio

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ACTIVITIES REPORT:

Strengthening Communities



- Visits to rural communities (Pacayal, Zapotillo, Pablo L. Sidar, Chamic, San Gregorio) to support the ecumenical groups of the community gardens project with workshops and socio-cultural presentations (October-January)

- Pregnancy and Birth Workshop in Marqués de Comillas (November)
- Introduction of the new volunteer in the secondary schools of Pacayal and Zapotillo (November-December)
- Preparation and realization of the 1st Inter-Community Meeting in Comalapa (November)
- Visits to the communities of Chamic and Pablo L. Sidar to realize a diagnostic on trash management (October-November)
- Participation in a course on organic gardening and food security in Veracruz (December)
- Systematization of the trash management diagnostic results, workshops planning (December-January)

Ecumenical Studies

- “Positive Transformation of Conflict” Workshop with CORECO in Tuxtla (October)
- Celebration of the Week of Prayer for the Unity of all Christians - 100 years - in Tuxtla and San Fernando (October)
- Presentation of the exposition on ecumenism at the Annual Meeting of Peace Builders in Comitán (November)
- 3rd session of the Ecumenical Course on Pastoral Reading of the Bible at INESIN (November)
- 4th session of the Ecumenical Course on Pastoral Reading of the Bible at INESIN and graduation of its first generation (January)



- Ecumenical Workshop on Biblical Hebrew for local translators (December)

Gender Studies



- Preparation and realization of the 3rd session of the Course on Pastoral Accompaniment in cases of Domestic Violence / DAPVF (October)
- Participation in the catechists meeting in the parish of Huixtán (October)
- Evaluation of the 3rd session and preparation of the DAPVF's 4th session (October-January)
- Information and awareness rising on INESIN's work with family violence prevention to groups and parishes in Switzerland (October-December).

Mayan Indian Theology



- Participation in the International Congress of Liberation Psychology in San Cristóbal (November)
- Work meetings with the Ecumenical Coordination of Indian Mayan Theology – preparation of the Annual meeting in Sibah'a (October-November)
- Follow-up meeting for the tsostil participants of the Spirituality Course / DIACHE (January)
- Participation of the 17th Ecumenical Mayan Indian Theology Meeting in Sibah'a (November)
- Participation in the catechists course on “Family” in the parish of Zinacantán (January)

Institutional Strengthening

- Preparation, realization and systematization of INESIN's annual evaluation session (October)
- Reception and coordination of a delegation for Women from Mennonite Central Committee (Oct)
- Realization and systematization of three work team coordination meetings (October-January)
- Renting of lodging and food services to five local groups and civil organizations (October-January)
- Reception and accompaniment of a group of Lutheran seminary students from the USA (Nov)
- Coordination and systematization of two institutional planning meetings (December-January)



- Construction of the second lateral wall around the property (December)
- Roof repair on INESIN's offices (December-January)

External Relations, Contact with partner organizations

- Visits of Ricardo Torres y Marion Meyer from the Mennonite Central Committee of Mexico (October-December)
- Presentation of INESIN and its projects to parishes in Switzerland (November-December)
- Edition and distribution of INESIN's sixth Newsletter in 3 languages (November-December)
- Diffusion of Season's Greetings to all INESIN's partner organizations in 3 languages (December)
- Participation in the Mennonite Central Committee Mesoamerican Retreat in Nicaragua (January)

BRIEFLY



Testimony of participants about the work on gender in separated groups during the DAPVF 3rd session:

As women, we value the bravery of the men. We had never seen men as wounded; we always saw them as strong. The image of a vulnerable man invites us to rebuild ourselves together. We want to search for ways to open our hearts and sincerely share between both women and men. As men we see that there is a great deal of interest in the women for the things to go well between men and women. This is also needed for the men. It is important for us to oppose to what society and the church say about the roles of women and men.