



MEMORY AND HOPE

Romero Delegation to El Salvador

For the 25th Anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's death, Edmonton's Salvadoran community organized a delegation to El Salvador. Elected archbishop in 1977, Oscar Romero was considered a conservative and safe choice. This changed 18 days later when his friend Father Rutilio Grande was assassinated along with an old campesino and a young boy. That night as Romero looked on the three bodies in the grief-stricken village of Aguilares, the poor converted him into their courageous defender. The powerful tried to silence him by bombing the radio station broadcasting his Sunday sermons. On March 24, 1980, a single bullet killed him but did not silence him. "If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people."

"The past is a source of knowledge and the future is a source of hope. Love for the past implies faith in the future."

- Stephen Ambros

The audience viewing the Romero film in Msgr. Oscar Romero High School on March 4 sobbed. Antonio told us the sounds of prisoners being tortured by the police in the film were the same as those heard from his prison cell. Antonio and his family fled. "Don't think we came to Canada to seek a better life for



ourselves. We came to save our lives. We had no choice."

A quarter century later, Antonio and his wife Rosa and other Salvadorans with family members, friends, co-workers disappeared, tortured, imprisoned, murdered went back to celebrate the 25th

anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero. Accompanying them were children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews who wanted to experience their family history.

Other participants were Michael Carby, director of Msgr. Oscar Romero High

School and two teachers, Dan Wold of Edmonton's Hosanna Lutheran Church, Delmy Garcia-Hoyt and Michael Hoyt of Change for Children's Board of Directors

Traditional dances greeted us at the airport. Six young dancers overcame their fear of being thrown out of the airport by the security guards. Salvadoran families waiting for later arrivals gathered around. Even the police clapped along.

"Subject to change" cautioned our delegation itinerary. The first morning we made an unplanned visit to the crypt where Msgr Romero is buried to set up for a celebration by the Christian Base communities. Later we participated in a moving celebration of dances, songs, testimonies. We, from far away Edmonton, felt part of the alegria - the joy! Youth, not yet born when Romero was killed, accounted for over half the participants, fulfilling Romero's prophecy: "If they kill me, I will resurrect in the People."



Change for Children Association (CFCA) is an Edmonton-based non-profit, non-governmental organization with a 27-year history of working for sustainable, grassroots community development in Latin America and the Philippines.

Our development projects, their cost and priority, are determined by our Southern partners according to the current needs of their communities.

In Canada, our education program engages the public in a process of awareness raising, analysis and action on issues of global justice.

While CFCA highly values its partnerships with communities of various religious and political persuasions, we are a non-sectarian, non-partisan society.



is published three times annually by Change for Children as part of our education program. The views expressed by the publication are not necessarily those of Change for Children Association.

**CFCA, #221 9624 108 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1A4
Phone: 780-448-1505
Fax: 780-448-1507
www.changeforchildren.org
cfca@www.changeforchildren.org**

Registered Charitable Organization No.
11884 9496 RR0001

BUILDING GLOBAL HOPE

This issue of *Bridges* is about the critical need for and profound place of hope in the struggle for a new reality, one that is less ugly, less cruel and less inhumane. Hope is a necessary tool to create a new reality that is radically different from the most pervasive dominant reality that is known as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism relentlessly attempts to instill in each person the belief that nothing can be done to change the way things are, that there are no alternatives. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian popular educator, in his lifelong pursuit of justice emphasized this in some of his work before he died:

“There is a lot of fatalism around us. An immobilizing ideology of fatalism which insists that we can do nothing to change the march of social-historical and cultural reality because that is how the world is anyway. The most dominant contemporary version of such fatalism is neoliberalism.”
(Freire, 1998)

It is critical in times of such violent global injustice to remember the past and build a global movement of hope as a real and lasting alternative. In this, we must ask how we are to build this movement. Paulo Freire also writes on the topic of hope and provides important insight for the ways that hope and education can interrupt and transform the neoliberal present and provide a means for the spirit of humanity to surface and continue in the face of global struggles.

“...education is always and necessarily a form of intervention in the world's inevitabilities' of neoliberal visions of 'globalization' and infocapitalism. We must heed the call to recover our vocation and resist the

domesticating and dehumanizing tendencies of 'the scourge of neoliberalism'” (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*)

In this newsletter we remember, as entire generations inspired by Paulo Freire and Oscar Romero, that it is necessary to dream of a world of equality and justice and to continue to fight for this today. Let each one of us participate and in our participation challenge all politics of inequality.

“My praxis is a decisive NO to an ideology (neoliberalism) that humiliates and denies our humanity.” (Paulo Freire, 1998)

HOPE IN ALBERTA

- The many letters, phone calls, donations and messages that were sent from Change for Children members, supporters and individuals from the CFCA community, when the organization received news about CIDA cutbacks.

- Rural Roots participants at the Rural Roots Conference March 2005:

“I will not forget that I have power to evoke change. I have a voice, and I will use it.”

“I-we all have the power to change the world. I have the resources to open people's minds and to better the global community with passion, with awareness, with emotion...”

“I learned more about the tremendous ripple effect a single action can have on one's community and one's world. After the conference, I will investigate more global initiatives for change.”

Fiona Cavanagh
CFCA Education Coordinator

IN THIS ISSUE

**ordinary people
can do
extraordinary
things**

– Hank Zyp, CFCA Founder

Romero Delegation to El Salvador
Designing Hope - World Social Forum
The Face of Hope
Rural Roots in Review
Intern Stories

Cecily Mills 1, 4, 5
Julia Paulson 3
Compilation 6-7
Fiona Cavanagh 8
Laura Roberts 11

FEATURES: Food for Thought 8 Educator's Corner 9 Projects 10-11

Editor: Fiona Cavanagh Compilation: Fiona Cavanagh Layout: Chris Peters
Newsletter Committee: Pat Sears, Margaruite Watson, Nadine Riopel, Cecily Mills

"To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing" – Raymond Williams

A PEDAGOGY OF HOPE

Without hope we are hopeless and cannot begin the struggle to change



To attempt to do without hope, which is based on the need for truth as an ethical quality of the struggle, is tantamount to denying that struggle one of its mainstays

"... the absence of hope is not the "normal" way to be human. It is a distortion. I am not ... first of all a being without hope who may or may not later be converted to hope. On the contrary, I am first a being of hope who, for any number of reasons, may thereafter lose hope. For this reason, as human beings, one of our struggles should be to diminish the objective reasons for that hopelessness that immobilizes us."

– Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogy of Freedom*

DESIGNING HOPE: The World Social Forum

In January in Porto Alegre, Brazil, temperatures regularly climb to 40C, bars fill with Samba Clubs practicing for Carnival, and the city swells with activists from around the world there to share ideas, discuss successes, strategize and enjoy the picturesque river that curves through the Social Forum grounds. People crowd into tents for workshops and scramble to hear the big name speakers like Hugo Chavez, Jose Saramago and Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva and the city glimmers with a spontaneous energy. This year over 100,000 people, many of them coming from other Latin American countries, others from Europe, Asia and North America, gathered at the Social Forum.

Activists camped or billeted with Porto Alegre residents for a week and scurried through the immense grounds hoping to make it to their choice workshops. There were eleven thematic areas, covering



human rights and dignities, to alternative economies to cosmovisions and each area offered at least 50 workshops a day. Inside tents activists sweated and debated, presenting projects and initiatives, discussing strategies, planning campaigns and exchanging addresses.

My fondest memory of the social forum is of sitting in a packed and sweltering auditorium with a close friend by my side, straining to hear the words of Eduardo Galeano. The Uruguayan writer was speaking about hope, with the same articulate rage and intense passion with which he writes. He told the audience that the sin against hope is the greatest sin of all. His words, spoken calmly and fluidly settled over the audience. We were not the only ones with tears in our eyes as we left the tent, we agreed that the Social Forum's greatest function is not to provide a space for finding all the answers to our global problems, but to promote

a space to re-inspire and energize our commitment and to fuel our creativity to continue the struggle in our own corners of the globe.

Julia Paulson is a volunteer at Change for Children who recently returned from her work as an intern in Peru.

"The sin against hope is the greatest sin of all." – Eduardo Galeano

Photo: Ricardo Stricher
(www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)

Memory and Hope

...continued from page 1

We each received a seed to plant and nurture. Oscar Romero said: "We plant the seeds that one day will grow." Thousands of adults and youth continue Romero's tireless work for justice, human rights and dignity. "The glory of God is that the poor live." Sadly, in 25 years there has been little or no progress. Still, it's not time to throw in the towel. It's a sign that all must work harder.

The poor dared to question the cause of their poverty.

At the retreat centre El Despertar - The Awakening - when Lito (Raul Rivera) said "You will translate" and insisted that everyone gather around, I knew we would get more than an explanation of who were the five persons depicted in the murals. "It was 6:30 am on Saturday January 20, 1979... the gate opened... there were army tanks... and shooting. We ran to the back... crossed the ball court and climbed the wall but the army was on the other side and fired... we crawled into a refuse hole... the army entered the ball court... ordered us out... pushed us onto the court... we lay there on our stomachs, not allowed to move until night time... someone moaned, complaining of a stomach ache. 'Where does it hurt?' barked a soldier savagely hitting the youth in the area he pointed... 'Are you better now?'"

Lito, along with 40 young boys, was pushed into an army truck and taken to a jail with dangerous criminals. Next day, the guards turned on a radio. They learned from Msgr Romero of Father Octavio's death and the names of the four companions felled in a cold-blooded manner. It was the hardest moment. I can't imagine living through this. Twenty five years later it's still a hard story to tell.

As a delegation we could only ask "Why?" The poor dared to question the cause of their poverty. The eve of that fatal day, Father Octavio had read to the boys gathered for the weekend retreat the passage in which Jesus proclaims the words of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21) and asked them how they could bring sight to the blind, free the oppressed in their community. Subversive questions.



Raul Rivera,
front row, far left
Photo by Michael Hoyt

The highlight of the 25th anniversary celebrations was the outdoor mass held on March 31. Forty thousand people participated in the Mass, candlelight procession and vigil and yet neither of the two most important newspapers of El Salvador devoted one line to the event. Can you imagine an event of that magnitude in Edmonton ignored by the Edmonton Journal and the Sun!

The Poor Make Room for the Poor

The civil war in El Salvador and the ruthless oppression of the Salvadoran army, funded by the U.S. government at the rate of one million dollars a day, left 75,000 dead and one million displaced. In Nueva Esperanza - New Hope - we heard from one group displaced when the army attacked their community. Six hundred

A Country Where Most are Landless and Jobless

Lower Lempa is a rural area 100 km east of San Salvador where Change for Children has funded projects. Change for Children, like Msgr Romero, chooses the poorest and most abandoned communities! Recent physical disasters include the flood of 1953, Hurricane Fifi (1974), Mitch (1998), the earthquakes of January and February 2001. There are other disasters and we heard about them in our visit.

El Salvador, the smallest country of Central America (31 El Salvadors would fit into Alberta), has the largest population (6 million compared to Alberta's 3 million). While 14 families own the best lands, the vast majority eke out a living on what remains. Most agricultural workers farm the rich landowners' land for salaries of hunger. They own no land, not even the land their houses sit on. From 1930 to 1970, the main crop was cotton, causing the destruction of over 100,000 hectares of mangrove forests, soil erosion and pesticide con-

tamination of soil and water. When synthetic fabrics and the high cost of fertilizers made cotton unprofitable, the land was abandoned. A brief progressive government in 1980 launched a program of land reform which permitted cooperatives to buy from this depleted land.

One cooperative is Normandia, where men were harvesting sugar cane under a torrid afternoon sun. The nine-year civil war and natural disasters destroyed their crops time and time again, resulting in an unpayable debt. The Romero Foundation, a Spanish NGO, refinanced the debt at lower interest enabling the cooperative to meet payments so far. Since 1980, the government and the former land owners have plotted to get the land back. Only by working together and with the support of international donors, will the cooperatives hold on to their land and livelihood in a country where most are landless and jobless.

Massacre in the Lempa River Valley

Is a massacre a massacre when there aren't enough survivors to make it known? Through the hard work of a team of dedicated anthropologists a massacre that took place 24 years ago is coming to light. One more massacre added to hundreds of others better documented.

The thermometer hovered around 40C. Huddled in the shade of a small tree, we looked out over the vast valley of the Lempa River, trying to reconstruct what happened here 24 years ago. An old man remembers well in his heart and body but the names escape him. He is a survivor. He was working with nineteen companions that morning on a vegetable garden near the river. Five days later he buried their decomposing bodies. The old man moves away. A big-build man takes over. He too is a survivor. The army slaughtered his wife and twin sons along with all the members of his community. He escaped only because he had gone back for an elderly, infirm lady.

Escaping was hard. Army detachments from all over the country, planes and helicopters surrounded the area in a well-planned operation. For five days, army spotters scoured the area, looking for any movement, tricking children out of cover with promises of reuniting

them with their mother or giving them food. Mercilessly, they killed everyone, children, women, old people. A member of the delegation braved the scorching sun to explore the vegetation survivors had to crawl under. "Thorns, just thorns. I can't imagine crawling or running through that, or spending days without water or food in this relentless heat."

How many died in this massacre? So far there are the remains of 43 persons, remains that will be reburied here in front of a mural. Many bodies were never buried because there were no survivors to look for them. Now the few survivors are dead or too old or too young to remember. With recent publicity around this massacre some survivors - some from North America - have come forward. The number of people killed is estimated to be between 500 to 1000. Many are afraid to denounce this massacre. Should they be afraid to speak out 13 years after the signing of the Peace Accords? The answer is yes! Those who do so are motivated by Oscar Romero who died for courageously denouncing such injustices. Testimony of a survivor has resulted in death threats and his arrest. Only the quick work of the Human Rights Office secured his release.

diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer, they started the Social Emergency Health Fund, with a monthly donation of twenty five cents from each of 4,000 member families. They raise half of the annual \$40,000 budget. The rest is from \$2 monthly donations from Christian Base Communities from all over the world.

The Edmonton Salvadoran community supports the Lower Lempa pastoral team, under the inspiration of Father Pedro and a dynamic pastoral team, to organize activities to benefit the youth of the community: dance and music classes, mural painting. The church has worked with rival gangs resulting in reconciliation and an end to violence. They asked CFCA to fund the Romero Resource Centre to bring together all these activities and more. The funds CFCA sent down from the Alberta Wildrose Foundation and donations were far short of those budgeted in the proposal.

What a surprise then to see a highly functional two-story building. Already the large central area serves as auditorium for cultural events. A school and office supply store, pharmacy and photocopier provide services not available elsewhere in the community. The kitchen and dining area and bedrooms are available for visiting delegations and workshops and meetings. Dance and music programs are still expanding. There is a Human Rights Office as well as Mental Health Services. Father Pedro is still dreaming of classes in literacy and life skills, vocational training, a library. I feel confident that CFCA will, with your support, continue to help these dreams come true.

"I will rise in the People"

April 9, we joined 400 enthusiastic young people of the area in a Youth Celebration of Romero. Their unbounded energy throughout the 7-hour program moved every member of our delegation. The seed Oscar Romero planted is yielding abundant fruit. In spite of unbelievable poverty, sequels of war and natural disasters, elections many claim were fraudulent, neoliberalism, globalization, Plan Puebla Panama, Free trade Area of the Americas. There is hope in El Salvador. Romero's words, uttered just days before his death, have come true: "If they kill me, I will rise in the People."

persons, women, children and elderly, walked to the capital to seek refuge in the basement of a church. For months, they slept on the floor and shared one bathroom. They found refuge in Nicaragua where they stayed nine years. On their return, the cooperative of Nueva Esperanza received them. The irony of the poor making room for the poor was not lost on us. While Nueva Esperanza is not rich by any stretch of the imagination, it is a community that has used to the maximum any international help and their own meagre resources for community projects: day-care, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, Saturday classes for adults, transportation for students, post-secondary bursaries and much more.

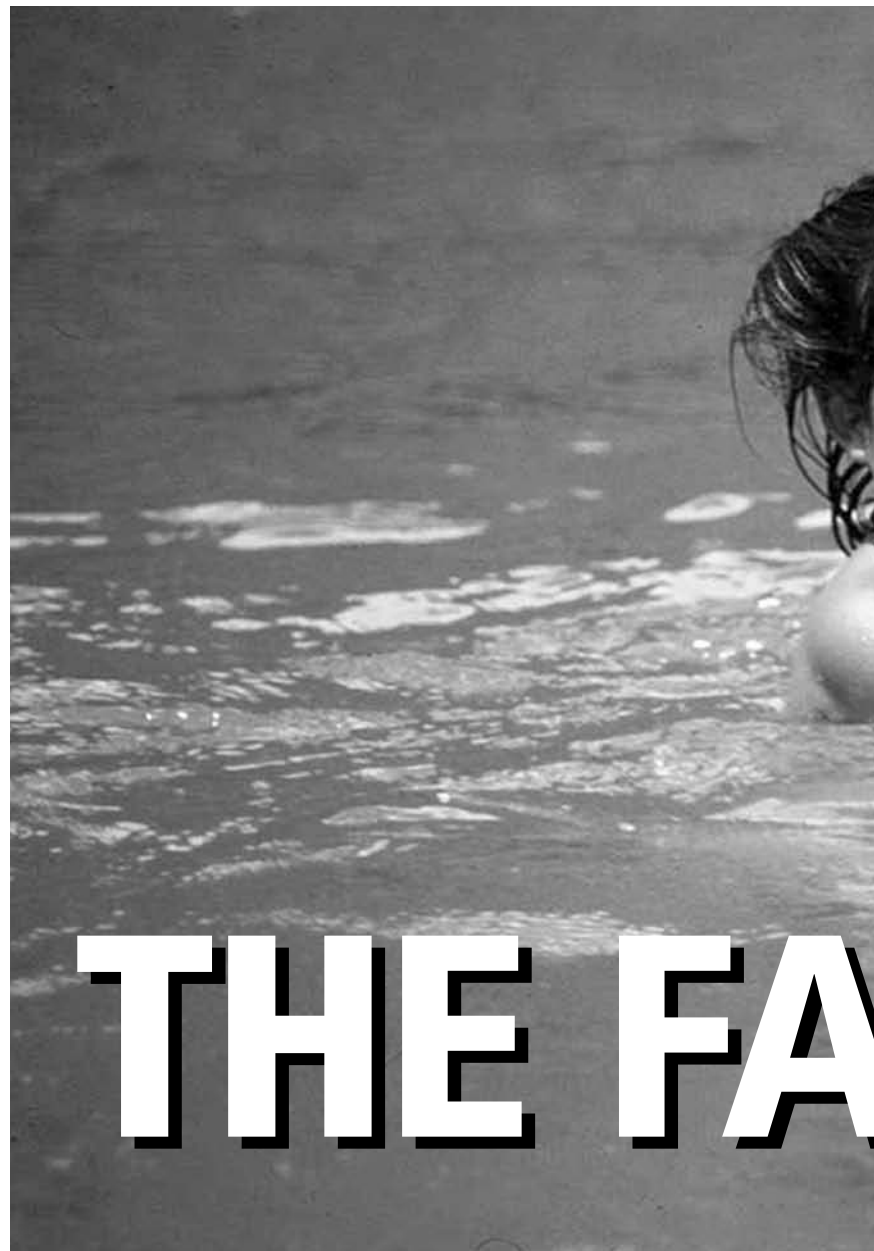


Christian Base Communities work from the ground up (that's why they are called "Base"). In 2001 the population of Lower Lempa looked at Health. The poverty of the area and very limited public health facilities made health inaccessible to the vast majority of the population. To provide access to emergency care for broken bones, care for chronic diseases such as

Known as the “Lungs of Central America”, the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve is the largest tract of tropical rainforest north of the Amazon basin. **The Community Health Project for the Indigenous Communities of BOSAWAS** is funded by Change for Children, CIDA and the WildRose Foundation. Indigenous women, who occupy traditional roles as community healers, are receiving training and are now able to provide basic medical services in their communities. Participants are trained in the areas of infant and child nutrition; the cultivation, preparation and use of natural medicines; AIDS and STD awareness and prevention; and the distribution of vitamins. It is evident that alternative solutions and health education are urgent and essential for the survival of these communities. With the survival of the Miskito and Mayangna peoples, comes the survival of the forest in which they live. A forest that is important to us all.

CONTEXT

- High incidence of STDs amongst the indigenous women poses one of the biggest threats to the survival of these indigenous communities.
- The armed conflict of the 1980s, which caused the temporary dispersal of these communities, had a negative effect on the transfer of traditional knowledge and the utilization of the medicinal herbs and plants used to cure common illnesses.
- Hurricane Mitch destroyed all of the citrus fruit trees from the river banks therefore the indigenous population is left without an essential part of their diet.
- Diseases such as conjunctivitis, malaria, respiratory infections, skin rashes, parasites and chronic diarrhea have caused epidemics and generated abnormally high mortality rates in the region, increased since Hurricane Mitch.
- The indigenous population endeavors to meet most of its nutritional needs from the surrounding forest and river, yet malnutrition and anemia still plague children and the elderly.



Thirty five indigenous communities with **A POPULATION OF OVER 9000** are benefiting from this initiative.

Miskito and Mayanga indigenous peoples of Nicaragua have been marginalized and oppressed for centuries. The **CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURES WITHIN NICARAGUA** is a true example of the **ETHNO-CULTURAL SURVIVAL** of these communities throughout the past 500 years.

Over 2000 patients have been attended in the various communities and **33 HEALTH PROMOTERS ARE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM FROM 33 COMMUNITIES.**

In comparison with statistics from 2003 in the target communities, Centro Humboldt (2004) reports a **30% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF DEATHS** from complications resulting from common illnesses; cases that need to be transferred from health centres in remote communities is **25% LOWER.**



FACE OF HOPE

There is an **80% REDUCTION IN CASES OF COMMON ILLNESSES** that receive no treatment at all and a **20% REDUCTION** in the incidence of common illnesses present in the target communities.

Great benefits for the environment are already being realized as community members begin to recognize not only the **VALUE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY** but also that the survival of their people depends heavily - in all aspects - on the natural environment.

The medicinal plant nurseries and garden plots have decreased the harvest of medicinal plants from the forest environment and **INCREASED THE ACCESS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO MEDICINAL PLANTS.**

People and communities **CAPABLE OF DETERMINING AND MEETING THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IS AN IMPACT** that is facilitated through the active participation of the women's association in the design and implementation of this project and the self-reliance aspect is a source of great pride for the women involved.

Sanitary and Hygiene practices have improved in the communities as a result of this project. **20% OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS REPORT THAT THEY USE NATURAL MEDICINE, DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION TECHNIQUES.**

Through such projects, Indigenous culture has **GROWN TO ACCEPT THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING**, allowing women in the region to develop their leadership skills and continue to organize themselves.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



**"Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?
Expediency asks the question - is it politic?
Vanity asks the question - is it popular?
But conscience asks the question - is it right?
And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right"**

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

RURAL ROOTS – A YOUTH ACTION

Rural Roots: A Youth Action Project Year I came to an end in March 2005 with the Rural Roots Youth Conference that was held in Edmonton, Alberta. Rural Roots was also recently named the recipient of funding for a second year, which will begin in June 2005. Rural Roots is funded by the Canadian Development Agency (CIDA) under their stand alone public engagement fund and NGOs from across Canada are eligible to apply. This article will provide a review of the project with reflections from participants from all of the different phases.

Theory: Rural Roots is a public engagement initiative providing youth with opportunities to deepen their understanding of poverty and social justice. This is the idea behind the project but what follows are some glimpses of the project in practice: youth in action.

Action: Youth Engagement and Participation: The first phase of the project, which began in May 2004, involved bringing together a group of older youth leaders whom had been active in diverse social justice activities, to begin the development of an interactive presentation about the root causes of poverty. At the end of August 2004, 6 other youth participants were selected and trained by the current group of youth and finished the presentation before taking it on the road to rural Alberta. This phase of the project was about providing meaningful opportunities for youth leaders to apply and strengthen their existing knowledge and skills.

"I joined the Rural Roots project because I think that even though poverty is probably the single most important issue facing the world, it's very rarely talked about, especially in schools."

Youth on the Issue of Poverty: A key goal of the Rural Roots project is for youth to engage each other in dialogue around root causes of poverty and social injustice. Throughout the project youth leaders contemplated poverty in their own communities as they worked towards the creation of tools to help engage others on the topic.

"The globalization of resource-based industries such as farming, forestry, and fishing has changed the face of rural communities forever. Rural Roots is an attempt to encourage youth to examine these changes in their own towns. These concepts are displayed differently in small Prairie communities than in urban centers."



PROJECT

RURAL ROOTS YOUTH CONFERENCE

This March 2005, Change for Children Association held the Rural Roots Leadership Conference for youth aged 14-19. The conference was the final phase of the Rural Roots project and took place in Edmonton, Alberta. The goal of the two and a half day conference was to explore global issues and local actions for change. Students came together to learn, share, dream and take action on issues important to the youth of Alberta in order to create strong and healthy communities at home and internationally. The Conference showcased examples of positive youth involvement in communities from rural youth networks to environmental clubs to youth councils.

Conference Highlights

- Two Cochrane high school students discussed the work they had done to raise \$40,000 for environmental initiatives in their school
- Indigenous youth talked about their involvement in a youth engaging youth project by Ghost River Rediscovery in Calgary
- All of the participants, with the help of Check your Head Vancouver, completed a process of identifying the injustices and changes they want to see in the world in a "Sea of Change" workshop.
- Jason Long, a Grade 12 student and one of the Rural Roots participants, gave an incredible talk on global citizenship and his involvement in the project. Below is an excerpt from his speech:

“ So – This is my challenge to all of you: get out and experience life, help make a difference. Find a subject, whether it is poverty, sweat shops, or sustainable development, that you are passionate about! I can’t stress that enough. Something that you are passionate about, something that gives you goose bumps and butterflies and that is important to you first and foremost. The energy and enthusiasm that you bring forth will help to stimulate others, and in turn maybe they will stimulate others and then again until finally there is a massive snowball of social justice plunging down the mountainside towards discrimination, disparity, and oppression. A whole world of adventure awaits you just beyond the looking glass. All you have to do is take a step into the unknown. Challenge yourselves and take hold of your destiny. Become empowered as I have! NO, I’M NOT SUPERMAN – I’M A GLOBAL CITIZEN!! ”

RURAL ROOTS YOUTH TOUR

The Rural Roots Youth Tour visited the communities of Millet, New Sarepta, Tofield, Wainwright, Olds, Bowden, Pincher Creek, Lundbreck, Crowsnest Pass and Banff.

Tour members: Andrea Figueroa, Kelsey Lavoie, Gillian McPherson, Laura Roberts, Rachel Dornian, and a representative from Transgenus, a Pincher Creek-based NGO.

EDUCATOR’S CORNER



The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organizations opposed to a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism come together to debate ideas, formulate proposals, and network for effective action.

Have students hold a mock World Social Forum and discuss the history, the objectives, the ideas and presentations. You could also compare and contrast the world social forum to the world economic forum in terms of who participates, who is able to participate and key debates. Canadian Social Forums that originated out of the larger social forum happen once a year and their websites can be useful in this activity. The world social forum website, listed on the back of this issue, is also available in French and Spanish.

e-sources and plans

Unicef-Voices of Youth

www.unicef.org/voy
An electronic newsletter and discussion group for youth to share their ideas for change. Topics include human rights, international development, millennium goals. An excellent site to enhance skills in debate, and communication on important global topics.

Global Education Network

www.global-ed.org
Lists resources, links, and organizations working on human rights, peace, development, environment and other issues. An excellent summary of the best global education resources available online.

OUR PROJECTS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE



DENTIST DELEGATION

Visits the jungles of BOSAWAS

This year, Change for Children and Kindness-In-Action partnered again to send two dental brigades to Nicaragua. One brigade visited our project safe houses for street kids in Managua and the other travelled to the Miskito and Mayangna Indigenous communities in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve. Together, they tended to over 1,000 patients and extracted 2,200 teeth. Complications of dental infections are the third most common cause of death in remote areas so the services of these dentists are very necessary, especially in areas like BOSAWAS where access to dental care is non-existent. The dentists, hygienists, dental assistants and support people also trained the local health unit personnel to perform simple extractions and distributed over 2000 toothbrushes to the local people.

Next year's dental brigades to Nicaragua are planned for January and February. We are also planning for a brigade to visit our health project in Lima, Peru in late March. If you are interested in participating on one of the brigades or sending financial support to help with supplies and logistics, please contact Change for Children.

Water is a Human Right Campaign

NICARAGUA

Access to potable water is a major problem for the majority of Nicaraguans living in rural areas. Structural adjustment programs have decreased public expenditures in this area, thus diminishing the possibility of providing potable water to the most needy. Every year Nicaragua pays over a million dollars in debt services and interest on the national debt, while investing less than one fifth of that amount into projects related to the provision of potable water for its population.



The privatization of water resources in Nicaragua is proceeding at an incredible pace and as a result, rural populations will soon be forced to pay for what little water they have access to. Water is a basic human need and should be recognized as a Human Right in Nicaragua (and in Canada). This year, in addition to our Rural Community Water Project which is drilling 20 wells in Northwestern Nicaraguan villages, Change for Children is supporting a national campaign to recognize water as a Human Right in Nicaragua. For information on this campaign and how you can support it, please contact Lorraine Swift at Change for Children.



Santa Maria Project

SMALL (REALLY) IS BEAUTIFUL

MEXICO

A project in the outskirts of Guadalajara demonstrated how a small donation (about \$5,000) can make a dramatic difference in the lives of women and children. A group of mothers whose children were being cared for in the Santa Maria del Tepeyac Shelter used the funds to purchase four sewing workstations. They then organized a co-op to produce attractive casual wear out of organic cotton and linen.

They no longer have to travel long distances using 3-4 buses to reach their poverty wage employment and, as a result, have more time and money to care for their children, thus reducing the need for the Shelter.

Samples of their clothing will be modeled at Change for Children's Annual General Meeting on June 18th.

INTERNSHIP UPDATE

Liberation, Empowerment & Education

By Laura Roberts, CIDA Intern for Change for Children 2004/05

The Eritrean government knows well that the key to development is to continue to educate and empower Eritrean women. In many ways, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the organization I am presently working as a CIDA intern on behalf of CFCA, has been the main implementing organization of this policy and progressive position which places the empowerment of women high on the government's priority list. The number of women NUEW has reached with its many projects and programs is outstanding and provides one with a strong sense of hope that through women's outreach projects and programs, true development with tangible results is possible. Without reaching out and empowering women, long-term successful development is difficult to accomplish.

NUEW implements its various projects with a major emphasis on education and capacity building, since they believe strongly in the philosophy: "Educate a woman, educate an entire village". NUEW's project activities cover everything from training women in traditionally female jobs such as handicraft production, nursing and home-care to training women in computer technology, con-

struction and driving. NUEW also offers micro-credit loan programs with a start-up fund for women to access and establish their own businesses.

A great example of how successful the empowerment of women is in attaining development objectives is the impact of NUEW's micro-credit program. In one village, located just 5 km outside Asmara, the women have become empowered, educated and have access to credit that they have used to develop their own small businesses. In many cases, women have chosen agricultural micro-businesses such as poultry farming or milk producing. Some women however, have chosen to start up small grocery stores and are running them out of their own homes. Regardless of the business project they have chosen, the women have all achieved success in their enterprises and 80% have been able to pay their loans back on time. These women have now begun to use the profits of their small business enterprises to generate income for themselves and their families.

The fact that through education and empowerment, along with a very small amount of credit, these women are now able to generate an income shows the enormous impact that women-focused development can have on a community.



These women are now empowered and motivated to take on extra responsibilities in their community's development, thus benefiting the entire community. Such responsibilities include sitting on the village council and making important decisions that affect their future.

The income generated directly benefits these women and their families and, in turn, leads to greater development results such as a higher standard of living, a healthier lifestyle and – in the long run – sustainable poverty reduction for the entire community.

Hands Across Africa A Journey of HOPE and Help



Africa's mission is "to provide financial support for grassroots initiatives that empower children/families in Africa that are affected by the results of war, HIV, poverty and abuse." **If you are interested in coming along for the hike and/or to assist with the fundraising, please contact Change for Children.**

Change for Children has recently partnered with Hands Across Africa which is a group made up primarily of health care professionals who work at the Glenrose Hospital in Edmonton. Their plan is to hike Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, in the fall of 2006. Participants on the hike pay their own way as well as fundraise to support rehabilitation projects in Sierra Leone, South Africa and Tanzania. Hands Across

INTERNSHIP BOLIVIA

Change for Children has partnered with Mosoj Yan's programs for youth in Cochabamba, Bolivia. We will send a CIDA intern there in October of 2005 to do social work, participate in Mosoj-Yan's self-esteem building programs and provide vocational training for high-risk youth. Change for Children gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canadian International Development Agency for this internship.



Canadian International
Development Agency



EVENTS UPDATE

WORLD WATCH

CFCA's Monthly Movie Night

Join us at CFCA on the second Thursday of every month, where we present a global issues based film from our resource library (documentary or other) and facilitate discussion after the screening. May 19th will be the last film until September when World watch will resume.

THIRST (Second Showing)

A film by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman (Bullfrog Films)
May 19, 2005 @ 7:00pm
@ Change for Children

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 18, 2005 @ 10:00 am
@ CFCA #221, 9624 - 108 Ave.

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN GARAGE SALE

May 27 4:00-9:00 pm
May 28 9:00-4:00pm
15440 - 108 Avenue

Please come out and support the 2005 sale. For donations or to volunteer please contact the CFCA office

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN ANNUAL JUNE FUNDRAISER

June 26, 2005
Upper Crust Restaurant
For tickets and information please contact Change for Children

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN CASINO FUNDRAISER

July 4-5, 2005
To volunteer please contact the CFCA office
claudia@changeforchildren.org

Mailing Duplications

Transferring our address list to another computer system resulted in a number of duplications. We hope that we have rectified the problems. If you receive a duplicate copy please let us know and then pass it on to someone like a friend or neighbor. We do not give or sell our address list to anyone and keep all info confidential.

RESOURCES

The information provided in this issue of *Building Bridges* has been compiled with the help of the following resources.

World Social Forum

www.forumsocialmundial.org.br

Alberta Social Forum

www.albertasocialforum.ca

Rabble

www.rabble.ca

New Internationalist

www.newint.org

Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future

www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/index.htm

CoDevelopment

www.codev.org

Rethinking Globalization/ Rethinking Schools

www.rethinkingschools.org

The Catalyst Centre - Popular Education

www.catalystcentre.ca

A Review of Paulo Freires' Pedagogy of Freedom

www.geocities.com/c.lankshear/revfreire.html

Please support CFCA's Important Work with a CHARITABLE DONATION

All donors who contribute \$10 or more automatically gain membership in Change for Children Association and will receive our Building Bridges newsletter three times annually.

Please find enclosed a tax-deductible donation to be used in the following areas:

- \$ _____ Undesignated - to be used as needed by Change for Children
\$ _____ General project account (supporting a variety of projects as required)
\$ _____ Supporting projects in the country of _____
\$ _____ A specific project: _____
\$ _____ Change for Children's Global Education Program in Canada
\$ _____ The Change for Children Endowment Fund
\$ _____ **Total Amount Enclosed** *Please make cheques payable to Change for Children*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Pre-Authorized Payment Plan Option

I/We authorize Change for Children Association to begin Automatic monthly withdrawals from my/our bank account as specified on the enclosed cheque marked "VOID." This authority is to remain in effect until further notification from myself/ourselves or Change for Children.

Please make a withdrawal in the amount of \$ _____

per month on the _____th day of each month.

Signature(s) of Account Holder

Date Signed

Change for Children Association #221, 9624 - 108 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1A4 • www.changeforchildren.org

The production and mailing of this quarterly publication, which we consider an educational tool, represents an investment by Change for Children of \$10,850 and we expect to raise from donors on an annual basis the sum of \$250,000. Proceeds will be used as designated by donor on reply form.