



Doctors for Global Health Reporter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President & CEO

JENNIFER KASPER, MD, MPH

First Vice-President & International Volunteer Coordinator

JOY MOCKBEE, MD, MPH

Chairperson

WENDY JOHNSON, MD

Treasurer (CFO)

CLYDE SMITH, MS

Secretary

ELYANNE RATCLIFFE, MD

Registrar

RENÉE SMITH, MEd

Domestic Volunteer Coordinator

WENDY L. HOBSON-ROHRER, MD

Advocacy Counsel

SHIRLEY NOVAK, MA

Liberation Medicine Counsel

LANNY SMITH, MD, MPH, DTM&H

Public Relations Counsel

MONICA SANCHEZ

DANIEL BAUSCH, MD, MPH

LINNEA CAPPS, MD, MPH

GUILLERMO HIDALGO, MD

AUDREY LENHART, MA, MPH

STEPHEN MILLER, MD

GEORGE PAUK, MD

ANDREW SCHIAVONI, MD, MA

DENISE ZWAHLEN, PA-C, MPH

Board Alternate

LUKE RAWLINGS, BS, MHS, MD

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: DGH IN MANAGUA

By Jennifer Perry

The *barrios* (neighborhood's) dirt paths and tin homes contrast sharply in comparison to the surrounding brick and cement urban homes. Cars barely pass through the narrow "streets" of the *barrio*. Bikes and feet are the transport of choice. Chickens roam the dirt pathways and neighbors watch the pedestrian traffic from their plastic chairs set outside their homes. The distant delighted shrieks of children can be heard coming from the green park in the center of the neighborhood.

Barrio Edgard Lang was not always a center of positive growth and community. This very poor neighborhood in Managua has about 270 houses, with several families living in each house, for a population of about 2,000.

In 1988 a Canadian nun who was working in the neighborhood helped by raising funds to build a community center on community land (a concept instituted by the Sandinista government), but she did not have title to the land. Over the years the center was pretty much abandoned. As violence and alcoholism in the community escalated, keeping children from playing safely outside, neighborhood residents decided to take action. They formed APROPOCACO (*Asociación de Promoción Popular Casa Comunal*), a neighborhood "watchdog" group whose aim was to help their fellow neighbors lead a dignified life. One need they saw was for a community center. This project became the focus of their work, so

they took over the abandoned community building.

Sometime after the Sandinistas lost power, the local Catholic parish tried to take over the community center, but the community did not agree. They fought back by demonstrating to the government that APROPOCACO had been actively working in it and they then got rights to the land.

Thanks to their hard work, this "C" shaped building now houses a children's library, a preschool classroom, a typing and computer classroom, and a medical clinic. In the adjoining dirt courtyard are benches and chairs for meetings, and swings for play. The center is always bustling—be it mid-week or weekend, morning or late afternoon.

Amidst the noisy, dusty streets of Nicaragua's capital city, Managua, exists a small haven where children dance and sing and learn. This place, tucked discreetly off a main thoroughfare, is Barrio Edgard Lang.

“ The community center's logo is a turtle walking proudly and determinedly, with legs, head and tail all well out of its shell, thinking: “Only by sticking your neck out can you take steps forward!” ”



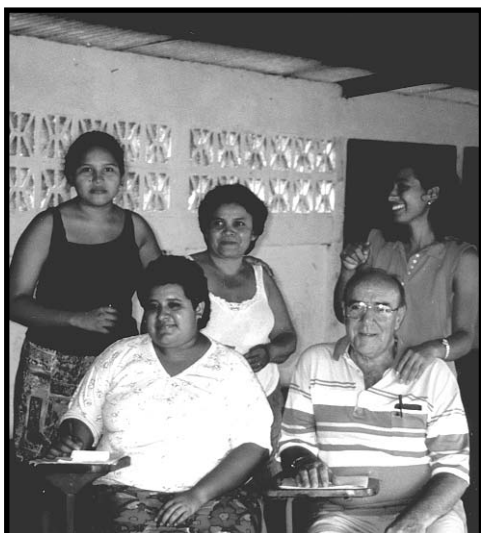
Neighborhood children attend classes in the barrio's community center.



Barrio Children playing in front of the community center ask that their photo be taken.



APROPOCACO logo saying: "Only by sticking your neck out can you take steps forward!"



APROPOCACO board members with Father Hébert at the Barrio Edgard Lang Community Center.

During vacations from school, the center offers youth-led programs on issues such as cooperation, self-esteem, respect and alternatives to violence. High school students take turns teaching the younger children as well as participating in their own self-facilitated group discussions. Although children are the primary participants in many of the center's activities, classes are also held for adults in the evenings in typing, computers, and arts and crafts.

DGH board members first visited Barrio Edgard Lang in October 2001 and were given a tour of the center's services and an overview of how they work. The library is free for anyone who wants to come, but it is not a lending library; books must be read on the premises. The pre-school teaches 50 children in two shifts. They have two teachers (one for each shift) and three grades (1st and 2nd in the morning and 3rd in the afternoon). The children pay a minimal monthly fee, which goes for a small salary for the teachers, but no child is turned away for not being able to pay. The teachers are young women from the same community who are studying at the public university. For income, they also rent out the center for private parties on weekend nights.

During this visit, one of APROPOCACO's board members, a 17-year old *barrio* resident, proudly pointed to a large drawing of a turtle they have hanging on the wall. She explained that this is APROPOCACO's logo. In the drawing the turtle is walking proudly and determinedly, with legs, head and tail all well out of its shell, thinking: "¡Solo sacando el pescuezo se dan pasos adelante!" ("Only by sticking your neck out can you take steps forward!").

APROPOCACO explained to DGH that the community's greatest unmet need was access to affordable health care services. So, with encouragement and assistance from DGH board member and Nicaraguan project coordinator, Dr. George Pauk, they submitted a project proposal to DGH requesting financial assistance and expertise to open a clinic and pharmacy in the center.

Through the joint efforts of Dr. Saul Contreras, DGH's in-country program coordinator, Denis Hébert, a Canadian priest who has worked and lived in the neighborhood for the past seven years, Dr. Pauk, and the *barrio's* executive board, the clinic opened its doors in July of 2002. DGH has provided financial, material and volunteer support to establish and administer the clinic, making the *barrio's* goal of providing primary health care to the community a reality.

Currently, the clinic's basic services include consultations with a part-time physician and a pharmacy. Referrals are made to the Ministry of Health or private specialists as needed. Clinic hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am to 2 pm. During these hours of operation, a physician and clinic assistant are available to neighborhood residents. The assistant's role includes that of receptionist, organizing the pharmacy and medical records, housekeeping, and occasional nursing tasks. The clinic is comprised of a front reception area and pharmacy, a consult room, a small area for a future laboratory, as well as two empty rooms, which APROPOCACO hopes to one day make into dental and OBGYN consultation rooms.

There is certainly never a shortage of patients. The waiting room's chairs are usually occupied while others wait standing. When asked what they thought about the clinic's services, an overwhelming majority of the neighbors expressed gratitude for the accessibility to basic health services. They state that public clinics in Managua are often over-booked with patients or simply not open. Furthermore, they often get a prescription for a drug they cannot afford to buy.

That is why the neighborhood asked that the clinic include a pharmacy. DGH listened to their concerns and helped them establish a pharmacy that offers medications at a very low cost—just enough to generate revenue to keep replenishing the pharmacy's supplies.

Future plans for Barrio Edgar Lang include opportunities for DGH volunteers, such as the training of health promoters; teaching classes in the community on various basic health issues; working with the youth in topics such as sexuality, leadership and violence; and organizing a neighborhood garden. Volunteers have the option of a home stay with a family in the *barrio*.

Barrio Edgard Lang residents have proven that when neighbors take action they can achieve positive results. With a safe space for children to play and learn, accessible healthcare services and affordable medications, the neighborhood has transformed itself into a safe haven.

YOUTH AGAINST HIV/AIDS CONFERENCE: UGANDA

By Kumakech Edward

University Students Guild decided to organize an International Student and Youth Leaders Conference on the issue. It was held in conjunction with intern doctors and nurses of Mbarara University Teaching Hospital in Kampala, Uganda on February 18-21, 2003. Under the theme *HIV/AIDS Prevention Practices Among Youth: Challenges and the Way Forward*, the conference's goal was to increase student and youth awareness of, and participation in, HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

Dr. David Kihumuro Apuli, the Director General of the Uganda AIDS Commission Secretariat, in a letter commending the conference, wrote: "For a long time, we have been concerned about young people in institutions of higher learning, especially universities, as regards to the problem of HIV/AIDS. We desire to bring the youth on board as key partners and agents in the multi-sectoral approach to the AIDS epidemic. Considering the nature of the conference, HIV/AIDS, and the target group, youth, this initiative is in line with the national scale of the response. We wish to commend the idea and encourage you to go ahead with the implementation."

The conference brought together 504 delegates (295 males and 209 females) from fourteen countries: Benin, Canada, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, the Republic of Macedonia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The delegates were from twenty-eight universities, a number of HIV/AIDS related non-governmental organizations, institutions of higher learning and a few secondary schools.

To provide useful background information and seek conference sponsorship, a 24-page proposal was prepared in advance with the help of and contribution from intern doctors and nurses of Mbarara University Teaching Hospital. It was distributed widely to potential sponsors. The conference could not have taken place without the help of our funders and sponsors. Top conference sponsors were H. E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda through Mbarara University, Mbarara University Teaching Hospital, Mbarara University Students Guild, Uganda AIDS Commission, Straight Talk Foundation and Uganda Red Cross. DGH also contributed. The delegates' registration fees covered one third of the conference's cost.

Informative plenary sessions covering several target aspects of HIV/AIDS were given to enable delegates to fully participate in the workshops that followed. Students, youth and resource persons facilitated all the workshops. Students and youth presented their own experiences of HIV/AIDS during the workshops. The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) drama groups presented very educational and informative HIV/AIDS-related plays, and shared experiences about living positively with AIDS. To some delegates this session was the most important and one that would help to change their behavior. Opilla Otun Isaac, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, raved, "The personal testimonies from the TASO delegates touched me most. I did not know that so many HIV-positive people could look very normal. I will surely change my thinking and my ways."

The conference was only an initial step in the direction of youth and students participating actively in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This conference generated a lot of interest among students and youth regarding the epidemic, and increased awareness and sensitivity to the epidemic.

In Uganda the HIV/AIDS conference was warmly welcomed by the

Realizing the impact of HIV/AIDS on youth and society in general, and considering the fact that youth are the most affected by this epidemic, the Mbarara

youth, who attended in large numbers. Youth involvement in HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns as a necessary preventive measure against HIV/AIDS was a theme that was echoed throughout all conference sessions. In that spirit, I want to acknowledge the youngest conference delegate, Tolofisa Namutebi. She is 9 years old, now in the sixth grade at Church of

“ The youngest conference delegate was Tolofisa Namutebi, a 9-year old sixth grader from Church of Uganda Primary School, who attended all the conference sessions. If we started all our HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns at this young age, we would be a big step ahead. ”

Uganda Primary School in Kasubi, Kampala. She attended all the conference sessions. If we start all our HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns at this young age, we will be a big step ahead.

The conference's final recommendations are of great importance and, if implemented with the support of all responsible sectors, shall surely give young people a fighting chance against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The Ugandan Youth Conference, as conference host, has taken up the challenge by forming the Uganda Youth Against HIV/AIDS Movement (UYAHAM) with the motto "Youth, save yourself from AIDS."

This national organization, whose goal is to promote youth activities aimed at reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, has the following specific objectives: To unite youth in fighting HIV/AIDS; to publish local HIV/AIDS literature; to promote peer sex education and counseling among youth in schools; to train sex and HIV/AIDS peer counselors; to support HIV/AIDS orphans in schools; and to promote safer sex practices among youth. 🌿



Delegates listen attentively at a plenary session at the first International Student and Youth Leaders Conference on HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

ACCOMPANIMENT OR CHARITY?

By Shirley Novak

How fitting that I received the “assignment” to write this article late one night in El Salvador. How fortunate that I was able to give thought to this topic in the midst of the very people I have been accompanying in one way or another since 1984.

As I thought about it, I divided charity into two categories: passing over material goods to those in need and making monetary donations so the receivers might make their own purchases to provide for their own needs. These may be one-time acts or continue for an indefinite period of time.

With charity, one person or group—the giver—always walks in front of the other—the receiver. The very act of receiving a handout keeps one above and the other below. Quite often the receiver does not even come in contact with the giver; they are not equals and there is no partner relationship.

We often give something away and there is no further connection, as when we donate clothing we have outgrown or household items for which we no longer have a need. Although these things have value, it would not usually be categorized as a loss or hardship for us to part with them.

Accompaniment involves much, much more. It suggests a strong *pueblo a pueblo*

(people to people) connection that may or may not include an exchange of material goods. Accompaniment is mutual respect and walking alongside each other. Giving and receiving. Teaching, learning from and sharing with each other. Working toward social justice to change the conditions that allow poverty and injustice to exist in the first place. Accompaniment empowers individuals, groups and communities. It means sharing at many levels and making certain that all are included in the decision-making process every step along the way.

I offer the example of Peace Brigades International (PBI) to show that accompaniment need not—in fact—must not in this case—involve any monetary exchange at all. This international NGO offers unarmed bodyguards to accompany locals around the world who have received death threats as a result of their political, religious or social struggles. Over the years, PBI has saved many, many lives in El Salvador, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Palestine and other areas of conflict. PBI operates on the principle that when internationals are present with locals, there is a level of protection from violence. Military and government officials know that PBI workers would spread the word of human rights violations quickly to the international community, and embarrass the local regime.

Another clear example of accompaniment is found in the way DGH has been walking with our Salvadoran, Guatemalan and Mexican project communities in a very specific way outside of each country’s borders. Following the example of hundreds of other secular and religious NGOs, DGH wrote a policy statement in 1998 advocating for the close of the US Army’s School of the Americas (SOA), and updated it in the year 2000 to reflect the institution’s name change from SOA to WHISC (the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

The SOA/WHISC is a US military training facility located in Columbus, GA. It has been documented that tens of thousands of foreign soldiers from Latin American countries have received training in low-intensity warfare there over the last 50 years. Training manuals in torture techniques and repression of local populations used at the school have surfaced. Returning home, these soldiers have committed numerous human rights violations, including the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980; the massacre at El Mozote in El Salvador, where 1,000 mostly women and children under the age of five years were brutally murdered in 1981; and the murder of six Jesuit priests at the University of Central America and their two housekeepers in 1989.

Accompaniment may begin as an act of charity that gradually, either quickly or over time, moves on to a new level. This is reflected in DGH’s involvement in Santa Marta, El Salvador.

We began our work there several years ago by responding to a financial crisis created by the serious illness of Brenda Hubbard, a physical therapist from the US who had been living in the community for many years and had founded a rehabilitation clinic there. Facing a six-month period of surgery and recuperation, Brenda would be unable to continue her work as a translator when delegations came to El Salvador, and therefore would be unable to keep her *Centro de Rehabilitación* open.

In what could be termed an act of charity, DGH passed over a \$1,000 donation to cover this short-term need. DGH received favorable reports on the use of the money and several board

(Continued on page 10)

“Accompaniment is mutual respect and walking alongside each other; giving and receiving; learning from and sharing with each other; and working toward social justice to change the unjust conditions that allow poverty and injustice to exist.”



Shirley Novak, laying brick alongside community members to help build the kinder (CIDI-Center for Integral Child Development) in La Estancia, El Salvador, in 1996.

Dr. Juan Romagoza, Social Justice Speaker at the 7th Annual DGH General Assembly

Dr. Juan Romagoza is the Executive Director of *La Clinica del Pueblo*, located in the Columbia Heights/Mount Pleasant area—the heart of the growing Latino community of the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. He works diligently to ensure equal access to quality health care on behalf of Latino immigrants and their families throughout the region.

Dr. Romagoza received his medical degree from the El Salvador School of Medicine in 1980. That same year he was imprisoned and tortured for providing medical care to the rural poor in his native El Salvador. Upon his release, he fled to Mexico, where he worked as a volunteer physician for refugees. In 1983, he went to San Francisco, CA, where he worked as the Founder and Director of the Central American Refugee Committee. In 1986, he moved to Washington, DC, and served simultaneously as the Program Director for *Casa del Pueblo* and as Men-

tal Health Counselor for La Morada Homeless Shelter. In 1987, he returned to San Francisco, where he served as the Director of Health Promoter Projects for the Good Samaritan Community Center and as the Director of Health Projects for the Central American Refugee Center. Dr. Romagoza returned to Washington, DC, in 1988 to become the Executive Director of *La Clinica del Pueblo*, where he continues to serve the health care needs of the Latino community in the nation's capital.

Dr. Romagoza has received many awards and citations for his service to the community. Among the most notable are: The Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Award; The International Center for Health Leadership and Development and University of Illinois at Chicago Leadership Award; La Raza Malclovio Baraza Leadership Award; and the Marcelino Pan y Vino Foundation Humanitarian Award.

THE INVINCIBILITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT: ONE DOCTOR'S STORY

Summary of Speech
By Juan Romagoza, MD

I am from the eastern part of El Salvador, from Usulután, near Morazán. I am from a mixed family that comes from both farmland and from the city. It is a very large family and a very religious one. Many members of my family died at a very young age because of parasitic infections. My grandparents died from heart attacks. They never had the opportunity to see a physician.

This made me want to do something. I thought being a priest would allow me to heal and give me the opportunity to study, so I entered the seminary. But after two years I left and had a chance to follow my heart.

Through lots of effort, I got a scholarship to study medicine. As soon as I started medical school, I volunteered in clinics in the most impoverished areas of the city. Through student associations I also organized campaigns in the countryside, promoting the concepts of public health.

At that time (we're talking about 1978-1979), the idea of war was just starting in El Salvador. There was fierce repression by the government against anybody who was in soli-

arity with the people; anyone who wanted to express their thoughts; anybody who wanted to elicit change in the society. The groups that were the most repressed were those doing community work and certain sectors of the church that were receiving refugees from northern El Salvador where the bombing already had started. During this period I worked with Monsignor Romero, who had asked medical students to help him. I was in the last years of my medical training and I was coordinating the *Clinica de Ajaus* in San Salvador, where most of the people who were victims of repression would go because they were afraid to go to the other hospitals.

This was a very special period for me because, while I have always considered myself a person of faith, my experience in the seminary had started me on the way to losing my faith. I lost more of my faith at the university. But that all changed when I met Romero. With him my faith returned because I saw a different kind of church, a practice of the faith that identified with the majority of the people. The church that Romero promoted was a church that not only identified with the baptisms and communions of the sons of the rich (as it had in the past), but one that was

“With Monsignor Romero my faith returned because I started seeing a different kind of church; a practice of the faith that identified itself with the majority of the people; a church that was in communion with the people.”

in communion with the poor, *con el pueblo*. And not just to sit once a month at the table with them, but actually to live with them, to cry with them, to be with them, or as Monsignor Romero said, “to exist with the people.”

This was the church that rechanneled the thoughts of many students and made us re-identify ourselves with it. For that church we were willing to suffer even the ultimate consequences that people were suffering because of the political regime that existed in El Salvador. This repression touched me as it did many people who worked in health.

One day we were in the north of the country, in Chalatenango, with the church. We were going to start a clinic. That day, in fact, we were going to have a surgery. It was a day dedicated to the Virgen of Guadalupe, who is very much revered in my country. Toward the end of the festivities, when we were still seeing patients and initiating the health promoter training, when everything was so festive, two truckloads of national guardsmen pulled up and started machine-gunning everybody in sight. I was in the clinic door and the first burst of gunfire hit me in the foot and in the head, and I just fell down. After the shooting, the soldiers started taking all the bodies to a truck where they were inspecting them to see who was dead and who was alive.

I was one of the first ones they found alive and they tried to kill me right then and there. For-

(Continued on page 8)

Speak Truth to Power

This multi-media project is a tribute to the achievements of human rights activists around the world. It celebrates the people of great valor and heart, committed to noble purpose, with long records of personal sacrifice, who walk among us in every country of the world.

The project includes a book, *Speak Truth to Power*, by Kerry Kennedy Cuomo. With photographs by Eddie Adams, the renowned Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist, the book captures the beauty and dignity evident in the faces of each person, and brings us face-to-face with an extraordinary group of courageous individuals. The photos from the book are also on display as a traveling exhibition.

In addition, the project includes a play by Ariel Dorfman that portrays the human rights defenders, and an educational advocacy packet to be distributed to 10,000 schools and colleges across the country in association with Amnesty International.

The photos on these pages are from the book (visit www.speaktruth.org for details):

► **Kailash Satyarthi** (page 6) is India's leading advocate for the abolition of child labor. Over the last decade he has emancipated over 40,000 people, including 28,000 children from bonded labor, a form of slavery where a desperate family typically borrows needed funds from a lender (sums as little as \$35) and is forced to hand over a child for security until the funds can be repaid. But often the money can never be repaid—and the child is sold and resold to different masters. Bonded laborers work in the diamond, stonecutting, manufacturing and other industries.

► **Kek Galabru** (page 7), one of the foremost human rights defenders in Cambodia, received her medical degree in France in 1968. She practiced medicine and conducted research in Phnom Penh from 1968 to 1971, and continued her work in Canada, Brazil, and Angola. In 1988 she played a key role in opening negotiations that led to ending the civil war in 1991, and elections held under the auspices of the UN. Galabru founded the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights to promote human rights with a special emphasis on women's and children's rights.

Human Rights

At DGH we believe there is an intrinsic relationship between art, health, education and Human Rights. Art, in its various forms, inspires our daily work. Every other issue we'll share some of the books, movies and music that have touched us. We invite you to recommend some works that have moved and enlightened you. Send your suggestions with a brief description to Monica Sanchez at newsletter@dghonline.org.



In Print

BAD BLOOD, by James Howard Jones, Free Press, 1993, Nonfiction, ISBN: 0-0291-6676-4. For many years the US Public Health Service enrolled African American men, mainly in the south, to participate in a study of the long term physical and mental effects of syphilis. Enrollees in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study were not treated, despite the existence of penicillin. It is a brusque reminder that despite having codified human rights documents in place, abuses can and do take place.

THE TREATMENT: THE STORY OF THOSE WHO DIED IN THE CINCINNATI RADIATION TESTS, By Martha Stephens, Duke University Press, 2002, Nonfiction, ISBN: 0-8223-2811-9. Thirty years ago the author, then an assistant professor of English, acquired a large set of little-known medical papers at her university. These documents told a grotesque story. Cancer patients coming to the public hospital on her campus were being swept into secret experiments for the US military; they were being irradiated over their whole bodies as if they were soldiers in nuclear war. This is a moving account of all that transpired during this epic battle between medicine and human rights.

THE GREATEST EXPERIMENT EVER PERFORMED ON WOMEN: EXPLODING THE ESTROGEN MYTH, by Barbara Seaman, Hyperion Press, 2003, Nonfiction, ISBN: 0-7868-6853-8. In June 2002, a large, randomized study of a synthetic estrogen was stopped early because the risks to the post-menopausal women involved were outweighing the benefits. Many women who

had been taking estrogen for years were left confused and angry. Seaman, a veteran women's health journalist, illuminates today's 'menopause industry,' tracing the history of estrogen use from its early purveyors, including a well-meaning British doctor who inadvertently led to the DES baby crisis, to Nazi experimentation with women and estrogen, to the present.

THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD—A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE, 1945-1999, By Michael K. Smith, Xlibris Corporation, 2003, Nonfiction, ISBN: 0-7388-5979-6. A mosaic of written snapshots unfolding in present tense narration, highlighting the themes of racism, sexism, militarism, imperialism and class domination. Five "overview" essays interspersed with the narrated events give a general orientation to the author's point of view, but the preponderant reality is of a ring-side seat at some of the greatest events of the 20th Century. To order call 1-888-795-4274 or visit www.xlibris.com.



In the Arts

THE HEALTH OF NATIONS: WHY INEQUALITY IS HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH, by Ichiro Kawachi and Bruce P. Kennedy, New Press, 2002, Nonfiction, ISBN: 1-5658-4582-X. Applying to the US the kind of scrutiny that Nobel-prize winning economist Amartya Sen has devoted to developing countries, this book demonstrates that growing inequality is undermining health, welfare, and community life in America. It reviews the social costs of inequality, revealing that the US and other wealthy countries with high levels of social inequality have lower general health than do more equitable societies, rich or poor.



On Film

BREAD AND ROSES, Directed by Ken Loach, Starring Adrien Brody, Benicio del Toro, Pilar Padilla, Elpidia Carrillo, 2001. Loosely based on a 1990 janitor's strike at Century City, the story is seen through the eyes of Maya, a young Mexican woman who gets a job at an office-cleaning company, where the largely undocumented Latino work force



LEFT: Kailash Satyarthi. ABOVE: Kek Galabru. Photos by Eddie Adams. These photos are part of the "Speak Truth to Power" traveling exhibit. For more information, read the story on page 6.

labors without benefits for \$5.75 hour and lives in constant fear of their brutal boss. Even so, the arrival of union organizer Sam is hardly greeted with elation by the workers, who know how easily they could be fired were they found at a union meeting. As the workers debate the risks and rewards of joining the union, Maya finds herself drawn to the humorous, but intensely dedicated union organizer Sam.

BEHIND THE SUN (ABRIL DESPEDACADO), Directed by Walter Salles, Starring Jose Dumont, Rodrigo Santono, Rita Assemany, in Portuguese with English subtitles, 2001. This period film is about a decades-long dispute between two families in the Brazilian desert. Set in the early 20th Century, a 20-year-old man is tested: he must avenge the death of his older brother by killing a member of the rival family. But he knows this action will only perpetuate the violence and conflict that for so long has kept his family at war, so he hesitates. Based in part on the novel *Broken April*, by Ismail Kadaré.

LOVE, WOMEN AND FLOWERS, Directed by Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, 1988. Flowers are Colombia's third largest export. Behind the beauty of these highly sought after commodities sold in the US and Europe lies a horror story of hazardous labor and environmental conditions for the 60,000 women working in the industry. This powerful documentary evokes with urgency and intimacy the testimonies of the women fighting to organize and bring attention to the harmful pesticides and fungicides that have caused drastic environmental and health consequences in their communities.

CRISIS IN MONTES AZULES, Directed by Paul Hixson, 2003. Hixson's video offers an excellent look at the latest developments in the Chiapas rainforest where indigenous peoples are threatened with forced

relocation by the Mexican government. It tells the story of how indigenous peoples of the region are being accused of destroying the rainforest by 'environmental' groups and includes the indigenous peoples' response to those allegations, along with the findings of the Global Exchange Emergency Delegation to the region. What is really at stake there are the area's natural resources, such as timber, water, oil, uranium and "green gold" (biodiversity that pharmaceutical corporations want to privatize and patent for profit). To order, send \$20 check to ASEJ/Montes Azules Video Order, Action for Social and Ecological Justice, P.O. Box 57, Burlington, VT 05402.



On Tape

DROP THE DEBT, Various Artists, World Village Productions, 2003. Some of the world's poorest countries in Africa and Latin America owe billions of dollars to the World Bank and IMF. For some nations, the debt is so large that paying it off seems impossible. Over the past few years, a movement has been growing calling for these large financial institutions to forgive debt to developing countries. This new CD is one such effort. African and Latin American artists, many of whom are stars in their own countries, contributed songs about debt to the CD.

CONSPIRANDO CON TERNURA (CONSPIRING WITH TENDERNESS), Grupo Jilguero, ASTAC Association Productions, 2003. This second production is a project of the communities where the non-profit group ASTAC works to promote socio-cultural advancement by recuperating and protecting historical memory in El Salvador. This new CD provides up-to-date commentary on the recent 9-month strike of physicians and other health care workers in El Salvador, and lack of support for the needs of civil society by now-president Paco Flores. The song, *La Diarrea*, received numerous positive comments from callers to a local radio program. Also featured on this upbeat CD are long-time Salvadoran favorites *Todavía Cantamos* and *El Sombrero Azul*.



DR. ROMAGOZA'S SPEECH

(Continued from page 5)

Unfortunately, the machine gun locked and did not fire. When they tried to cock the gun again, they kicked me and my backpack came open. They saw all the surgical equipment inside, but they did not know it was surgical equipment. They thought it was some sort of special weapon. That surgical equipment and my shoes saved my life. I had lost one of my shoes because of the gunfire, but I still had the other shoe on. Since the shoe was Range Rover brand, the soldiers thought I was a commander in the forces. I was the only person who survived that day—all the rest were killed and thrown into a mass grave. I was taken by helicopter to a town called El Paraiso, and from there to San Salvador.

In San Salvador my clothes were taken off, I was blindfolded and I was beaten. After that I was taken to see other prisoners who had been tortured. I could see some of them hanging from the ceiling; women with their breasts cut off, bleeding. Then I was tortured.

Throughout the whole interrogation process they just kept asking me why I was there with “those people.” They kept telling me that all farmers are communists, all poor people are communists, all priests are communists. The punishment had to be the same for everyone, they said, even for those who helped them. I suffered all kinds of torture in the three weeks I was held by the National Guard. One of the worst I can remember is the electric shock. Everyday I was subjected to

electric shock. I was also beaten, burned, raped; a hood was put on top of my head. Their goal was to make me say that poor people had guns, that farmers had guns, and that the priests and religious people were the ones giving the *campesinos* guns. But I could not say that because in my experience I had never seen any weapons among the priests or the *campesinos*.

Another reason I was tortured is that two of my uncles on my mother's side of the family were colonels in the Salvadoran army. High officials in the army went to visit me while I was detained and asked me what role my uncles played in the guerrilla war.

When I denied all their allegations, the torture got worse. They strung me up from the ceiling with wire through my finger tips. They called it the Chinese fingers. After hanging that way for ten days, they shot me in the left arm to show everybody that I was a leftist. They also cut off the tips of my fingers on my right hand.

I believe they had already made the decision to let me live, but they wanted to leave me mutilated so that I would always remember. And eventually it did happen. Through the influence of my family, particularly one of my uncles, I was released. Just before they released me, I was warned not to go back to help “those people.”

So there I was wounded from the torture, knowing I could not go to the hospitals because the hospitals were controlled by the military. Lots of my friends who were physicians said they could not risk helping me either. Only one physician friend helped me and he only helped me twice because his family warned him that he was putting his life and theirs at risk. (In fact, one year after that physician helped me he was assassinated—they put a hand grenade in his chest and exploded his body to pieces.) My family told me, “Get out of the country. Get out of here because they will kill you and they will kill all of us.” So I accepted that I had to leave. But that was an even greater torture for me, the torture of leaving my family and leaving my people.

I had to escape like a common criminal—without any passport or papers. I went through Guatemala, but Guatemala was in the same situation as El Salvador, so I had to hide myself there as well. Some friends took me to Chiapas, Mexico, and left me in a church there. At that church I began my recovery. A little while later I went to Mexico City and that is where I really started recovering. I actually wanted to stay in Mexico because Mexico is near El Salvador. I did not want to go North; I wanted to stay near my people. In Mexico City I met a very good priest, Sergio Mendez Arcel, who was very helpful to all the Guatemalans and the Salvadorans who were escaping their countries. He gave me the opportunity to open a health clinic in Cuernavaca, near Mexico City. In Cuernavaca, outside the clinic, we received a lot of refugees.

This clinic became a haven for immigrants and refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala who were on their way to the United States. On one occasion, I had a patient who was diabetic and needed insulin. She was on her way to the US, and that is how I ended up in the US, accompanying this elderly lady so that I could control her insulin intake.

Upon crossing the border, we were given advice on where to find our people, “If you're going to Los Angeles, go to McArthur Park. If you're going to San Francisco [another park]. If you're going to Washington [another one].” And they were right. After sleeping only two days in McArthur Park, I ran into somebody from my hometown. He connected me with a cousin and family in Los Angeles. I spent a couple of months in LA, but then I decided to go to San Francisco where I had family. But when I arrived, my relatives already

“I was taken to see other prisoners who had been tortured. I could see them hanging from the ceiling; women with their breasts cut off, bleeding. Then I was tortured.”



Dr. Juan Romagoza (right) speaking with DGH Board Member Wendy Johnson, at the 2002 DGH General Assembly. Join us at the next GA in Atlanta, July 30-August 1, 2004.

DGH Announcements

knew what had happened to me and said it would be too risky for them to take care of me.

So I went to another church. There were many Salvadorans there. The priest asked me, "Can you help me with the needs I have here with this community?" He did not need to ask me twice. I immediately started organizing the community. We founded an organization called the Central American Refugee Committee to help us fulfill our basic needs: housing, food, how to get work, legal assistance, counseling, and also to speak about what had happened to us. There we found that by talking, by sharing, by expressing what we had felt, we felt better. There I learned something that I had never learned in medical school: the true value of psychotherapy.

What we wanted was to stop the terror that was reigning in El Salvador, and the only weapon we had was our voice, our pain. At that time the US was sending one million dollars a day in military aid to El Salvador. They were deporting 100 Salvadorans a day, putting them directly into the hands of the military they had fled from in the first place. We had to do something.

We trained mental health promoters because we found value in testimony: The personal value of how we can get out of this situation ourselves and at the same time how we could convince the American people that their taxes were being used for terror; how we could show Americans that their hands were covered with blood—the blood of innocents in El Salvador.

I want to share something that has happened recently that I am very happy about. Four years ago I was asked if I wanted to be a part of a civil lawsuit against a group of Salvadoran generals who had been implicated in torture and violence in El Salvador and were now living in the US.


For me, this was one more step towards my own process of recovery. I also saw this as an opportunity to achieve social justice. I personally felt that these scars that I have in myself, these spiritual scars, will not heal as physical scars so easily do. With psychological scars, just like with physical scars, if there's something rotten inside, something infected, they simply do not heal. Psychological wounds, just like physical wounds, have to be opened, cleaned and disinfected so the healing process can really be achieved. If there is no justice, there still is infection in those wounds.

I felt that only by having those generals be judged and found guilty would that pus start to get out of the wound. So, with other Salvadorans, and the aid of lawyers, psychologists and psychotherapists working pro bono, we initiated this case. The good news is that the verdict was just recently announced and we won. They were found guilty and ordered to pay \$54.6 million in damages! (For details visit *Justice & the Generals* at www.pbs.org/wnet/justice/.)

It may be hard for you to understand how this has changed something completely for me. I don't expect to see any money, but now when I talk about my trauma and my torture, it's a completely different feeling for me. I now see light at the end of the tunnel. Now I believe in justice. Until this moment I had not been able to bury those who died. Now I believe that they can rest in peace, because these two generals represent everything that was bad and evil in El Salvador. Seventy-five percent of those killed during the war in El Salvador were killed between 1979 and 1983, when those two generals reigned. They are the ones responsible for the massacre in the Cathedral on the 8th of March of 1979, for the murder of Monsignor Romero.

This judgment is also an international message. The message is that now each and every tyrant or torturer will not be able to just retire in peace. Generally, dany abuse of power is also connected to corruption, to stealing money from the government. These people pillage, rape, murder and rob, and then they come to the US and retire in tranquility. Now the tyrants will think they have to go some other place. And some of them who are hiding here are starting to pack their bags. Recently four more cases have been brought against military officers living in this country.

In my own country, where the norm is to bury these things and not speak about them, a dialogue has begun. Those who had disappeared, who were tortured, who suffered, are now finding that they are able to speak. This is healthy. I think it's a recovery of a conscience, a recovery of a health that was lost, and of a justice that seemed to have been lost.

– Read the full text of Dr. Romagoza's speech, which includes an overview of the magnificent work being done at La Clinica del Pueblo, at www.dghonline.org/romagoza_speech.html. 

► Updated DGH Mission Statement and Principles of Action.

The DGH Board of Directors held a special strategic planning meeting in New York City this past May. The goal was to ensure that as the organization continues to grow, it stays true to its original mission and principles. An important part of the process was to re-evaluate the DGH Mission Statement and Principles of Action, which had not been done since the organization was founded in 1995. The Board was pleased that all members were still in agreement with the goals expressed in those documents. However, they felt the language should be clarified and shortened to make it easier for newcomers to DGH to understand what the organization does and why. The new statement agreed upon at the meeting states: *DGH's mission is to improve health and foster other human rights with those most in need by accompanying communities, while educating and inspiring others to action.* You can read the updated Principles of Action in their entirety on the DGH web site at www.dghonline.org/principles.html.

► New Opportunity for Legal Volunteers in Nicaragua.

The women's cooperative in Mulukukú, one of DGH's partner organizations, welcomes attorneys and law students to accompany its Program for the Defense Against Violence Towards Women and Children. Established in 1998, this program has 16

(Continued on page 12)

DGH Reporter

Edited and designed by Monica Sanchez.
E-mail suggestions to P.O. Box 1761,
Decatur, GA, 30031, USA, or e-mail them
to newsletter@dghonline.org.

DGH is administered by a volunteer **Board of Directors** whose members have volunteered with DGH a minimum of three years and are elected by DGH **Voting Members**. The Board is assisted by an **Advisory Council** composed of over 200 physicians, students, retirees, artists, nurses, business people and others. A diverse group of volunteers provides the vital core of DGH's resources, including this newsletter. As of May 2002, DGH has one paid employee. Incorporated in the state of Georgia and registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, **DGH welcomes your donation, which is tax deductible.** To donate, please make your check out to *Doctors for Global Health* and send it to the address above. You will receive a letter stating the amount of your gift for tax purposes, and the very good feeling of having helped make a difference.

CHARITY OR ACCOMPANIMENT?

(Continued from page 4)

members traveled to Santa Marta to visit the facility during this difficult time.

Months after that single act of writing a check, DGH was moved to make a commitment to accompany the work of Brenda, the Centro and the people of Santa Marta with no end date in sight. This struggling community now welcomes DGH volunteers to work alongside them, both in the Centro and in the nearby community health facility.

Now let's look back in time to the two devastating earthquakes that shook El Salvador in January and February of 2000. In the name of DGH, three physicians, two physician assistants and a teacher, joined local Salvadorans in several medical brigades to attend to people's health needs, mostly in the Department of Usulután. Bringing their expertise, DGH money and backpacks loaded with donated medicines could certainly be labeled charity by many. But DGH involvement grew to the deeper level of accompaniment when the project was expanded to develop a training program for health promoters in the rural area of Usulután, which had been completely flattened by the earthquake and was a desperate part of El Salvador.

What accompaniment offers us is the opportunity to really get to know the people. Once we work along side them and join in

their joys and disappointments, it is impossible to not become aware of the fact that people do not simply happen to be poor and in need. We come to understand that their poverty is largely a product of the way society is organized. We already know that poverty, war, racism and all the other 'isms' threaten poor and marginalized populations all around the world. But what accompaniment helps us to realize is that even in the richest and most comfortable of countries we are not immune to these 'isms' either. They also threaten us with death of body and spirit. They are the evil against which we must all organize.


When drought or heavy rainfalls cause crops to fail in Chiapas and La Estancia and Mbarara, Uganda, charity would send more seeds. But to accompany these communities means that we will not only send the necessary seeds if the community makes that request, we will also join thousands of others worldwide in protesting corporations—like Monsanto—that produce genetically engineered seeds (seeds deliberately manufactured so that they will not reproduce next year's crop, forcing poor *campesinos* to go into debt to buy new seeds year after year—contrary to the successful, generations-old custom of reserving a few of the biggest ears of corn for seed for next year's planting). It also means buying from fair trade cooperatives that pay *campesinos* a fair and living wage for the products they produce.

There could be a great deal of sadness and anger in recognizing that to improve life for the poor and marginalized of the world is a struggle that must continue well past our own lifetimes. But, in spite of all the sadness, the violence, the evil and injustice in our own country, and the world in general, there is tremendous hope.

Hope is found in the very groups that we accompany, the marginalized who are organizing and struggling against these injustices: The Maya of Guatemala. The Zapatistas of Chiapas. The Lencas of El Salvador. Resistance groups in East Timor and Burma. The mothers and grandmothers of the Plazas of South and Central America, and Iraq. Native Americans, refugees and other immigrant groups right here in the US. Accompaniment is essential for all people everywhere who are demanding an end to all forms of government oppression, violence and injustice; for those who say "no" to oppression, who say "yes" to liberation and social justice; for those who

stand by that declaration even if it costs them their lives. All need our accompaniment. All deserve our accompaniment. And we need their accompaniment as well.

To those who argue there is a place for simple charity in combating the steady stream of injustices, I would agree that material donations are often a necessary part of accompaniment work. But I submit that the end result of charity alone will be no change in the systems that create those injustices, and the need for intervention will continue. Charity is simply not enough. Simple charity is not capable of producing lasting results.

Accompaniment, that act of being with the people, will have long-term effects. The act of socio-political formation, interpreting reality from within and from the outside and responding to it, will empower and support those in need. This will help to create changes that have the power to endure. There really is no other way. DGH takes pride in its place in that process and invites others to join in. 

“ We know that poverty, war, racism and all the other ‘isms’ threaten poor and marginalized populations all around the world. But what accompaniment helps us to realize is that we are not immune to these ‘isms’ either. They also threaten us with death of body and spirit. ”



DGH board members, Denise Zwahlen and Guillermo Hidalgo, rushed to El Salvador after the earthquakes to accompany the communities with which we work as they rebuilt.



Doctors for Global Health

Promoting Health and Other Human Rights
"With Those Who Have No Voice"

October 2003

To Those Concerned:

As US citizens and human rights activists, we are particularly concerned and express our strong objection to the US government's interference with the electoral process in countries where Doctors for Global Health accompanies local partner non-governmental organizations. Nicaragua and El Salvador are now preparing for up-coming municipal and presidential elections, and what appears to be our government's improper and unwise policy of interference is our source of concern.

We wish to express our objections to a recent visit to Nicaragua by US Congressmen Cass Ballinger and Jerry Selle, and US Ambassador to Nicaragua Barbara Moore, where they urged the disputing political opposition parties to unite to defeat the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). We object to warnings by outgoing US Ambassador to El Salvador Rose Likins to the people of El Salvador regarding the 2004 presidential elections. Salvadorans were told they must consider the "reality" that the US government would have to "reconsider" its relationship with El Salvador if the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) were to win.

The US government should promote democracy abroad. One of the pillars of democracy is for people of a sovereign nation to be able to choose their own leaders through free, fair and transparent elections, without interference or undue influence of foreign governments. US intervention, whether by direct or indirect means, taints the elections and violates the sovereignty of that nation. The US government and its citizens would never tolerate interference by another government in our elections. Yet the US government has used and continues to use threats and intimidation to influence foreign elections to maximize the chance of winning for the candidate most favorable to some special US interests.

The US government may decide the kind of relationship it wants to have with another country's government once that new government has been put in place by the legitimate election of the people. However, the US government does not have the right to sway, directly or indirectly, who will be the victor in those elections. Our government should live up to what it claims to be its own standards by providing an example for other countries of the world, and by practicing non-interference in the free, fair and transparent elections in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In the spirit of true democracy, national sovereignty and human rights,

Jennifer Kasper, MD, MPH, President

DGH Announcements

(Continued from page 9)

workers, including two attorneys and 10 legal promoters, and three offices in Mulukukú, Santa Rita and Siuna. Volunteers will accompany attorneys and victims in all areas of family law practice, including intimate partner violence and child abuse prosecutions, property rights, family support and food assistance. Volunteers will have the opportunity to assist in obtaining restraining orders, accompany victims to forensic examinations, observe mediations, participate in community workshops on women's rights, and work with men to end violence. Law students or lawyers interested in this opportunity should have a high dominion of spoken and written Spanish, and some legal or social services background in domestic violence or sexual abuse, such as shelter work, clinical, legal or pro bono experience. For more information, e-mail volunteer@dghonline.org.

► **DGH 2003 General Assembly.** Dr.

Victor Sidel, Distinguished University Professor of Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center, was the Keynote Speaker at this year's annual DGH General Assembly (GA), held the last week of July in Berkeley, CA. His theme, *Promoting Peace in a Time of Preemptive War*, was delivered with his inimitable style and met by a standing ovation. Other highlights of the meeting, whose theme was *Promoting Peace Through Liberation Medicine*, included Social Justice Speaker Dorothy Granada, founder of the Women's Center of Mulukukú in Nicaragua. She spoke on *Empowering Women Through Health*, focusing on women's rights and the current situation in Nicaragua. The D'Amphibians played a benefit concert the evening before the GA began. Throughout the meeting there were breakout sessions focusing on: Volunteer opportunities and DGH projects national and international; the current Health and Human Rights status of immigrants in the US; and the People's Health Movement (includ-

ing the upcoming meeting in Mumbai, India, on January 14-15, 2004 just prior to the World Social Forum). More than 130 persons, from as far away as Australia, participated in this year's GA.

► **Save the Date.** The next DGH General Assembly will be held in Atlanta, Georgia from July 30 to August 1, 2004.

► **Los Chavalitos Closes.** Friends of Los Chavalitos, the NGO that has worked in solidarity with the farm school over the past eight years, has informed us that as of this past summer Los Chavalitos is no longer functioning as an orphanage. We report this with much sadness as the farm school had been the last refuge for numerous Nicaraguan children over the past several years. Any funds recently donated to DGH for Los Chavalitos will be used for the still functioning Los Chavalitos Alumni Fund, administered by Friends of Los Chavalitos, which helps graduates of the farm school pursue further education.



DOCTORS FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

Promoting Health and Human Rights
"With Those Who Have No Voice"

Box 1761, Decatur, GA 30031 U.S.A.

Tel. & Fax: 404-377-3566

e-mail: dghinfo@dghonline.org

<http://www.dghonline.org>

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: DGH in Managua ... 1

Youth Against HIV/AIDS Conference in Uganda ... 3

Accompaniment or Charity?... 4

Dr. Juan Romagoza, GA Social Justice Speaker... 5

Human Rights in the Arts ... 6

DGH Announcements ... 9

An Open Letter to the US Government ... 11