

This series looks at the work of EPES in Chile.

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Provided to the community were basic fire emergency management tools (above), community forest fire prevention and management maps and brochures (center) and a 600-gallon water tank (right).



## FIRE PREVENTION GALVANIZES A VALPARAISO NEIGHBORHOOD

In April 2014 fire raged across hillside communities of Valparaiso, destroying 3000 homes and leaving 12,000 homeless. Nearly four years later a fire prevention and emergency management program brought neighbors together again, determined to make their Las Cañas neighborhood a safe and united place.

Project coordinators Mauricio Salazar and Camila Jorquera, from Las Cañas Community Center, selected areas in their neighborhood, helped identify priority actions, and motivated neighbors to participate. The 20 participants formed work squads that were trained in fire prevention strategies and to take action in an emergency. One positive outcome of the project was the building of closer ties with the Valparaiso city government, firefighters, and police.

Designed in conjunction with EPES, thanks to key funding from Global Ministries (Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ), the project included the installation of a 600-gallon water tank and supplied basic fire emergency management tools. Brochures on community forest fire prevention were printed and widely distributed. Neighbors also received a map informing them of safety areas and areas of risk.

One project activity was a family excursion to the site where forest fires broke out in 2014, an area scorched by the blaze that today is green once again. Children and their parents learned the importance of creating firebreaks by keeping the hills free of trash and weeds.

Francisca Guerra and her husband Mario participated in the program with their two small children. "Many people lack environmental conscience. We need to encourage the entire neighborhood to get on board," said Francisca. "No one else will come here to clean our neighborhood; we have to organize to do it ourselves. The project not only gave us fire prevention know-how but also galvanized us to continue strengthening community work."



Children gather at the site of the 2014 fire and the Guerra family who were program participants.



*Monitors from a nonprofit, Educación Popular en Salud, giving information on healthy and cheap food to the residents of the low-income El Bosque neighborhood of Santiago.*

*Photo Credit: Victor Ruiz Caballero for The New York Times*

## EPES IN THE NY TIMES!

This photo and caption are from the NY Times article titled, "In Sweeping War on Obesity, Chile Slays Tony the Tiger." It addresses new regulations, which corporate interests delayed for almost a decade, that require explicit labeling and limit the marketing of sugary foods to children.

The article, by Andrew Jacobs, appeared in the New York Times, Feb. 7, 2018.

## EPES TRAINS COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENTS THROUGHOUT CHILE



*During the community actions, neighbors take a photo with a frame that reads: "Eating healthy does not have to be expensive."*



Since 2016, EPES has been developing a program with the Health Ministry's Primary Health Division (DIVAP) to introduce Community Health Agents in the new neighborhood family health clinics (CECOSF) throughout Chile. During the week of January 22-26 EPES held a training course for 73 Community Health Agents and clinic directors. Training sessions combined theory and practice, featuring on-site work led by community organizations. EPES training fosters horizontal relationships, mutual recognition of knowledge and interpersonal relations between participants.





*"We are thankful to EPES for helping to sow seeds of dignity and peace when we most needed it." — Aurinés Torres-Sánchez, Puerto Rico University Medical School*

## PUERTO RICAN HEALTH PROMOTERS ATTEST TO VALUE OF POPULAR EDUCATION AT NINTH INTERNATIONAL "ESCUELA"

Seventeen people from Puerto Rico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Uruguay and several regions of Chile graduated from the Ninth International Training Program on Popular Education for Health, held in Santiago and Concepción January 7-17, 2018.

The presence of three Puerto Rican women enriched this year's Escuela: environmental health education teacher Elda Guadalupe Carrasquillo from Vieques; community leader and health promoter Aida Edward from Loiza; and Puerto Rico University Medical School professor Aurinés Torres-Sánchez, who also took part in the second International Course of 2011. Elda Guadalupe and Aida Edward traveled to Chile thanks to a scholarship from EPES funded by Action for Health in the Americas –NYC and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Clifton Park, NY.

Elda, Aida and Aurinés met, they say, "thanks to Maria," the category 5 hurricane that devastated the island September 19-20, 2017. The three helped generate community-based organizations drawing from the EPES popular education for health model.

Aurinés affirmed, "Popular education methodology allows us to strengthen projects where Elda and Aida work, especially to foster local community empowerment. We are thankful to EPES for helping to sow seeds of dignity and peace when we most needed it."

Escuela participants traveled to the Biobio Region to visit the town of Penco where women leaders of Villa Montahue, a community built for families who lost everything after the 2010 earthquake and tsunami, described how they rebuilt their neighborhoods and their lives. After forest fires last summer threatened their homes yet again, they learned fire prevention methods that have been incorporated as routine neighborhood practices.

*Above: Aida in the workshop on participatory community assessments explaining the steps in the assessment process. Right (l-r): Aida, Angelina (EPES), Karen (EPES), Aurinés and Elda at the graduation ceremony.*



In Santiago, the International Training Program conducted workshops on social determinants of health, with a special focus on gender, provided hands-on learning through EPES educational board games, and taught methodologies for the promotion and recovery of nutritional health, as well as other issues.

The students carried out three community actions with the Llaretta, Circle of Women for Health, and David Werner health groups. Together with these veteran health promoters, students alerted shoppers at open air markets to the high sugar content in soft drinks, urging them to consume more water and fruit. They also painted a mural and learned about historic memory of the La Bandera neighborhood's courageous struggle for social justice.

- **In the first nine Escuelas, 2010-2018, we have had 167 participants from 21 countries** (Bolivia, El Salvador, Ecuador, Canada, US, Uganda, Kenya, Guatemala, Honduras, Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Chile, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Ghana).
- **34 participants have come from 11 Lutheran churches in the region.** Iglesia Cristiana Luterana en Honduras, Iglesia Luterana Salvadoreña, Iglesia Luterana Evangélica Peruana, Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala, Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Unida de Argentina and Uruguay, Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Boliviana, Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Puerto Rico, IELCH, ELCA, Iglesia Evangelica Luterana del Ecuador and Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia. The ELCA provided scholarships for many of these participants.

## ANNIVERSARY VIDEO RECORDS EPES' 35-YEAR HISTORY

On March 26, EPES launched a video commemorating its 35 years working for the right to health. The 7-minute video chronicles the organization's history through oral testimony offered by neighbors, community and church leaders, women and young people on how EPES has positively impacted their lives and their communities. The video traces the organization's development, focusing on five key programs: Nutrition, Justice and Health; Tobacco-Free Chile; humanitarian disaster relief; training and coordination of community health groups; and the International Training Program on Participatory and Community-based Strategies for Health.

The EPES anniversary video may be viewed at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVN44QxigU&t=8s>



## HEALING TOUCH THERAPY SHARED WITH EPES



Healing Touch is an "energy therapy" that uses gentle hand techniques thought to help re-pattern the person's energy field and accelerate healing of the body, mind, and spirit.

Healing Touch is based on the belief that human beings are fields of energy that are in constant interaction with others and the environment. The goal of Healing Touch is to purposefully use the energetic interaction between the Healing Touch practitioner and the patient to restore harmony to the patient's energy system. — University of Minnesota

In April, Jeanne Mugge traveled to Chile to share Healing Touch therapy with community health promoters, EPES staff, Lutheran church members and women healers. Jeanne has worked as a nurse for 50 years, the last 15 at Fairview Home Hospice. As a parish nurse, Jeanne attends to the physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of her congregation, Trinity Lutheran located in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 2010, Jeanne was certified as a Healing Touch practitioner, providing care particularly for her congregation and Somali women refugees, as part of a health promotion program for the region's immigrant population.

Between April 17th and 29th, Jeanne led introductory workshops for over 80 participants on Healing Touch in Santiago, Concepcion, and at Tremohue, a center for spirituality and healing located in the mountains outside Santiago. She also provided over 20 individual sessions of Healing Touch for EPES staff members.

In Concepcion, Jeanne met women leaders of Villa Montahue, in Penco, who formed a community fire prevention program, guided by EPES. Walking along the neighborhood's lanes with the women, she became acquainted with this resilient community that lifted itself up after natural disasters.



"My visit with EPES was profound and inspiring. I met so many good people and was able to see the results of the hard work that EPES does up close. I have so much respect for the staff at EPES and was happy to play a small role in supporting them."

— Jeanne Mugge

## RECOVERING OUR NUTRITIONAL HEALTH



During the month of April, an EPES workshop equipped preschool and nursery school teachers and parents with theoretical and methodological tools for "Recovering our nutritional health." Participants from the network of El Bosque municipal-funded preschools acquired skills to promote healthier eating habits, from a human rights and social determinants of health approach, with a gender focus. During the first session, participants explored factors that influence our health, then learned how to cook creatively, even with a tight family budget. The workshop culminated April 24 with a community activity that denounced the high sugar, sodium and fat content of ultra-processed food industry products, while also offering taste samples and healthy, low-cost recipes.

Another strategy for promoting healthier eating habits was the mural painted April 26 on the new public clinic, also in El Bosque, by over 40 neighbors, children, parents and students of the school and the Sow and Harvest Women's Health Group trained by EPES two years ago. The theme of the mural was: "No more privatization of our rights." In the midst of the creation of the mural, there was a break to share a community lunch with a traditional "porotada" (pot of beans).

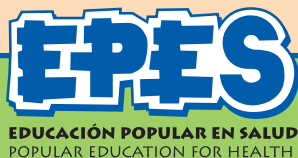




## US-UGANDA PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR VISITS EPES

Agape Community Transformation (ACT) is a Michigan-based ecumenical organization that partners with a sister organization of Uganda to improve spiritual, physical, economic and social conditions in Ugandan villages. ACT Michigan director Sue Waechter visited EPES March 25 to learn more about the work of community health promoters trained by EPES and to share her experience in Uganda.

ACT's Ugandan director Generous Turinawe introduced the EPES health promoter training model in her country after participating in the 2014 Fifth International Training Program held in Chile. The program they started based on the EPES model is called HEAL (Health Is Elemental to All Life), and "provides a self-sustainable pathway towards improved individual and village living conditions."



### CONTACT EPES

**EPES Santiago:**  
Fundación EPES  
Phone: (56-2) 25487617  
Fax: (56-2) 25486021  
E-mail: [epes@epes.cl](mailto:epes@epes.cl)

**EPES Concepción:**  
EPES "Gaston Toledo" Popular  
Education Center  
Hualpén, Concepción, Chile  
Phone: (56-41) 247-0570  
E-mail: [epes@chilesat.net](mailto:epes@chilesat.net)

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](http://www.epes.cl) or Action for Health in the Americas (AHA): [www.actionforhealth.org](http://www.actionforhealth.org) or Chile Libre de Tabaco: [www.chilelibredetabaco.cl](http://www.chilelibredetabaco.cl)

**On Facebook:** EPES Fundación ; Action for Health in the Americas ; Red Chile Libre de Tabaco.



## HEALTH GROUPS SET 2018 PRIORITIES

Health promoters from the Llaleta, David Werner and Circle of Women for Health teams gathered April 7 at the EPES Center in Santiago for their 2018 evaluation and planning session. The health promoters agreed to organize workshops on public speaking and body language to improve their community work and their presentation skills. A training program on how to address the resurgence of HIV as well as reflection on the contemporary Latin American political situation will also be this year's priorities. As in years past, in September health promoter groups will organize a human rights forum together with EPES.



*In March, the Municipality of El Bosque gave EPES an award for our "contribution to the community in health, education and human rights."*

*Susan Jiles from EPES receives the recognition from Municipal leaders.*

