



## EPES (Popular Education for Health)

- **Who are we?** EPES is a non-profit foundation created in 1982 in Santiago and Concepción, Chile
- **Our vision:** Health with dignity for the poor
- **Our tools:** Empowerment, community mobilization, gender and human rights perspectives, collective action
- **Our areas of action:** Violence against women, HIV/AIDS, mental health, tobacco control, reproductive/sexual health/rights, women's health, leadership
- **Our activities:** Education, training, research, advocacy. EPES works with local health services, community health workers, grassroots self-help groups and human rights and issue-based activist networks



"When an earthquake struck in Chile, Karen Anderson and the community health group she founded were the first on the scene – and they're still there."  
– Cover story on EPES in the Fall 2010 issue of the *Harvard Public Health Review*

## BEYOND THE EARTHQUAKE: HIGHLIGHTS 2010

- Innovative **management and referral system** developed with community groups and local government to **address violence against women**: includes training, advocacy and street campaigns
- In-depth research conducted into **links between HIV/AIDS and gender violence** for United Nations Development Fund for Women
- Dozens of **workshops held on leadership** in health, nutrition, violence and HIV/AIDS
- Hundreds of **rural paramedics** trained in **community outreach**
- **Research with Lutheran churches** throughout Latin America on programs for people living with HIV/AIDS
- August 2010: EPES receives **Mayor's Award for long-standing contributions** to Santiago's El Bosque district

## EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI: EPES STEADFAST ON SHAKING GROUND

When the earth began to buckle in southern Chile on February 27 in one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded, EPES was steadfast on the ground. With nearly 30 years' experience mobilizing local communities to defend the rights of the poor to health and dignity, EPES was there to respond to the emergency in a country whose deceptively modern facade crumbled along social, as well as seismic, fault lines. The EPES Center in Concepción, which sustained only minor damages, functioned immediately as a hub of help to:

- Locate an **emergency electrical generator** to pump and distribute **water to 300 families** daily for several weeks
- Deliver **first aid kits** and **boxes of food** to hundreds of families
- Activate its **network of community health promoters** to identify health needs and priorities in neighborhoods lacking electricity and water for weeks
- **Mobilize resources** from scores of donors and join forces with others to **channel relief aid efficiently**

*"We knew EPES would come," a distraught woman told us during those first days of chaos and despair. EPES was there – and continues to be there – providing material aid and helping to rebuild spaces for participation and collective action.*



*Solid support: The EPES center in Concepción (building at right) suffered only minor damages.*

*... and coming up in January 2011 ...*

### **EPES International Training Course: DIGNITY, EMPOWERMENT AND EQUITY**

Participatory and Community Based Strategies for Health (with emphasis on EPES' post earthquake/tsunami work)  
Course held in Spanish. For application and scholarship information, see: [www.escuelainternacionalepes.cl/](http://www.escuelainternacionalepes.cl/)



## IN PENCO, A NEW START

The fishing families along the coast of Penco – located 10 km from EPES Concepción – were impoverished even before the quake. The tsunami that washed away their homes and livelihoods landed them in resettlement camps of makeshift emergency shelters unfit for the bitter winter.

EPES is working with 100 families in three camps to:

- Install new **roofs**, metal **siding**, **insulation** and other repairs, all put in place **before winter**
- Provide **food**, **gas** for heat/cooking, **beds** and other household items
- **Winterize** and **furnish community halls** and **put them to use** for meetings, workshops and recreational activities
- Hold courses in **first aid**, **family health**, **prevention of domestic violence** and more
- Form **health committees**
- Conduct **disease prevention** campaigns



## RESTORING CONFIDENCE

EPES is providing psychosocial support for children in stricken communities. Workshops lasting up to 10 weeks use personal narratives, games and team sports to rebuild confidence.

Resource-poor schools and community centers receive volleyball nets, soccer balls, T-shirts and other sports equipment; younger children receive backpacks full of school supplies, a stuffed animal, toothbrush, toothpaste and a flashlight.

- Two programs: **Comfort for Kids** (ages 6 to 10) and **Moving Forward** (ages 10 to 14)
- More than **1,000 children** in **five cities** have participated
- Nearly **100 community** leaders trained as facilitators



*“We are so grateful to EPES for reaching out to our children, because so often, in our difficult circumstance, they are treated as if they don’t count.” – mother at the graduation of a Comfort for Kids workshop held at shelter for battered women*

## EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO REBUILD THEIR OWN FUTURES

Help EPES to reconstruct and transform, rebuilding stronger and healthier communities.

- Foster greater **organizational capacity** of leaders
- Provide **technical support** in the process of building and/or moving into **permanent housing**
- Conduct **mediation training** for camp leaders to address conflicts generated by the emergency and facilitate future housing decisions
- Consolidate **local health committees**
- Offer **technical assistance** for job training

*“The EPES vision of community participation and empowerment can convert short-term emergency aid into long-term assistance and transformation.” – Karen Anderson, EPES founder*

EPES thanks the emergency support received from ACT International, Chile CAD, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Global Ministries, Disciples of Christ, UCC, La Peña Cultural Center, Mano a Mano con Chile, Mercy Corps, Owatonna Trinity Lutheran Church, Streng Family Fund, 1199/SEIU and so many others, especially individual donors.

Help EPES continue to help. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to our US-based counterpart:

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

Or donate online at [www.actionforhealth.org](http://www.actionforhealth.org)



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