

**The SHARE Foundation: Building a New El Salvador Today**  
**2007 Annual Program Report**  
**A Review of Programs, Projects and Organizational Priorities**

Fifteen years after the signing of the Peace Accords in 2002, El Salvador still faces major obstacles to building a real and lasting peace. However, through an agile strategy of supporting grassroots projects, advocacy initiatives and people-to-people accompaniment, SHARE has been able to be a vibrant force in helping to build a sustainable future for El Salvador. SHARE is proud of its more than 25 years of accompaniment of the people of El Salvador and is committed to social and economic justice for the country. SHARE is pleased to present its accomplishments throughout 2007.

SHARE's Advocacy Program supported the ongoing efforts of Salvadoran counterparts to resist the devastating impacts of trade policies and accompanying infrastructure projects. SHARE provided an effective conduit between El Salvador and the U.S. base for emerging advocacy issues. SHARE rapidly mobilized its U.S. base to defend the civil liberties of the thirteen prominent community leaders who were arrested in Suchitoto for peacefully protesting the privatization of water. SHARE supported grassroots organizing for environmental justice to protect the communities in the department of Chalatenango from incursions by foreign mining companies.

SHARE's Local Development projects offered sustainable alternatives for women and families. SHARE continued its capacity building through trainings on leadership, gender, civic participation and emergency preparedness. The three-year women's literacy project continued to provide women with basic skills and was expanded to include a visual health campaign.

SHARE's Grassroots Program continued to gain momentum with new and discerning members for the traditional sistering partnership, as well as the youth partnership and theological school consortium. Twelve delegations organized by SHARE provided the solidarity links between the U.S. and El Salvador. A new two-year volunteer position was added to fortify and to expand the cross-border relationships. Grassroots projects supported leadership development, youth organizing and women's empowerment in four rural regions of El Salvador.

Throughout the year, SHARE engaged in a strategic planning process to identify the goals and objectives for the next five years. The unique synergy of SHARE's work in advocacy, local development and grassroots will continue to move SHARE forward into another 25 years of solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

## **I. Advocacy Program**

SHARE's advocacy program promotes the rights of the Salvadoran rural population to shape its development paths by advocating for sustainable rural development policies and projects at the international, national and local levels. Through collaboration and coalition-building with development, human rights, faith-based and solidarity organizations, SHARE works with its grassroots base to advocate for a joint vision of development policies in the United States and El Salvador that promote human rights, trade justice, fair land distribution, emergency prevention, immigration and women's empowerment.

2007 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Accords, which ended the devastating twelve-year civil war; however, an array of injustices continues to plague the country. Neo-liberal trade policies are destroying the economic opportunities for rural farmers and youth populations thereby creating greater poverty, violence and emigration. The erosion of human rights accelerated when fourteen community leaders were brought up on charges of Acts of Terrorism and Organized Crime for peacefully demonstrating against the privatization of water. The Salvadoran government continues to lack emergency preparation and prevention plans within a country that regularly faces natural disaster.

SHARE's advocacy program responds to pressing socio-political issues by strengthening cross-border solidarity and organizing its base to advocate for just trade, environmental protection, human rights and emergency prevention.

### **Just Trade Advocacy**

#### *The Dominican Republic and Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA)*

Since the beginning of the struggle against CAFTA, SHARE has consistently worked to build coalitions and educate its base to advocate for just and fair trade instead of destructive neo-liberal policies as DR-CAFTA. Now that the agreement is in place, SHARE has begun to monitor its socio-economic effects from both the U.S. and Salvadoran perspective. SHARE D.C. served as editor for the Stop CAFTA Annual Monitoring Report, which was released in Spanish and English on September 27 and made available prior to the Costa Rica DR-CAFTA referendum vote.

To view the report, go to [http://lasolidarity.org/CAFTA\\_report](http://lasolidarity.org/CAFTA_report).

In Washington, D.C., SHARE represented the Stop CAFTA Coalition at the national trade conference convened by the Citizens' Trade Campaign, American Federation of Labor-Congress Industrial Organizations, Change to Win, Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment, and the Alliance for Responsible Trade. The Coalition also decided to focus this year on monitoring DR-CAFTA and its effects on the Central American and Dominican poor in order to create awareness of the links between trade, migration, poverty and militarization promoted via the current development model favored by multinational corporations. Additionally, the Coalition designed an educational workshop on the effects of DR-CAFTA for other countries currently

confronting ratification of bi-lateral neo-liberal trade policies such as Peru, Panama, Colombia and South Korea.

**Conclusions after a year of DR-CAFTA (excerpts from the Stop CAFTA Coalition report)**

1. Salvadoran exports to the United States have fallen and imports from the United States have risen. The deterioration of agricultural trade has worsened.
2. U.S. investment has remained stagnant.
3. Unemployment and prices have increased.

*“Contrary to the promises made prior to DR-CAFTA’s passage and implementation, our 2007 report indicates that the agreement is not leading to increased prosperity among the region’s poor and middle classes, that levels of foreign investment and job creation have been disappointing, and that migration continues to serve as a primary escape valve from poverty (6).”* Stop CAFTA Coalition Report

*“According to El Salvador’s Central Reserve Bank, in 2006 Salvadoran exports to the United States decreased by 2.5% and imports from the United States increased by 5.3%.”*

*Equipo Maíz Awareness and Education*

Equipo Maíz has begun a monitoring effort of DR-CAFTA in order to create educational material to provide trainings for other grassroots social organizations and counterparts working for economic structural reform in El Salvador. The Equipo Maíz’s Economic Literacy Program has also been very focused on neo-liberal economic issues. Equipo Maíz has addressed DR-CAFTA in the *Diario Colatino* newspaper by supplying an insert that provides accessible, but well researched, analysis on important issues in Salvadoran current events. Furthermore, SHARE has facilitated various presentations of DR-CAFTA analysis by César Villalona, an economist who works for Equipo Maíz. César also participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the SHARE Foundation in Washington, D.C.

*DR-CAFTA and Costa Rica*

In collaboration with a faith-based cohort of Columbians, Maryknollers and Medical Missionary Sisters, SHARE D.C. helped design a workshop linking trade policy and migration. Between 35-40 people participated in the workshop, and a brainstorming session included ways to promote the NO on CAFTA vote in the October referendum in Costa Rica. SHARE D.C. and the SHARE El Salvador Office Director participated as international observers in the Costa Rica DR-CAFTA referendum on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Seven individuals representing the Stop CAFTA Coalition and the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART) also participated. In addition to observing the voting, SHARE met with civil society leaders on the NO side to understand the Costa Rican current events leading up to the referendum. The two coalitions issued a press release and supported advocacy steps, such as a NGO sign-on letter published in a major Costa Rican paper to the

Organization of American States asking that it does not certify the referendum results given the intimidation tactics used by the Costa Rican and U.S. governments.

*Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)*

In September, the Latin American Working Group committee on the MCC, which SHARE D.C. co-coordinates, met with the Managing Director for Latin America and his staff to dialogue on the consultative and monitoring process of the compacts and the use of indicators to determine MCC eligibility. SHARE expressed concerns about the Salvadoran anti-terrorism law, which could criminalize social protest and El Salvador's deteriorating human rights record, which could affect its MCC eligibility.

In November, El Salvador failed its annual evaluation to maintain eligibility, but was nevertheless re-certified for funds. It scored below the mean on government effectiveness, rule of law, land rights, days to start a business, fiscal policy, natural resource management, girls' primary school completion, primary education expenditures, and health expenditures. Through the initiative of its Congressional Hunger Center Fellow, SHARE has begun to create an alternative evaluation tool to share civil society analysis on El Salvador's performance with Members of Congress, the MCC, allies, and the SHARE grassroots base.

*Association of Communities Affected by the Beltway and Bypass (ACAPb)*

Plan Puebla Panamá (PPP) is a 10 billion dollar project supported by the Inter-American Development Bank, other public banks, and private investors that aim to achieve commercial integration throughout Central America by providing infrastructure for the implementation of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). The project fails to address the basic infrastructure needs of Central Americans, such as access to potable water, roads to community market places, and affordable, reliable and environmentally sound public transportation systems.

SHARE provides financial and technical support to the Association of Communities Affected by the Beltway and Bypass (ACAPb), a group of local citizens who oppose the construction of the highway in their neighborhood. This group educates and organizes community members to halt the construction of the project and to press for adequate compensation when residents are displaced. Through community education and advocacy pressure at the local, national and international levels, they have had success in halting construction along the eastern portion of the beltway. In place of the highway, ACAPb is proposing basic infrastructure projects such as community roads and urban planning efforts to build El Salvador's economy from the ground up.

SHARE approved a continuation project that provides resources to keep organization active in the community struggle against the San Salvador Beltway construction in the San Jacinto Mountain and the San Salvador volcano

SHARE has also supported emergency preparedness and prevention in communities below the San Jacinto Mountain in a high-risk zone of floods, earthquakes and landslides. This preparedness training is increasingly important because if the construction process continues the mountain will be deforested, creating erosion and increased possibilities of landslides.

## **Environmental Awareness and Community Organization**

### *Metallic Mineral Mining*

Foreign companies have been granted exploration permits and hope to utilize strip mining methodology because it is the cheapest extraction method: notably, however, strip mining is also the most costly to the environment and community. The blasting and displacement of huge quantities of earth leads to acid drainage, which occurs when rainwater washes off the newly acidic and oxygenated rock. Contemporary methods to extract gold and silver from the ore involve a cyanide leaching process that has been known to contaminate surrounding land, surface water and ground water.

*"If our community had not been organized and educated, the mining companies would have already exploited our land, and we would already be suffering the consequences." Maria, from Ignacio Ellacuria community*

Since 2006, metallic mining in El Salvador has become a relevant issue for the environmental social movement. The National Working Group on Mining in El Salvador (*Mesa Nacional Frente a la Minería en El Salvador*), comprised of environmental NGOs, community organizations, human rights defense organizations, and religious organizations, has solidified. SHARE accompanies the Working Group's advocacy efforts through counterpart organizations such as the Association of Rural Communities for Development (CRIPDES), the CCR, and UCRES. Mining of metals affects the northern part of the country, where these organizations have their social base.

In March, SHARE DC collaborated with US-ES Sister Cities on a U.S. Congressional letter with Rep. Michael Michaud to encourage the Salvadoran Congress to support proposed mining law reforms to ban metallic mineral mining in El Salvador. This letter, which carried 26 congressional signatures, was published in two national Salvadoran papers. Late in the year, in the days leading up to an expected vote on a regressive mining reform law, counterparts again published the letter and successfully halted the vote. During the June Week of Action on Metallic Mining, civil society utilized the letter in educational and press events.

SHARE facilitated an invitation to a regional workshop on mining to SHARE partners from the Bank Information Center. A representative from the CCR region of CRIPDES and from the NGO CEICOM traveled to Guatemala the weekend of March 24<sup>th</sup> to participate in the educational and strategy session.

SHARE D.C. is participating in a new interfaith working group on water with participation from Church World Service, mainline Protestant churches, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, and Catholic women religious groups. SHARE contributed its field knowledge to the ways extractive industries affect water availability and purity. The group, through SHARE's leadership, facilitated a joint NGO letter to key U.S. Congressional targets on US mining reform. The letter carried the signatures of over 30 faith-based organizations and many faith leaders.

SHARE supported Caritas and the National Table on Mining as the Catholic Episcopal Conference of El Salvador issued a statement, "Let Us Care for the House of All," which expressed its opposition to metallic mineral mining in El Salvador. This important step was a product of community groups and NGO partnerships to leverage links with Catholic leadership.

The Aura Silver mining company sold concessions in Chalatenango to Tribune Resources Corporation. In its annual report, Aura Silver stated that it decided to leave El Salvador due to considerable resistance on the part of Salvadoran civil society. This admission provided a significant victory for Salvadorans struggling against mining. SHARE D.C. circulated an action to ask its grassroots base to write Tribune and share their concerns about mining. SHARE also signed onto a joint NGO letter to Tribune addressing the environmental and social impacts of mining. SHARE and its counterparts will continue to educate, organize and maintain pressure on interested companies.

### *Water Pollution*

With support from SHARE, a local committee on the environment gathered samples from the Pampe River and sent them for analysis to the University of El Salvador, where high levels of contamination were revealed. The committee is currently raising awareness about these results and starting to organize related advocacy activities. Another topic recently identified by the committee and the Consciousness for Economic and Spiritual Recuperation, (CREDHO) is the danger of deforestation of 244 acres of coffee plantations in the municipality of Santa Ana, which would also affect neighboring municipalities for the construction of an industrial, commercial and housing complex by the Poma Group Company.

*(Photo: "We want Opportunity to Work, We Don't Want Privatization")*

## **Human Rights**

### *The Suchitoto Detentions and Terrorism Charges*

When a protest against water privatization in Suchitoto, El Salvador, on July 2, 2007 was broken up by law enforcement officials, more than 25 people were injured by rubber bullets, 18 severely affected by tear gas, and 13 people detained and accused of public disorder and illicit association. In addition to the detention of the National President, Vice-President, driver, and



journalist of prominent community association CRIPDES, ten civil society members were detained. Irregularities and human rights violations marked the entire apprehension and detention process. Some of the detainees reported that police threatened to push them from the helicopter while they were being transferred to prison. As reported by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, three detainees were beaten during interrogation and isolated in remote places during questioning. All detainees complained of the abysmal conditions in prison, the overcrowding, and the insecurity they experienced sharing cells with inmates with violent records. The charges against the protestors were extremely serious: under Article 5 of El Salvador's 2006 Anti-Terrorism Law, protestors may be charged with the intent to cause harm to a high public official, in this case the president, who was present in Suchitoto the morning of the protest. The sentence for such crimes is between 40-60 years in prison.

*“Once the reinforcements arrived, they immediately opened fire, shooting rubber bullets and throwing tear-gas grenades. When the police fell upon us, I was hit three times with a baton, once on the back of the head, once on the shoulder, and once on my back, and then arrested and loaded into a truck.”* Martha Yania Mendez

*“In jail, our conditions have been inhuman. They put us in solitary confinement, a cell with no light, no water, and no food... Then they feed us two measly tortillas and a few spoonfuls of beans.”* Marta Lorena Araujo Martinez, President of CRIPDES

The SHARE network mobilized in the wake of the Suchitoto detentions. The DC Office focused efforts on informing and activating the grassroots base and international decision-makers and initiating a campaign to fax concerns first to leaders of the Salvadoran government, then to major media in El Salvador. SHARE provided frequent reports on the progress of the preliminary hearings, detention conditions, releases, the upcoming trial, and opportunities for action to the base.

SHARE's congressional work was key to securing the release of the detainees as well as the eventual dropping of terrorism charges. Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA) sponsored a congressional letter with the support of 41 Members of Congress through the efforts of U.S. solidarity groups' grassroots bases and staff. After SHARE communicated with Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), the congressman issued a strong personal letter to President Saca, with copies to U.S. Department State officials. Rep. McGovern's letter received favorable coverage in mainstream and progressive Salvadoran papers.

SHARE correspondence with the United Nations, the Organization of American States, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International helped promote attention to the detentions and prompted these organizations to release public statements on the events of Suchitoto. SHARE also facilitated the creation of a paid ad in the *Prensa Grafica* and *CoLatino*, which generated the support of over 60 NGOs, Salvadoran groups, community groups and individuals.

SHARE hosted El Salvador's Human Rights Ombudsman, Oscar Luna, in Washington, D.C. from October 30-November 2, 2007. Luna met with Rep. Linda Sanchez, Rep. Jan Schakowsky, Rep. Jim McGovern, the legislative assistants of several additional Congressional offices, and State Department staff to provide an overview of the current situation in El Salvador and to propose ways that the U.S. Congress could promote respect for human rights.

SHARE DC convened multiple times with U.S. solidarity organizations such as CISPES, Sister Cities, and Voices on the Border to plan and coordinate a letter-writing campaign and a public witness and vigil, particularly around the January 14-18, 2008 Week of Action.

### *Seeking Justice in the Oscar Romero Case*



In an April 13, 2000 report, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) found the State of El Salvador responsible for the extra-judicial killing of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Yet on October 10, 2007, over seven years later, the government continued to refuse to accept responsibility at IAHRC hearings in Washington, DC. The Salvadoran government articulated its unwillingness to comply with three specific recommendations of the IAHRC: to identify, judge and sanction all of the material and intellectual authors of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero; to make amends for the consequences of the assassination, including just reparations for damages; and to adapt Salvadoran internal legislation to the

guidelines of the American Convention stripping the 1993 General Amnesty Law of its effects.

Instead of complying with the recommendations, the Salvadoran government initiated a dialogue with Archbishop Saenz Lacalle of San Salvador to appear to be resolving the Romero case, yet little has been revealed about their search for a "comprehensive solution." Later, the Archbishop's firing of a lawyer from Tutela Legal, a codefendant in the case, who spoke before the IACHR in October sparked both indignation as well as action accompanied by SHARE. SHARE coordinated a letter writing campaign directed at IAHRC and Archbishop Saenz Lacalle. The letters expressed concern about the refusal of the government to comply with any of the recommendations. The hope is that the government's dialogue with the Church, if it is to continue, will be opened up to greater transparency if there is international attention.

### *The Coalition for Peace, Dignity and Social Justice*

The Coalition for Peace, Dignity and Social Justice (*La Concertación por la Paz, la Dignidad y la Justicia Social*), arose in the second half of 2006. SHARE sponsored an East Coast tour of Maria Silvia Guillen, Executive Director of FESPAD and one of the leaders of the new coalition in March. Maria Silvia and SHARE met with representatives

from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations to describe the deterioration of human rights in El Salvador. In commemoration of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords, the Coalition prepared a written analysis of these 15 years, which was then publicized in an alternative forum and press conference in El Salvador and D.C. The Coalition has carried out other actions regarding the recent approval of the Anti-Terrorist Law and is part of the advocacy efforts concerning the Suchitoto detentions

### *Women's Rights*

The issue of femicide continues to be present on the feminist agenda of the Salvadoran women's movement. The SHARE Foundation has provided support on this issue through the First Regional Seminar on Femicides (*Primer Seminario Regional sobre Femicidios*), organized in commemoration of International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 by the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (*ORMUSA -- Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas por la Paz*) and the El Salvador Chapter of the Feminist Women's Network Against Violence (*Red Feminista de Mujeres contra la Violencia-Capítulo El Salvador*). SHARE has also supported two campaigns led by the Prudencia Ayala Feminist Coalition (*Concertación Feminista Prudencia Ayala*), in commemoration of International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> and the International Day Against Violence Towards Women on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Emergency Prevention Organization and Advocacy**

#### *Levy Reconstruction*

The issue of flood risk in the Lower Lempa is more present than ever. With each year that passes, protective infrastructure is further eroded and 9.9 km of levy continues to await construction. SHARE, CDM Tecoluca, CRIPDES San Vicente in Tecoluca, and Comunidades Unidas and CONFRAS in Jiquilisco have driven advocacy work on the levies. The Legislative Assembly approved the Bank of International Development funds to repair the levies in the Lower Lempa region and the latter organizations are maintaining communication with the Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate local interests within this important project for emergency protection.

#### *SPHERE*

SHARE continues to form part of the SPHERE Project's El Salvador Coordinating Committee, a coalition of organizations committed to accountability in the prevention of disasters and alleviation of any resulting human suffering. An achievement this year has been the joint publication by SPHERE and UNETE (technical team for all agencies in the United Nations system) of a guide for the identification, installation and equipping of shelters. These guides have been provided to the Civil Protection System of the Ministry of the Interior and will direct the establishment of shelters in emergencies. Many local partners who have participated in SHARE workshops on SPHERE principles have gone on to disseminate this knowledge in their own organizations. CONFRAS held two regional trainings, one in the eastern part of the country and another in the western part; FEDECOOPADES held trainings with two cooperatives, La Reforma and El Jícaro; and ASMUR imparted information to communities of San Carlos Lempa.

## **II. Local Development**

SHARE's Local Development Program follows the three integrating principles of women's empowerment, citizen participation and leadership development. The program addresses the real gaps in the existing network of support for community development programs by strengthening local grassroots organizations and NGOs. This integrated approach increases family food production and income generation, economic self-sufficiency and community organization.

The Local Development Program supports the following organizations and cooperatives: Marta Gonzalez Cattlewomen Cooperative (ACAMG) in the Lower Lempa, the Association of Active Women for Gender Equality (AMAIG) in Chalchuapa, and three different women's committees of the Federation of Cooperative Agricultural Production Associations of El Salvador (FEDECOOPADES) in SHARE's target area of Chalchuapa, Santa Ana and Atiquizaya, Ahuachapán.

### **Literacy and Visual Health Program**

*"I'm learning how to read and do math, knowledge we were missing to run the cooperative store, now with these and other training workshops we are better organized and stronger leaders." Amparo Hernández, La Reforma Manguito*

Literacy and education are important steps towards greater organizational and human development. As part of its women's empowerment strategy, SHARE supported literacy training for women of ACAMG who received classes through a project with the Association for Women in San Carlos Lempa (ASMUR) in Tecoluca. Two women's cooperatives of FEDECOOPADES continued to receive support to provide literacy training for El Jícaro in Atiquizaya and La Reforma El Manguito in Chalchuapa. SHARE also accompanied the women's cooperative Paso Carrera in literacy through AMAIG. The overall attendance percentages for literacy training increased this year from 76% to 86%. All trainings were done in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's Learning and Aptitude Exam (PAES) for each subject and grade level. Through coordination with other institutions such as the Association for Sustainable Economy and Social Progress (CIDEP), National Foundation for Development (FUNDE) and the Tecoluca Mayor, four associate members from ACAMG have received computer classes to gain basic knowledge of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and internet use. Thirty books by Salvadoran authors have been donated to each learning center and are being made available to students and the larger community.

The following chart displays the number of women in literacy training.

Associations	Enrolled 2006	Completed 2006	%	Enrolled 2007	Currently Attending 2007	%
ACAMG	36	20	55%	28	25	89%
FEDECOOPADES	34	33	97%	36	32	88%
AMAIG	30	23	76%	38	31	81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>86%</b>

During the trainings it became apparent that many women had vision problems, which led to a visual health campaign. SHARE coordinated with the eye clinic of María Madre de los Pobres Parish, which has U.S. sistering partners through SHARE. Clinic staff traveled to perform eye exams on a total of 85 women, providing glasses when needed for 53 women. Better vision allowed for the carrying out of administrative work and greater capability in everyday activities. The women who needed surgery followed procedures to receive operations with the Bolivarian Committee of El Salvador and Venezuela (*Comité Bolivariano de El Salvador y Venezuela*). Two women were selected to leave the country while other less complicated cases were operated on in El Salvador with financial support for part of the operation costs.

*"Now trained in literacy, we will continue reinforcing our leadership and organization, to grow our economically productive projects."*

FEDECOOPADES Organizer

### **Organization, Leadership, Administration and Civic Participation**

Women are demonstrating notable advances and development as they gain access to literacy, education and equal rights consciousness that provide greater opportunities for their organization. Many women leaders are taking initiatives not only within their cooperatives, but also at a local and national level, illustrating the power of leadership.

The organizational development trainings handled topics of interpersonal relational skills, team building, board member responsibilities and work plans. Leadership development workshops discussed the dynamics of effective communication, creativity and being proactive, delegation of power and conflict management. Other workshops highlighted business administration techniques such as market management, documentation of revenues and sales, cost assessment and business books.

### *AMAIG*

The women of AMAIG received eight training workshops through the Women's Institute (IMU) on leadership styles, gender studies, women's rights, team and community building and writing project proposals. SHARE supported a market analysis by the Foundation of Self-Sustainable Micro-Business (FADEMYPE) to prepare AMAIG members for getting further involved in economically sustainable projects. AMAIG women leaders and president Doris Gonzales participated in the local municipal council meetings making headway in the creation of a women's center in Chalchuapa where they plan to develop a cooperative economic project in sewing and production of indigo dye textiles.

### *El Jicaro*

The women's committee has grown from 17 women to a group of 30. After restructuring their leadership committee they petitioned for and were granted a local loan to extend their bread bakery project. Marciana de Jesús Rumualdo stepped up as a significant leader within the larger cooperative when she was elected Dairy Products Sales Manager. She also completed a computer class and a course in business administration at the Lutheran University.

### *La Reforma El Manguito*

Membership has increased from 11 women to 16, and the participants of the literacy circles have increased from 32 to 54 women. The women's committee of La Reforma has constructed its own storage building for their community store from cooperative profits. Maria Lidia Flores was elected Administrative Manager of La Reforma and Blanca Estela Flores (La Reforma President) was elected treasurer to the FEDECOOPADES National Administration Council.

### *The Marta Gonzalez Cattlewomen's Cooperative (ACAMG)*

Support was provided to the ACAMG steering council for the implementation of internal sustainability and credit policies. In June, the cooperative applied a 1% charge for administrative procedures, an important achievement for the cooperative and a sign of the beginning of their self-sustainability. ACAMG continued to maintain a very healthy loan recovery portfolio, with payment default at only two per cent. SHARE provided administrative assistance in learning how to apply for funding and grants independently in ACAMG's process of becoming self-sustainable.

## **Exchange Programs and Mental Health Support**

### *Exchange Meetings for Local Development*

The SHARE Foundation supported a meeting for the women's committees and cooperatives from different regions to exchange knowledge and experience about local development projects. Together they shared, learned and provided critical analysis concerning their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their projects. The women left feeling inspired to work harder within their groups.

### *Second Annual Literacy Campaign Competition*

At the end of the academic year, the women's cooperatives and committees involved in the literacy project came together for the second annual competition. The competition served as an important motivational point as women looked forward to the exchange and pushed themselves in their learning capabilities. This provided a great opportunity for women to share their experiences of learning, and each member worked hard to put together their portfolios.

Artistic expression through writing enabled several women from the cooperatives to tell and receive personal stories of sexual abuse or domestic violence. This was especially important for women to gain support from their peers and allow The Women's Institute (IMU) to identify and provide mental health services accordingly.

### *Association of Research and Training for Mental Health (ACISAM)*

Family to Family" support for families affected by mental illness was designed to create greater social integration and support for those affected by mental illness and their families, as well as appropriate medical treatment and assistance. Care also included recreational activities, support meetings and open discussions, which were held in the different municipalities where ACISAM works. These meetings helped bring new cases to light and provide an opportunity for exchange among participants.

## **III. Grassroots**

The SHARE Foundation's Grassroots Program coordinates cross-border solidarity relationships through a sistering partnership program. This program facilitates the accompaniment of U.S. parishes, schools, universities, seminaries and Salvadoran-American organizations with Salvadoran regional and community projects. These projects include women's empowerment, youth organizing, education scholarships and environmental advocacy. The Grassroots base is also SHARE's central resource for organizing around just policy reform.

*Grassroots vision of accompaniment for sistering-partners:*

- **Physical/Moral:** The U.S. delegations visits with partnering Salvadoran communities coupled with the tours of Salvadoran counterparts to the U.S. provide cross border fertilization, as well as physical and moral accompaniment. Through these experiences, people connect with and support each other
- **Advocacy:** The U.S. Grassroots base promotes community organizing and advocacy for just U.S. policies that support sustainable solutions to poverty, rural development and human rights in El Salvador.
- **Financial:** SHARE Grassroots partners support regional projects, which promote the empowerment of women and the development of new leaders. This model of development provides a sustainable alternative to poverty and social injustice.

## Grassroots Outreach and Program Development

Many historic sistering communities have maintained a consistent relationship with SHARE. At the same time, SHARE is developing relationships with new institutions in order to maintain programmatic vitality. These outreach initiatives bore much fruit in 2007. New partnerships have been cultivated with church youth groups, high schools, universities and seminaries. SHARE has also increased community outreach to new populations through coordinating the annual commemorations of Archbishop Oscar Romero with the U.S. Grassroots base and through thematic large delegations such as the commemorative delegation of the four U.S. Churchwomen and the youth delegation planned for 2008.

U.S. sistering partners have fortified the efforts of Salvadoran communities to organize youth, empower women and provide scholarship opportunities. SHARE has educated and mobilized the U.S. Grassroots base to advocate for human rights and socio-economic and environmental justice.

### *Youth Partnerships*

Delegations for this partnership are designed to appeal to youth populations by creating interactive itineraries that involve Salvadoran youth. Activities include events such as



soccer games, mural painting, bonfires, dances, drama and talent shows. This is also an important opportunity for cross-cultural exchange. This year SHARE welcomed delegations from Northwest High School in Seattle, Cretin-Durham Hall High School in Minnesota, University Lutheran Chapel in Berkeley, Central Baptist youth in Pennsylvania, and Good Shepherd youth of St. Therese in Milwaukee. SHARE is also organizing a youth delegation for July 9-16,

2008, with the goal of bringing one hundred young people from the United States to El Salvador to explore their role in advancing accompaniment.

### *Romero Justice Week*

SHARE promoted the annual Romero Justice Week Commemorations and organized eleven events and activities across the country. These events strengthened community awareness around issues of social justice, fair trade, human rights and advocacy. Existing sister relationships were re-energized and doors were opened to future partnerships. SHARE produced a Romero Justice Week packet of articles, which included biographical and reflective information about Romero, along with information for advocacy and fundraising. The items in the packet followed this year's theme: "Building Peace in a Post-War Society: Global Lessons from El Salvador." Events took place in the following places: Maryland Presbyterian, the Boston Paulist Center, Detroit Sister Community, St. Andrew's of Kansas City and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. The 2007 Romero Week raised more than \$3,000 for SHARE and established

a new precedent for the organizing efforts SHARE's U.S. base around such a commemoration.

#### *Theological Education Solidarity Consortium*

The Solidarity Consortium is an ecumenical group of seminaries and/or higher education institutions that have come together to strengthen their emphasis on contextual education through partnering with SHARE's Grassroots Program. Seminaries, universities, professors and students have the opportunity to collaborate, dialogue and work with each other through the SHARE delegation experience. Colgate Rochester Crozer School of Divinity became the first member of the consortium followed by the Bellarmine University, whose participants went on their first delegation last summer. Pacific School of Religion and Drew School of Theology have also been involved in the formation of the consortium and plan on committing to partnerships. This project is designed to broaden SHARE's base as new leaders emerge in their respective communities seeking to create cross-border solidarity relationships and commitments to justice in El Salvador. SHARE has already seen the results through the work of interns and seminary youth leaders who have taken their groups on delegations.

*"A seminary delegation to El Salvador is the ultimate integration of theory and practice, of words and living Word."* - Dr. Marcia Bailey, Faculty at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

#### *School of the Americas*

From November 16-18, SHARE U.S. Grassroots Coordinator Elly Jordan traveled to Georgia with Salvadoran counterparts from the community of El Buen Pastor and members of SHARE Sister Parish Good Shepherd to attend the vigil to close the School of the Americas. This event presented many opportunities to educate others on the current issues in El Salvador and to lay preliminary groundwork for prospective relationships. The visiting Salvadorans gave a workshop to a crowd of 130, where they spoke about recent threats to civil liberties and the possibility of water privatization in El Salvador. SHARE staffed two tables at the event, speaking with hundreds of people, distributing SHARE literature, and gathering signatures to petition the U.S. Senate on the arrests of those protesting water privatization in Suchitoto.

#### *Delegations and Tours*

Delegations have been very successful through close coordination with the various sistering regions and other local partners. The delegate experience has forged a strong identification with SHARE and its work throughout El Salvador and the United States. Many have taken special interest in recent advocacy issues related to mining and the human rights issues surrounding the arrests in Suchitoto. Delegates, on their return to the U.S., have been motivated to support advocacy issues and to promote further tours and delegations. They have also proven very ready to fundraise and donate; some have already made significant commitments in this respect.

*“Our days are long here and filled with activity and peppered with moving tributes, personal stories of suffering and survival, testimonies by those working to provide justice to the poor here. We will all come home deeply impacted by this experience, and we will be processing what we will have seen and heard for a long time.” –Glen (NWS)*

*(Photo: Rutilio Grande delegates march with the people, 2007)*

Twelve delegations were received March through October 2007, which included the commemorative Rutilio Grande delegation, four youth delegations, one theological school delegation, one medical delegation, the Board of Directors delegation and four sistering partner delegations.



The 2007 Rutilio Grande Anniversary was a very successful delegation that also included a press conference attended by the Co-Latino newspaper, La Radio Chévere radio station, and TV Channel 21. On a visit to the contaminated Sucio River delegates witnessed the waste discharges from the San Andrés Valley factories into the river and had the opportunity to speak with members of a community affected by the toxic discharges of the Kimberly-Clark factory. At the press conference the delegation and local activists denounced the pollution of the Sucio River and called upon the Ministry of the Environment to comply with environmental law in the San Andrés Valley. After the press conference, the Channel 21 reporter accompanied the Northwest High School delegation back to areas of waste discharge and reported back the findings on the local news program.

*“Moving on to the Kimberly-Clark factory (Kleenex being its most famous product), the impacts of this contamination ceased to be theoretical as we walked through a small community living directly next to the massive factory along the River Sucio—a river which used to be full of fish and was used to irrigate vegetable crops, but now cannot sustain life.” –Sarah Harkness, Rutilio Grande Delegation*

### *New Partners*

In late 2006 SHARE welcomed Cretin-Durham Hall High School as a youth partnership and in 2007 St. Edward’s Catholic Church near Louisville, KY as a sistering partner. Currently, Eastern Michigan University and Georgetown University are in discernment for youth partnerships. The Pacific School of Religion and the Drew University are discerning their relationship within the Theological Solidarity Consortium.

## Grassroots Projects

Through SHARE's Grassroots Program, our US sistering partners (churches, faith communities, schools and colleges) are able to work in solidarity with Salvadoran development organizations and communities. SHARE partners with the regional offices of the Association for Development of El Salvador (CRIPDES) to fund projects that support community organizing. CRIPDES is a nationally and internationally recognized NGO with a base of approximately 300 rural communities in El Salvador.

All projects include a focus on citizen participation, women's empowerment and leadership development. In 2007 US sistering-partners accompanied Salvadorans throughout four geographic sub-divisions or regions of CRIPDES: 1) CRIPDES San Vicente, 2) Association of Communities for the Development of Chalatenango (CCR), 3) Union of Communities of Northern San Salvador and La Libertad (UCRES) and 4) Association for Municipal Development of New Tenancingo (ADMNT).

*Strengthening CRIPDES San Vicente's Integral Women and Youth Organizing Work*  
19 youth committees were very involved in the various aspects of the project, which included strengthening youth leadership in local development, scholarships, art workshops and youth exchanges. Youth participated in five workshops to develop artistic skills, an opportunity not often available, nor offered in schools. Various assemblies helped generate space for participation, analysis and awareness about the societal issues of rural Salvadoran youth. Through coordination with local organizations, youth addressed the challenges they face in today's El Salvador. For example the youth participated in workshops given by the National Foundation for Development (FUNDE) on basic tools for local development and social action with a human rights focus. San Vicente youth also participated in an exchange with Chalatenango youth who shared their history of organizing current resistance to mining in their region.

CRIPDES San Vicente reported 33 communities with participating women's committees that continued to grow in local involvement. At two different assemblies women from various communities came together to share their successes and challenges. In both assemblies, the women talked about domestic violence and how they are affected by other safety issues within El Salvador. The women also had the opportunity to travel to Aguilares and share experiences with women from the UCRES region. Four workshops were given on non-violence, conflict resolution, communication and self-esteem. The project included funding for vegetable garden projects for four women's committees. Two of the communities, El Salto and El Platanar, had good harvests, creating greater food security for the families of participating women. La Betania and San Pedro met with challenges both in organizing the initiatives and with nature (poor soil quality, pests) and did not have the same results with their garden projects.

*Strengthening CRIPDES San Vicente's Integral Development Through Education*

This university scholarship project assisted four CRIPDES San Vicente community organizers and one from CRIPDES SUR with the aim of strengthening professional development, institutional capacity and organization through access to higher education. The five CRIPDES organizers are currently working towards college degrees in social work, business administration and law, and are committed to using their education to benefit their communities in local development, organization, leadership and human rights. In 2008, this project will incorporate four more students for a total of nine.

*Educational Support for the Integral Development of the Youth of CRIPDES San Vicente*

In 2007, SHARE supported CRIPDES San Vicente youth through a high school scholarship project funded by our US sistering partners. These scholarships are especially important because they require youth to be active and committed to the youth committees within their communities. The project provides the youth with support for continuing their education and contributing to their region, rather than emigrating to look for work in the US, as many youth feel forced by the economic situation to leave their family and head north.

This project provided 19 youth leaders from 12 communities, with high school and middle school scholarships. Each student received a \$375 scholarship in 2007, disbursed in monthly allotments to cover the costs of fees, uniforms, books, school supplies and transportation. Regular assemblies were held to evaluate grades, to hear reports on community activities and to collect student letters to US sistering-partners. Students gave positive feedback about the scholarship program and expressed their appreciation to sponsors.

The project also funded an activity in which the students traveled to Suchitoto to take part in a youth exchange with the youth of Progreso, another CRIPDES region. Students shared experiences and learned more about the detentions at the July 2 protest. At another youth encounter with The Association for Economic Development and Progress (CIDEP), students learned about how to get involved in vocational training for those who cannot afford college after high school.

Two of the students graduated high school this year. Apart from graduates, all but one of the students will continue to receive scholarships in 2008. The new project has been expanded to cover 26 students in all.

*Strengthening Community Organizing and Leadership Development in the CCR Communities, Chalatenango*

This project funded both youth and women's organizing. At the close of the project 25 youth committees were active in their communities. The committees were accompanied by the CCR's regional youth committee to help in coordination and to provide support for overall organizing, as well as for planning specific activities such as tournaments, parties, fundraising artistic/cultural nights, and beach trips. Sub-regional youth assemblies were held, which included an analysis of current events and proposals for solutions to the problems that youth in Chalatenango face; evaluation of past work and planning for

future fundraising; social and educational activities in the communities; and overall social interactions among the youth—all of which served to motivate greater participation in youth organizing. The project also provided the Guarjila theater group, “Nuevas Vidas” (New Life) with a small financial compensation for its performances on the topic of HIV/AIDS prevention and some funding to train three new youth theater groups.

The CCR’s Women’s Secretariat closed the project with 46 working women’s committees. The project funded the regional women’s committee and its promoters to enable them to accompany and advise the committees in their organizing efforts. The geographic area covered by the CCR is broken down into sub-regions and each promoter is in charge of accompanying the communities in that sub-region. Considering this structure, the project funded sub-regional assemblies, which were attended by women from the communities in each of those sub-regions. At the assemblies, the women shared experiences, achievements, and difficulties that each committee encountered in its community. There was also an analysis of the current situation of women and the population in general, and a discussion of proposals for solutions. As the result of organizing efforts, more women from the CCR region are participating in community decision-making processes and national advocacy activities.

*Defending the Human Rights of the Communities of Northeastern Chalatenango Against the Threat of Mining (CCR) and Education and Advocacy on the Possible Impacts of Mining in the Municipality El Paisnal (UCRES)*

These two projects worked to educate, organize and mobilize the population of affected communities of northeastern Chalatenango (CCR) and of northern San Salvador (UCRES) against the impact of mining exploitation. Local leaders developed educational activities concerning the affects of mining on people and the environment. These communities advocated in defense of their water sources, crops, environmental health and human rights. The projects promoted alliances with other local and national organizations concerned about the impacts of mining. Anti-mining literature and T-shirts, radio spots and interviews have been part of the campaign as well as participating in the National Working Group Against Mining. As a result of the projects there is a heightened awareness in the communities about the possible impacts of mining, and mining companies have not been able to advance in their proposed mining projects in these areas due to the resistance of the communities.

*Strengthening Youth Organization, Culture and Sports in Northern San Salvador and La Libertad (UCRES)*

This project had 18 active youth committees and the continued support of UCRES youth promoters as the youth planned and organized activities and events in their communities. Several gatherings and trainings for youth were given on the following topics: Leadership, Promoting Ownership in Community Youth Organizing, and Motivating Youth Organizing through Cultural and Recreational Activities. The project also funded theater and folkloric dance classes and a soccer and softball tournament to provide extracurricular activities for youth and the opportunity to develop their own artistic, athletic and organizational abilities. A needs assessment for youth in the municipalities of Aguilares, El Paisnal and San Pablo Tacachico was conducted and results were shared

in assemblies and through radio announcements. This assessment will serve as an advocacy instrument for the youth and UCRES.

*Local Organizing and Training with a Focus on Gender and Citizen Participation with Young Leaders in the Rural Area of Tenancingo*

This two-year project focusing on youth organizing ended in 2007. The project provided funding for the ADMNT youth promoters to accompany 16 different youth committees in their organizing efforts. The project also included funding for training youth and for replicating workshops on the following topics: Organization and Local Development, Citizen Participation and Democracy, Youth Leadership and Political Advocacy, Gender and Human Development and Environmental and Cultural Preservation. A municipal youth committee was also supported by the project to promote youth organizing and plan special events. In 2007, they planned an event on domestic violence for the November 25th, International Day Against Violence Against Women, as well as a cultural event featuring choral and theatrical competitions on March 24th, to commemorate the life and legacy of Monseñor Romero. The project also funded soccer tournaments and trainings for a youth theater group. As a result of this project, youth organizing has a higher profile in the municipality of Tenancingo and more youth are being elected to their local community councils.

## **IV. Organizational Update**

### **SHARE's 25th Anniversary**

SHARE held events in Milwaukee, San Francisco and San Salvador to celebrate 25 years of solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

In June 2007, over one hundred of SHARE's historic and current Salvadoran partners from grassroots organizations, NGO's and the religious community gathered in San Salvador to mark the anniversary. SHARE's board of directors were in-country for a meeting and attended the event.

In September 2007, SHARE hosted a conference in honor of the anniversary. A symposium featured keynote speaker Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez and included a panel of Salvadoran and North American community organizers. Together they discussed topics such as: Solidarity in Today's Context, Issues Facing Youth in El Salvador, US Border and Immigration Policy, The State of Peace and Democracy in El Salvador. The weekend concluded with an ecumenical service to celebrate and re-commit to solidarity.



In December 2007, SHARE commemorated the lives of Maria Julia Hernandez, founder of the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador and Gustav Schultz, SHARE chair emeritus and cofounder. SHARE welcomed the first female mayor of San Salvador, Violeta Menjivar, as the featured guest at a gala dinner. The celebration was held in a Latino district of San Francisco, providing the opportunity to connect with many local Salvadoran-Americans.

### *Strategic Planning*

Throughout 2007, SHARE staff, board and other supporters engaged in a strategic planning process to identify the strategic goals and objectives for the organization for the next five years. Strategic Planning consultant Kate Lorenzen and a committee of board, staff and volunteers led the process. The plan was developed during board meetings in June and November and at the staff retreat in September. Final approval of the plan is pending for January 2008.

### *Personnel update*

El Salvador Office: Erin Yost Garcia completed her first year as Grassroots Program Officer. The Voluntary Missionary Movement (VMM) approved a new two-year position for Solidarity Education Coordinator. Kelley Burns was hired to coordinate large delegations such as the 100-youth delegation, the theological school partnerships and Romero Week activities. SHARE was chosen to receive a Congressional Hunger Center Fellow, who will work for one year in SHARE's El Salvador office and one year in SHARE's DC office. Michelle Petrotta will be monitoring the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)-financed projects, metallic mineral mining activities, and infrastructure development such as dams and roads.

San Francisco Office: Sarah Harkness, former director of the Hispanic Ministry Training Institute was hired as administrative assistance to replace Lynnette Arnold, who left to work at Mills College where she is currently a student. Development Director Stephanie Pile moved on from her position to pursue a career change in the healing arts. Kathleen Bolts left her position as Foundations and Religious Orders Director. SHARE hired a development consultant to evaluate our fundraising programs and provide new strategies and goals for the Strategic Plan.

### *Board of Directors*

SHARE welcomed to the Board of Directors Santos Angelica Garcia and Francisco Lopez. Ms. Garcia is a community leader in San Vicente, El Salvador and the former president of the Association of Women of San Carlos Lempa (ASMUR), a SHARE beneficiary. Francisco Lopez, a long time Salvadoran American friend of SHARE, supported SHARE with the GOING HOME Campaign through his work at the Archdiocese of Portland and was one of the organizers of SHARE's Rutilio Grande 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary delegation in March 2007.

SHARE says thank you to the following board members who completed their terms in 2007: Board Chair Diane Clyne, RSM, Board Treasurer Dennis Beach OSB and Rhina Ramos. Susan Saudek will serve as Chair, Bernie Peterson was elected Treasurer and Ron Morgan remains as the secretary.