

# South-South Solidarity: Sharing a Health Education Model Across the Andes

The accompaniment model for global mission calls upon churches to move beyond the traditional relationships of the past in which mission personnel and resources tended to flow from the global North to the global South. Living into this new vision, a health organization in Chile and a Lutheran church in Argentina have engaged in a South-South collaboration that promotes health, hope and human dignity. During 2002 and 2003, staff from Educación Popular en Salud (EPES) in Chile traveled to Resistencia in northern Argentina to train the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay (IELU) on EPES' successful model of health education and mobilization.

Since its founding in 1982 as a project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH), EPES has been mobilizing women to identify and address the structural causes of health problems in their communities. EPES starts with a community diagnosis that residents conduct themselves. In Resistencia, this diagnosis was carried out in Barrio Juan Bautista Alberdi, the neighborhood where the IELU's mission is based. Residents identified family violence, alcohol and drug use, teen pregnancy, and poor nutrition, hygiene and sanitation as among the top health problems they face. Based on this diagnosis, EPES then conducted a 4-month preventive health course with women in the community. As a follow-up, staff from the IELU in Resistencia traveled to Chile to evaluate the process and see EPES in action.

This South-South initiative was funded through a World Hunger grant from ELCA Global Mission, as is the ongoing health work of IELU in Resistencia and EPES in Chile. In 2006, an ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) will spend a year volunteering with the IELU in Resistencia.



Graduation from the EPES-led health education course marked the end of the training and the beginning of the new health promoters' ongoing work in the Juan Bautista Alberdi neighborhood .



Workshops on addiction, violence, nutrition, and other health problems faced by the community give health promoters solid information that they can share with others.



Through health fairs, health promoters get the word out on how to prevent and address health problems that are commonly faced by the community.