



Diverse Leadership Builds Momentum for CoCoDA

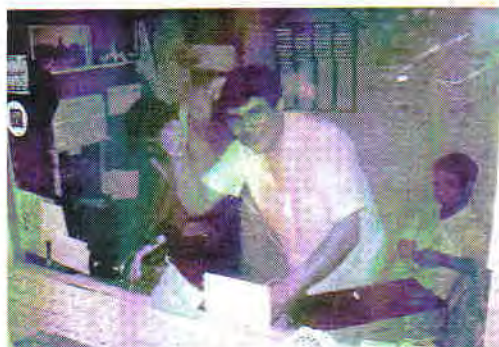
This issue of *The Companion* will inform you about two busy years for CoCoDA, the one past and the one to come. It includes project updates, reports on program activities, and an introduction to new campaigns and opportunities for involvement in 1997. We are particularly pleased with *The CoCo Forum*, which features a poem and two reflection pieces by participants on CoCoDA's 1996 delegations to El Salvador.

The inaugural issue of *The Companion* (Spring 1996) reported on 14 development projects supported by local U.S. community groups in collaboration with CoCoDA during the period 1992-95. The Program Update section in this issue shows that these 'Companion Community (CoCo) Groups' continue to have a significant impact. CoCo Groups alone raised over \$40,000 for CoCoDA's Development Fund over the past year, helping put resources into the hands of Salvadoran community leadership - the mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers devoted to leaving future generations with a better El Salvador. They are the humble visionaries who have paid a high personal cost in the on-going struggle for a democratic society.

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Community Radios, CoCoDA Work for Democracy and Development

by Josh Walsman



Guillermo Chavez, youth coordinator of Radio Victoria, one of El Salvador's 11 community radios, on the air in Villa Victoria, Cabañas.

In El Salvador today, there are eleven community radios that give voice to Salvadorans who have never had direct access to communication media. These radios are initiatives of impoverished, rural communities hardest hit during the 12-year civil war. In the current era of reconstruction and reconciliation, the communities in

the ex-conflictive regions use their radios both as a tool for development and a forum for democratic participation.

In the decade preceding the war, efforts of the marginal population to address their needs and assert their rights in a country that has been dominated by a small, wealthy minority were met with violent repression. That repression ignited the civil war in 1980. United Nations-brokered peace accords that ended the war were signed in 1992. But the struggle of the community radios demonstrates that there is still a powerful elite in El Salvador that feels threatened by efforts of locally-controlled, service-oriented radios to deepen democratic empowerment.

Companion Community Development Alternatives (CoCoDA) has been working alongside communities in three ex-conflictive regions of El Salvador since 1992 in reconstruction projects and programs which foster viable, hopeful alternatives for the future.

Over the past year, generating support for the community radios has become a priority for CoCoDA in our efforts to support democratic development. Two of our Salvadoran associate organizations, the Committee for the Reconstruction and Socioeconomic Development of Suchitoto, Cuscatlán (CRC) and the Association for Social and Economic Development, Santa Marta (ADES), each support a community radio station. The CRC has proposed Radio Suchitlán as a very high priority for CoCoDA support.

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photo: Wendy Walsman

Companionship in Development

Perspectives

IN TERMS OF DEMOCRACY

At the 1996 CoCo Encuentro in Toledo, Ohio, Baldemar Velásquez of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) told of experiences in organizing farm workers and negotiating agreements with major corporations. He spoke about the importance of crossing cultural and class boundaries in efforts for social justice. "We have to begin to make connections," he said, "to create democratic forums which give people the ability to participate in the community of decision-making."

Typically, democracy is discussed in terms of choice, of choosing among a selection of candidates for government. In these terms, many Latin American regimes during the cold war qualified in U.S. foreign policy as 'emerging democracies,' simply by holding elections, however wrought with fraud and political violence they may have been.

But Baldemar referred to democracy in terms of community, participation and decision-making. This is a more demanding and complex concept of democracy which is being pursued by many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) on an international level, including CoCoDA and our Salvadoran associates. Too many people in our world are excluded from the community of decision-making, not solely on global issues, but regarding their own government, their local resources, and their daily lives.

To create 'democratic forums,' we must redesign and renovate relationships that are still confined by undemocratic structures built on the foundations of colonialism. When resources in middle-class U.S. communities are made available

for self-development in marginal Salvadoran communities, relationships are being renovated. When professionals educated in prestigious U.S. universities work together on projects with Salvadoran leaders educated in the daily struggle of their people, relationships are being redesigned. This is the *companionship in development* we promote.

This March, municipal and legislative elections will again be held in El Salvador, the second time since the signing of Peace Accords in 1992. Threat tactics reminiscent of the war and the military dictatorships are again being seen in some parts of the country. Reforms recommended after the '94 elections to clean up the electoral process have not been advanced.

But still the community of NGO's in El Salvador, and the local communities with and for whom they work, are creating democratic forums that go beyond electoral politics. It is part of what they call *el proceso*, the process of democratization in a society with a long history of exclusion and brutal oppression. For our Salvadoran colleagues, democracy is a complex social, economic and political struggle for survival that they can't afford to lose.

For many U.S. citizens, supporting *el proceso* is a moral debt we, as a nation, owe for the billions of tax dollars our country sent to El Salvador in support of destructive and undemocratic forces during the war. But it is also an opportunity to create the type of forums that may be the only guarantee for the advance of democracy, in El Salvador and in the world.

Tim Crouse, Director
CoCo Development Alternatives

ADES Pulls onto the Information Highway

Carlos Bonilla, President of ADES, (Association for Economic and Social Development - Santa Marta), CoCoDA's associate in Northern Cabañas, sent the following message to announce their connection to the internet. The greeting also serves as a reflection on the role of technology and what companionship in development means to our Salvadoran counterparts. Check out ADES' web site: <http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/6388/index.html>

Greetings in solidarity to all of our brothers and sisters,

Today we have the pleasure of communicating with you via the technology of the Internet. In order to reinforce our means of communication with our brothers and sisters outside of El Salvador, we have installed a modem in our office in Sensuntepeque through which we have access to the Internet via ANTEL, the national telephone company.

Today is the first day we are connected which is cause for us to reflect on two points:

- 1) The north-south inequality that exists in our world, particularly in terms of material well-being, widens daily—especially with respect to technology. We see the act of establishing a connection to the internet as a step towards ensuring that our population is not further marginalized.
- 2) With the clear understanding that solidarity is a two-way street, we hope that the Internet can make the distance between our communities shorter. We intend to be able to inform you on the activities of each community and in the areas of health, education, pastoral work, women's development, agricultural production, community radio, mental health, and other aspects of social and economic development.

We await your response, with news from your community, and ideas and suggestions on how we can better support your efforts in solidarity with our population.

Attentively,
Carlos Bonilla: President, ADES - Santa Marta



Baldemar Velásquez (left) spoke on the need for crossing social and economic boundaries to achieve social justice at the 1996 CoCo Encuentro in Toledo, Ohio. Cal Krueger (center) and his wife, Gena, are members of the CoCoDA Board of Directors and activists in the Toledo Area Committee on Central America, the CoCo Group that hosted the '96 Encuentro. Craig Auchter (right), chair of the CoCoDA Board, facilitated the all-day Encuentro workshop in which approximately 30 people from eight states participated.

See "1997 Encuentro" on back page for information on this year's event in Evansville!

Leadership Builds Momentum. . .

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These Salvadorans are also leaders of CoCoDA's associate organizations, who are challenged with managing extremely limited resources for long-term community-based development in regions where the needs of the population are overwhelming. Two of these organizations, ADES in Cabañas and the CRC in Cuscatlán, sent their top leadership to visit U.S. communities last fall to acknowledge the importance of our support for their efforts. ADES, CRC and DIMECONU in Northern Usulután were all partners in coordinating CoCoDA delegation visits to El Salvador in 1996.

The feature article of this issue tells about Salvadoran community radios and how they have become a test case for democratic rights in post-war El Salvador. The positive impact these radios are having as they bring a voice to rural communities and development programs, and the unrelenting efforts by political and economic interest groups to silence them, reveal the importance of international solidarity for the Salvadoran community radios. Our Democratic Communications Campaign aims to do this by generating political, economic, material and technical support for the community radios, and will continue to be a top priority for CoCoDA in 1997.

With leadership from CoCo Groups, CoCoDA is building campaigns of U.S.-El Salvador *companionship in development* for democratic communications, economic development, community education and health care. These campaigns are the principal expression of CoCoDA's commitment to support integrated development programs in targeted regions of El Salvador. Ecology, land tenure, and the role and status of women are important issues affecting all aspects of community-based development which will become stronger themes in CoCoDA's campaigns.

To do this work, CoCoDA depends upon the contributions of many committed and skilled individuals. Wendy Wallas, a North American woman who has worked for more than a decade on communications-related projects in El Salvador, has played a central role in CoCoDA's support for community radios. Charles Kwon, a business consultant from Evanston, Illinois,

helped CoCoDA get El Salvador on the agenda as one of the five pilot projects of the Kellogg Corps, a new program at Charles' alma mater, Northwestern University.

Mary Jude Postel, a teacher of English as a second language in Chicago, accompanied by two of her colleagues, led CoCoDA's first delegation to have language exchange sessions. Kelly Lubeck, after working with CoCoDA staff as co-coordinator of delegations last summer, is bringing her experience from working at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis to support ADES' mental health program in Northern Cabanas.

Nancy Chisholm Murphy, a founding CoCoDA Board member and activist who led years of successful efforts in Takoma Park, Maryland to support development projects in Santa Marta, Cabanas, helped coordinate our U.S. speaking tour with ADES last fall. CoCoDA Board member and Salvadoran human rights activist, Maria Teresa Tula, participated on both ADES and CRC speaking tours to speak about the role of women in the movement for social, economic and democratic change in El Salvador.

Craig Auchter, the chairperson of the CoCoDA Board of Directors who has extensive experience in Latin America, met with CoCoDA's associates and other Salvadoran organizations to help assess the impact and long-term strategy of CoCoDA's support for their work. He will help lead a delegation of CoCoDA Board members and interested CoCo Group leadership to El Salvador in May '97 to continue this planning process.

But even with the support of this diverse and committed leadership, the capacity of CoCoDA to achieve its ambitious agenda ultimately depends upon the strength of its membership. In 1996, CoCoDA began its first ever membership drive, ending the year with just over one hundred members. Members make an annual *Investor* contribution (any contribution to CoCoDA's General Fund) of \$15 or more. If we can triple CoCoDA's membership in 1997, it is sure to be another productive year for *companionship in development*.

We hope that you and every other person who reads this issue of *The Companion* will be inspired by what CoCoDA is achieving with the leadership of people at the community level, and become a supporting member of CoCoDA by making a tax-deductible 1997 Investor contribution.

"Even with the support of this diverse and committed leadership, the capacity of CoCoDA to achieve its ambitious agenda ultimately depends upon the strength of its membership."

Poetry

The Spring at Los Bueyes

by Bill Hemminger

El Salvador July 1996

Away from the village, near the foot of the quieted volcano, forest suddenly thickens, and the fields of corn and cane give way to indigenous vegetable inhabitants. Felipe machetes a path for us to follow as lianas link hands over our heads and trees reach to intercept the sun, keep the floor a shaded dark. We follow the loudening sound of the stream, at first a slow-moving marsh of tall grass, later smooth flow shirking buttressed tree trunks, boulder roots. Bits of black rock, bathed into pebbles, spread the ancient uprising at our feet. The stream broadens and deepens. In touch with the tempo of the flow, our feet move faster to the pool where the source springs from unseen interiors and collects in a basin of green concrete, occasionally gashed, sending off creeks at random to feed innumerable plants (all prim in pots in our homes) and the great sunblocking trees. The heat of the tropical day takes us straight to the pool, dissolving the sweat and dust from the road. Blue butterflies glide idly by while we wash.

As we swam calmly I couldn't help repairing this pool in my mind,

capturing the streams that slip from the cracks in centennial concrete, reworking the joints, cutting back too vigorous vines. And I imagined this vital place clean of odd colorful scraps of paper and *detergente* plastic, remains of recent *campesinos'* visits.

Not far from the shimmering small forest and its protected water, a *hacienda* collapses, fields and flats gathered like children at its cracking feet, silent vigil to a past that created and cared for the pool, cobbled roads to carry the gifts of the rich land to the river and cities. For a moment I saw this building whole again surrounded by organized fields, the pool full-fed and solid.

But a splash of the spring smashed my reworked dream of development. A few years ago in this same landscape, Felipe ran, hacking a path in his flight from soldiers—bought by keepers of *haciendas* and the people that feed them—until a bullet from their rifles reached out and ripped his arm, blasting skin and blood onto the verdant floor. His fall may not have been heard for the talk from the spring, and the soldiers left to rout some poor village while his

blood ran like the spring to nourish the earth. Felipe lived, though the arm sickened and fell, victim in this localized fight between those who are expected to work ever for others who claim that work for themselves. Before Felipe the people here knew that earth has no owner and that volcanos and forests respect no title. Today only blue *mariposas*—the most local dwellers—occupy the *hacienda*.

Now Felipe fights forest with his one good arm, the other stump wags in regular rhythm as he swings the certain machete. I suddenly want the cracks in the concrete to widen, the water to gush unchecked from the pool, return to the moment when, unharnessed by forces that make and feed wealth, the water springs ever intentionally from black earth, the depth of some long-sleeping fire.

But I know my new vision is equally flawed. For Felipe and family live in the same world as I and want first to drink from fresh streams and grow like this forest easy and strong. But they too have faith in the order of *haciendas* and in plastic convenience, which feeds their immediate dreams.



Participants on the Usulután delegation explore the spring at Los Bueyes.

Bill Hemminger is a Professor of English at the University of Evansville and a member of Patchwork Central, an interfaith community that has been active as a CoCo Group since 1994. Bill participated in a Patchwork-sponsored delegation to Usulután in support of community health and potable water projects.





photo: Don Cheney

Youth from River Road Unitarian Church pose with their delegation in front of the Casa Augsburg in San Salvador.

Unitarian Youth Support Popular Teachers and Learn



Edited by: Carrie Blanche, delegation member and youth coordinator, River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda Maryland

Last June a delegation of teenagers and adults from the River Road Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Maryland, joined by three teachers from Chicago, traveled to El Salvador to visit the community of Santa Marta and the capital, San Salvador. Two years of preparation, fundraising and soliciting for material donations culminated in a two-week visit organized by CoCoDA and ADES (Association for Social and Economic Development, Santa Marta).

Our visit was filled with political history, political sightseeing, time spent with the ADES people in Sensuntepeque and a great deal of time spent with families, teachers, ex-combatants and community members in Santa Marta. The night before we left to return home we all shared with the group our final reflections on these amazing two weeks. The teenagers unanimously felt that their visit had been so worthwhile that they would recommend the same adventure to other teenagers without hesitation.

Kirk Silvermail, 16 years of age, writes:

I'll never forget the reception that we received the first evening we arrived in Santa Marta. There was a big party that all of the teachers came to with food and music. They sang us songs and applauded us. They really cared that we were there to visit them, not like when people come to our country and we don't even talk to them or seem to care. These people were so enthusiastic. I would highly recommend a trip like this to other teenagers because it teaches us that so many people struggle to survive and do not have anything like the riches that surround us

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Visions of Pupusas and Memories of the Salvadoran People



by Lydia Hage

Visions of pupusas recur in my mind. It has been almost eight weeks since my return from El Salvador and the craving continues. The kneading and the working of the corn-based dough between the palms of weathered well-worked hands is missed. The molding of perfectly round patties is made to look so simple, like school girls at recess hand-clapping to well-known rhymes. The history behind the making of this beloved Salvadoran dish well depicts the people. And in truth, it is the Salvadoran people that I miss the most.

As a pediatrician, my first impression of the Salvadoran children was sheer amazement. A one year old child was performing the developmental tasks of a three year old! To see such a small boy confidently running and kicking at a ball while speaking full sentences seemed miraculously advanced. In reality this was not a one year old Child! This was a three year old boy in his under-developed, under-nourished three year old body. There were too many examples of this phenomenon in the countryside.



photo: John Hage

A Salvadoran woman prepares pupusas.

With the war over, one of the key threats to the people of El Salvador continues to be their health. Most people continue to live in terribly unhealthy environments. Most rural children grow up playing in the same dirt occupied by pigs, chickens and other animals. Their drinking water consists of untreated river water. Easily treatable diseases like intestinal disorders and respiratory infections claim many lives. Malnutrition is endemic.

The "health promoters" are to be applauded. These promoters are local residents, many are former refugees who provide primary and preventative care to the outlying villages. Their basic training is in primary health care techniques, similar to an emergency medical technician in the United States. They extend their training to advanced levels, similar to a wilderness medicine specialist. Their motivation and commitment to their people is commendable in light of minimal financial support from the government.

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Unitarian Youth Write. . .

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everyday. Let me say that if you go be sure to prepare with questions so you can talk to the teens and the ex-combatants. They are not so different than we are even though they have seen so much more suffering and poverty.

Here's Ryan Peterson's (age 16) story.

These were two of the most enjoyable weeks of my life. I visited with six other kids and a few adults from my church. We stayed in a small rural village called Santa Marta for 8 out of the 13 days. The village is made up of people who had fled El Salvador for Honduras during the civil war, and have now resettled. Many men from the village who were old enough at the time had joined the war on the side of the FMLN, the guerrillas. It was extremely interesting to hear their stories. I really enjoyed talking with the villagers, especially those who were my age or close to it. I've never seen harder working people in my life, and not once did I hear a single complaint about the workload. One day, a group of ex-combatants, both male and female, took us on a hike to see where their camps had been during the war. It was one of the best days of the trip. The ex-guerrillas took us to a place called La Posa Verde, here a river flowed through a narrow canyon down the side of a mountain with waterfalls as high as twenty feet and swimming holes at the bottom of the waterfalls. They said that they would go there every day during the war to bathe.

The reason for our trip was to visit and learn about the popular schools in El Salvador, specifically the one in Santa Marta. "Popular Schools" is a term used to describe the schools in which the teachers are not government certified teachers but simply members of the community with a strong interest in seeing to it that the children receive an education. The Ministry of Education in El Salvador is doing a poor job of seeing to it that every student receives an adequate education, so the people of Santa Marta have taken it into their own hands. The schooling started when they were in the refugee camps in Honduras, with people who could read and write teaching those who couldn't.

Caroline Sten, 16 years of age, shares:

It's very worthwhile for teens to visit El Salvador for the perspective it can give you on your world and your own life. It is humbling to see the degree of responsibility that the girls have there and the societal differences between the boys and the girls. Going to the school made a great impression on me. The children were learning the same stuff we knew at that age even though the teachers have very little professional training and the schools have almost no materials.

Alicia Belden, another teen from our group writes:

I feel that teenagers in particular should travel to El Salvador. I learned a lot about the history of El Salvador and I found the country to be very pretty and a lot different than the United States. I also learned a lot of Spanish. I made many friends with the Salvadorans and found them to be very generous and lots of fun to be around. Other teenagers should

get the chance to have the unforgettable experience that I had in El Salvador.

R. J. Johnsen, 15 years of age, writes to any teenagers considering such a trip:

Many people in Santa Marta are still feeling the effects of the war. However, in Santa Marta there is something that shines like the first ray of the sun in the morning sky. The school and everyone affiliated with it are an oasis of hope. It is extremely hard to get into words the experience my delegation and I had in El Salvador. There are sad memories, like those of the war and the death of Oscar Romero. There are touching memories, like the stories of the teachers who taught in the guerrilla camps after fleeing their homes from attacks by the military. There are happy ones like the birth of the school leader's daughter during our visit, and funny memories like when I poured salt instead of sugar into my coffee! The memories that you have will last you a lifetime. I strongly encourage you to take the trip and hope you have as wonderful a time as I did and I know you will.



Visions and Memories. . .

(Continued from previous page)

During my visit, this commitment was exemplified to me daily by a woman named Vilma. She is a health promoter in Suchitoto, a village north of San Salvador. Her days are dedicated to working in the clinic, making house-calls and maintaining a midwifery practice. Counseling families on preventative health measures is an ongoing task, seven days per week. Vilma closes each day with her family. The children help to prepare the meals. The cow is milked, a trip to the river for water is made and food is gathered from the garden. The corn plants are revered by everyone in the family.

Corn is grown, sown and cooked in preparation to be ground by hand for the cornmeal. This is then developed into a dough to be used for tortillas. The dough is expertly handled into a small cake filled with cheese, beans and meat. This pupusa, or pocket, is then fried on a grill and is the mainstay of a typical Salvadoran meal.

The people and their traditions are missed. In spite of the postwar poverty and famine that persist, the people are strong. They look forward with little resentment of the past. They remain committed to their people and to their traditions. We are fortunate to have such neighbors.

Lydia Hage is a pediatrician who accompanied her husband John on a delegation co-sponsored by CoCoDA and Kellogg Corps. Kellogg Corps is composed of recent graduates from the Kellogg School of Business MBA program at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. The business graduates evaluated economic development initiatives and Lydia did pediatric consultations and led several training sessions with health promoters in Cuscatlán.

1997 Program Activities

Delegations to El Salvador

CoCoDA delegations generally cost \$1,200 - \$1,500, including: round-trip airfare, in-country transportation, lodging and food. Confirmation of participation is needed at least 1 month before departure. Contact the CoCoDA office for more information.

Cabañas

Valle Nuevo & Commemoration

March 15 - 23

The South North Partners Ministry of Reba Place Church will visit the community of Valle Nuevo, and accompany Cabañas communities in the commemoration of their flight across the Lempa River to Honduras in 1981.

Inter-regional

CoCoDA Board of Directors

April 28 - May 9

Cuscatlán

Women's Development & Community Radio

May 12 - 20

Join the Bloomington, IN CoCo Group delegation to learn about the challenges facing women's development initiatives in the region of Suchitoto, Cuscatlán. The group will also visit development-oriented Radio Suchitlán and express international support for legal recognition of community radios in El Salvador.

Inter-regional

Economic Development

July, TBA

This delegation is designed in partnership with the Kellogg Corps, the international service program of the Kellogg School of business at Northwestern University. Interested individuals with experience in private or public sector economic development are invited to apply for this national-level delegation that will work in all three regions where CoCoDA sponsors projects.

Usulután

Community Health/Potable Water

July 18 - 27

Join the Patchwork Central delegation to accompany residents of communities in Northern Usulután in support of community-based health initiatives, including a campaign to bring potable water to the communities. The delegation will also learn about cooperative agricultural production strategies in the region.

Cabañas

Popular Education & Mental Health

July, TBA

This youth-oriented delegation will live and work with the residents of Santa Marta and the surrounding communities on a work project of the community-based mental health program.

Cabañas

Santa Marta Anniversary

October, TBA

Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the first repatriation to Santa Marta from refugee camps in Honduras on October 10, 1987. The delegation will learn about advances the communities have made over the past decade, and the challenges they face for long-term social and economic development. Everyone who has been a part of Santa Marta's historic journey are encouraged to participate on this delegation to help make this 10th anniversary a memorable and inspiring occasion.

New CoCo Groups are Welcome!

If you and others in your local area want to participate in the Companionship in Development Program, we encourage you to register as a Companion Community (CoCo) Group. CoCo Groups are not chapters, but independent local community groups and organizations who share CoCoDA's vision of a global community founded on just relationships, and who work in partnership with other U.S. CoCo Groups, CoCoDA staff and our Salvadoran partners in campaigns to promote democratic social and economic development. CoCo Groups are asked to contribute at least \$100 to CoCoDA per year and set annual goals for participation in the Program. For a CoCo Group registration sheet, please contact Tim or Josh in the CoCoDA Indianapolis office.

Recommended Resources

- Internet Conference: <reg.elsalvador>. This conference located on PeaceNet of the Institute for Global Communications provides a forum where organizations post updates, analysis and notices pertaining to El Salvador.
- Latin America Working Group (LAWG): This is a project of the National Council of Churches which provides Legislative Updates on U.S. government policy pertaining to Latin America. e-mail: <lawg@igc.apc.org>; web page: <<http://www.igc.apc.org/lawg>>; tel: 202/546-7010.
- INTERCONNECT: This is a publication which reports on grass roots movement-building and promotes the sharing of resources within the U.S.-Latin America Solidarity Community. tel: 716/381-5606; fax: 716/381-3134; mailing address: 57 S. Main St., Pittsford NY 14534-1926.

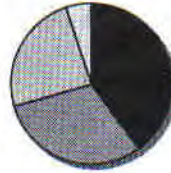
Program Update

1996 CoCoDA Development Fund

CoCoDA's Development Fund is a tool for sharing economic resources among the people of the United States and El Salvador for integrated, social and economic development initiatives. In 1996 grants were made to three regional, community-based development organizations, ADES, CRC, and DIMECONU. A special grant was also made for community radios. The Development Fund is guided by five principles of development:

- to promote local democratic participation
- to strengthen community organizing and unity
- to enable self-development of the neediest sectors
- to encourage cultural expression and identity
- to strive for economic, social and ecological sustainability in development initiatives

1996 Development Fund Grants: \$42,473



Land Tenure and Economic Development	39.9%
Popular Education	30.8%
Community Health	24.2%
Democratic Communications	5.1%

1996 Development Fund Income: \$52,375



Land Tenure and Economic Development	34.5%
Community Health	24.6%
Priority Allocations Fund	17.9%
Popular Education	12.9%
Democratic Communications	5.2%
Technical Assistance	4.9%

Priority Allocations Fund

1996 Funds Raised: \$9,350

Investor Contributors	78.1%
Kent Coalition for Sanctuary OH	21.9%

1996 No-Interest Loans: \$10,000

School Sisters of Notre Dame, Wilton CT	100%
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1996 Allocations: \$15,681

Land Tenure and Economic Development	\$8,206
Popular Education	\$7,475

Popular Education

1996 Funds Raised: \$6,780

River Road Unitarian Church MD	35.4%
Kent Coalition for Sanctuary OH	29.5%
Toledo Area Committee on Central America (TACCA) OH	19.2%
Greencastle CoCo Group IN	15.2%
Nighthawk Team, Frankfort Middle School IN	0.7%

1996 Grants Disbursed: \$13,075

ADES - Education Program	\$2,400
CRC - Education Program	\$3,500
Mariposa Cultural Center	\$7,175

Land Tenure and Economic Development

1996 Funds Raised: \$18,087

Berea Inter-Faith Task Force KY	56.5%
St. Harold's Catholic Community, Chicago IL	27.9%
St. James Catholic Church, Ferndale MI	11.9%
Greencastle CoCo Group IN	3.3%
Other	0.4%

1996 Grants: \$16,950

ADES - Land Tenure	\$9,950
DIMECONU - Agricultural Production	\$7,000

Community Health

1996 Funds Raised: \$12,900

Takoma Park-Santa Marta Companion Cities Project MD	55.4%
Dumbarton United Methodist Church, Washington DC	29.1%
Patchwork Central, Evansville IN	15.5%

1996 Grants: \$10,288

ADES - Health Program	\$8,023
DIMECONU - Health Program	\$2,265

Democratic Communications

1996 Funds Raised: \$2,708

Friends in Putney/Brattleboro VT	100%
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1996 Grants: \$2,160

Corporation of Community Radios of El Salvador	\$2,160
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Technical Assistance

1996 Funds Raised: \$2,550

Connie Wilkinson Support Group	100%
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See Campaign Highlights on page 10

1996 Program Activities Report

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Community Radio in El Salvador

U.S. Speaking Tour

May 12 - 28, 1996

CoCoDA coordinated the U.S. visit of representatives from the Association of Participative Radios and Programs of El Salvador (ARPAS) to generate international solidarity for the rights of community radios in El Salvador. Juan Lucas Aguilar, Director of Radio Segundo Montes; Carlos Ayala, Director of Radio YSUCA and President of ARPAS; and Wendy Wallas, a North American working with community radios in El Salvador, traveled to 15 U.S. cities on the east coast and in the midwest with CoCoDA Program Director, Josh Walsman.

The tour included meetings in the U.S. Congress and State Department, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Communications Workers of America (CWA), The National Labor Committee, public forums and numerous interviews on public and community radio stations in the U.S.

"Walking with the People Towards a Better Future"

U.S. Speaking Tour

September 25 - October 12, 1996

ADES (Association for Social and Economic Development, Santa Marta) sent two leaders, Antonio Pacheco and Carlos Bonilla, to Canada and the United States last fall. They brought a message of gratitude for nine years of U.S. accompaniment since the first repatriation of refugees from Mesa Grande, Honduras to the community of Santa Marta in Cabañas, El Salvador. They also spoke about the numerous programs for social and economic development which ADES promotes in Cabañas and the ongoing need for international partnership in their ambitious efforts.

Over three weeks, Carlos and Antonio visited 15 communities on the east coast and in the midwest. CoCoDA Board member and human rights activist María Teresa Tula participated, speaking on the role of women in the Salvadoran democracy movement.

"A New Model of Development in El Salvador"

U.S. Speaking Tour

October 21 - November 12, 1996

Alfonso Rivas, President of the CRC (Committee for Reconstruction and Socioeconomic Development of Suchitoto, Cuscatlán), made his second trip to the United States to report on their efforts to promote democratic, integrated development. Thirteen U.S. community groups in the midwest and on the east and west coasts hosted Alfonso and he visited several foundations.

Alfonso spoke about the challenges facing 1,300 farming families in the communities where the CRC works who are beneficiaries of the Land Transfer Program (PTT). Over 400 of these beneficiaries are women in the role of single parent, unable to generate income beyond the basic needs of their family. CoCoDA Board member María Teresa Tula participated during the first week of the tour.

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Valle Nuevo, Cabañas

March 15 - 25, 1996

Since 1992, the South-North Partners ministry of Reba Place Church in Evanston, Illinois has organized an annual delegation to Valle Nuevo, Cabañas to commemorate the anniversary of the people's exodus from Cabañas to Honduras under attack by the Salvadoran armed forces on March 18, 1981. Last year's trip featured an all-night pilgrimage to the Lempa River, on-going community discussion on the management of 265 acres of land, the election of a new community council, sharing ideas for sustainable agriculture and participating in youth activities of the Santa Marta Health Center. CoCoDA's associate ADES helped organize the visit to Cabañas.

Santa Marta, Cabañas

June 15 - 29, 1996

The River Road Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Maryland organized a delegation to Cabañas which was hosted by the Popular Teachers of Escuela 10 de Octubre in the community of Santa Marta. Among their activities included an English-Spanish language exchange, a hike through former battlefields with ex-combatants of the FMLN, visits with various community committees, the community radio station Radio Victoria, and government officials in Villa Victoria and Sensuntepeque. CoCoDA's associate organization, ADES, helped coordinate the visit of the delegation to Cabañas (see *CoCo Forum*).

Business & Economics Study

July 3 - 26, 1996

The Kellogg Corps at Northwestern University chose El Salvador as a project for its inaugural year. This delegation of MBA's devoted three weeks to a study of national and regional economic realities, and opportunities in regions where CoCoDA's Salvadoran associates promote socioeconomic development. The delegation prepared documents on market potential for small producers of domestic grains; opportunities for ecotourism in Suchitoto; and diagnostics of a lobster project and women's micro-business to benefit communities in Cabañas. The Salvadoran Foundation for Reconstruction and Development (REDES) and regional associate organizations hosted the delegation.

Northern Usulután

July 15 - 26, 1996

For the third year, Patchwork Central in Evansville, Indiana organized a visit to communities in Usulután. They were joined by three participants from Kentucky. Health care workers from the delegation and the Emmanuel Baptist Church worked with community health promoters in local clinic. The delegation attended the founding meeting of the Federation of Cooperatives of Northern Usulután (FEDECOPAUS) and participated in meetings with an inter-community committee to promote a potable water system in the region. CoCoDA's associate organization, DIMECONU, helped coordinate the delegation's visit (see *CoCo Forum*).

Campaign Highlights

Campaign for Democratic Communications

There are several ways people in the United States can support the Salvadoran community radios through CoCoDA's Campaign for Democratic Communications:

- **Raise Money** Contribute to CoCoDA Development Fund grants for strengthening the operations of community radio stations.
- **Donate Supplies** The radios need: music (CD's and cassette tapes), blank cassettes, high quality CD players and tape decks.
- **Support the Legal Struggle**
 - Send a letter of solidarity (see bottom of page 11).
 - Inform your congressperson on the issue.
 - Inform CoCoDA of other possible sources of support for ARPAS' legal advocacy work.
- **Learn More** Participate in the May 12-20 delegation and see what the radios are doing in their communities.

Current Initiatives

- CoCoDA is pursuing funding for a radio documentary on the community radio movement in El Salvador.
- The Bloomington IN CoCo Group is planning a fund-raiser in March '97 to benefit Radio Suchitlán.
- The Bloomington IN CoCo Group is also sponsoring a delegation to El Salvador in May which will focus on community radio and women's development.

Seeds of Learning (SOL) Campaign

Academic Advancement for Popular Teachers

In October 1995, after three years of negotiations, the Concertación Educativa de El Salvador (CEES) reached an agreement with the Salvadoran Ministry of Education and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), to begin an 18-month academic advancement program benefitting 300 Popular Teachers.

As part the SOL Campaign in 1994-95, more than fifty educators, students and concerned individuals in the United States sent personal letters to USAID urging financial support for the program. CoCoDA also coordinated a delegation of educators from the United States who visited with officials of USAID, the Ministry of Education, CEES and local Popular Teachers in October 1994. CEES' representatives said they believed that CoCoDA's support had a significant effect on the attention and consideration they received.

Midway through the program, USAID officials said they were impressed by the commitment and performance of the Popular Teachers. Mario Paniagua, a member of the CEES negotiating team said, "We wanted to include more teachers in the program but we are fully aware that this is a long process. We think it is very positive that, for the first time, USAID and the Ministry of Education are supporting an initiative of the communities themselves. We want to ensure continuity to this cooperation."

Community Radios. . .

(continued from page 1)

Born of Conflict

Each of the eleven community radios has a unique character but they all share roots in the history of the Salvadoran popular movement and civil war. In northern Cuscatlán, the valley that stretches northward from the Guazapa volcano to the shores of lake Suchitlán is home to the 27 communities who work with the CRC. The region was one of the most conflictive areas during the war. The "slash and burn" tactics of the Salvadoran Army and the intense combat with the rebel forces of the FMLN forced the civilian population to flee. But in 1986, *campesinos* (peasant farmers) began returning to their native region in the midst of the armed conflict to reestablish a civilian population and advance a negotiated settlement to end the war.

Since the peace accords, the CRC-affiliated communities, like other repopulated communities throughout El Salvador, have participated in reconstruction programs including transfer of lands to ex-combatants and families who settled lands in conflictive areas during the war. In the Guazapa valley, the CRC has helped communities take initiative to address the virtual absence of social services and to create economic opportunities at the local level. But the communities face many obstacles. In most rural areas where community radios broadcast, there are no telephones, there is very limited coverage of electricity, the roads are terrible, and there are endemic problems of poverty and illiteracy.

Radios as a Tool

Radio is the most effective and accessible communications tool for overcoming obstacles repopulated communities face. The technology required to broadcast at low wattage has become affordable in recent years and the skills necessary for managing the equipment can be learned by almost anyone, given some basic training. Hernan Landaverde, the director of Radio Suchitlán, explained, "We began our radio project in November of 1992 with basic training for two volunteer staff. The highest education level of any participant was ninth grade." In Cabañas the daily operation of Radio Victoria is managed entirely by a team of teen-age youth. Producing local radio programs requires little more than some training, basic recording equipment and blank cassette tapes.

With the management of a community radio in the hands of the communities themselves, the programming can reflect their needs. The character of each radio varies but all of them include programming oriented to the needs of the communities they serve that are not addressed by commercial or official government radio stations. Citing his experience as coordinator of Radio Victoria, Guillermo Chavez pointed out, "Before people just listened to the big radios from the city with all their commercials that told them what to buy or what to do, and maybe it didn't have anything to do with what their life is about. But people identify with a small radio in their own community. They can't be tricked or deceived because they will go to the radio and say something. But they couldn't go to the capital and do that!"

Radio Suchitlán features a broad array of music, local poetry, political analysis, local news, a children's show, ecological information, and women's development programs. Radio Victoria has similar programming and has also broadcast shows with local government offices like the National Civilian Police and the Ministry of Health. In the spirit of democracy, Radio Segundo Montes in Morazán opened its doors to all

political parties for debates during the landmark 1994 elections. Anticipating the upcoming municipal and legislative elections, Radio Victoria is producing "Elections '97", a program focusing on civic education about the electoral process, information on different political parties and interviews with candidates.

No other technology matches the impact that low-wattage radio has with so few resources. Radio technology can bring vital information to communities when the roads are impassable, and communicate with everyone, even where literacy rates are low. The audience is generally composed of impoverished rural residents whose time and activity are dedicated almost exclusively to the tasks of daily survival. Still, a simple transistor radio and batteries are attainable for almost everyone and people can listen to the radio while engaged in any number of daily activities.

Conflict Continues

In the past five years, as the community radios have struggled to attain legal recognition, it has become evident that there are political and economic interests in El Salvador that will go to extreme lengths to thwart the efforts of these locally-controlled radios. In 1991, at the time of the community radios' inception, El Salvador's telecommunications law contained no provisions for non-profit, community service-oriented broadcasting. The community radios spent four years petitioning ANTEL, the agency charged with regulating the radio dial, for legal frequencies but they were consistently denied. They were alternately told that there were no frequencies available or that they would have to wait until all parties that had previously solicited a frequency were granted one. They were accused of being ploys of opposition political parties or of competing unfairly with commercial broadcasters.

Finally, in December 1995, Dr. Juan José Domenech, then president of ANTEL and president of the right-wing ARENA political party, solicited a petition ordering the National Civilian Police to seize the equipment of all eleven community radios calling them "pirate" and "clandestine" radios. The contradictions between the rhetoric used to justify the closure of the radios and the substance of the order were clearest in Villa Victoria, where the same police who were sent to close Radio Victoria had previously broadcast a show from the station.

The Association of Participative Radios and Programs of El Salvador (ARPAS), the representative body of the community radios, took their cause to the Salvadoran Supreme Court, which ordered the confiscated equipment returned on grounds of free speech but left the question of the community radios' legality unresolved. A series of negotiations followed the court ruling and a joint community radio-ANTEL technical commission found that there was in fact space on the dial for the community radios. Despite the findings of its own technical personnel, ANTEL unilaterally suspended the negotiations.

Most recently, in September 1996, ARENA and commercial radio owners successfully lobbied for a new telecommunications law to privatize the airwaves, which still contains no provision for non-profit broadcasting. ARPAS helped draft proposed legislation that would have created a law regulating non-profit broadcasting. But ARENA, as the majority party, had enough

votes in the Legislative Assembly to close debate on the issue before some members of the legislature had even seen a final draft of the law. If enforced, the new law, which ARENA pushed through the assembly by one vote, would give the private sector virtual control of the airwaves, forcing the community radios off the air unless they raise the money to purchase a frequency. Now the community radios' right to broadcast is for sale in El Salvador, for as much as US \$500,000, the market value of a radio frequency under the new telecommunications law.



"TO CLOSE THE RADIO IS TO SILENCE THE PEOPLE" This sign was made to protest the December '95 closing of the community radios. Former ANTEL President, Juan José Domenech is caricatured as he silences the people.

International Support is Critical

After ANTEL suspended negotiations with the community radios, even the support of the United Nations Observer Mission and Human Rights Ombudsperson was not sufficient to spark new talks.

To bring further international pressure to the situation, ARPAS and CoCoDA coordinated a U.S. tour in May, 1996 to broaden the radios' support base and raise the profile of the issue (see 1996 Program Activity update, p. 9). One of the most important results of the tour was a dear-colleague letter, sponsored by congressmen Joe Moakley (D-MA) and Xavier Becerra (D-CA). The letter, signed by 35 congresspersons,

urged the U.S. State Department to take a more active role in support of the community radios. The State Department responded favorably stating, "...we hope that El Salvador will update its telecommunication law, including provisions for the important services provided by non-profit broadcasting." As the vote on the telecommunications reform law approached, Moakley and Becerra sent a letter to Salvadoran President, Armando Calderón Sol, that made front-page news in the Salvadoran press.

After the ARENA-controlled Legislative Assembly shut down debate and passed the new law, with more than 20 people slated to speak on the proposed legislation, ARPAS responded, declaring, "We commit ourselves, before the Salvadoran people and the international community, to exhaust all legal, constitutional, and international resources in order to contribute to the democratization of communications in El Salvador."

The continued contribution of community radios to democracy and development depends upon this commitment and upon support and solidarity from the international community.

Write a letter for the Community Radios

The first thing we can do to express international support for the radios is to write them letters of solidarity. Direct a brief letter of support to the community radios c/o ARPAS.

Things you might mention:

- you are aware of and appreciate the radios' work
- why you think non-profit radio is important
- you support them in their struggle for legalization
- Organizational or institutional letterhead looks good.
- Encourage others to write letters.
- Send letters in English or Spanish to:

CoCoDA • 609 E. 29th St. • Indianapolis, IN 46205-4199

*We envision
a global
community
founded on
just relation-
ships among
people and
nations and
rooted in the
democratic
sharing of
resources for
sustainable
social and
economic
development.*

**CoCoDA
Vision Statement**

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Announcing the 1997



iCoCo Encuentro!

Friday, April 25 to Sunday April 27

Hosted by the CoCo Group at Patchwork Central, Evansville, Indiana

The 1997 CoCo Encuentro is the fourth national gathering of local organizations and individuals active in the Companionship in Development Program.

It is an opportunity to share experiences, to exchange ideas and analysis on topics such as community organizing, realities in El Salvador and campaign strategies for *companionship in development*.

The cost is \$25. Housing and some meals will be provided.

Contact the CoCoDA office to confirm participation or to request more information.

*This issue of **The Companion** was produced by the CoCoDA staff: Josh Walsman, editor.*