

Rights Action

www.rightsaction.org • March 2004

ORGANIZATIONS & PROJECTS FUNDED AND SUPPORTED BY RIGHTS ACTION IN 2003

Dear friends,

This newsletter summarizes the projects and organizations that Rights Action funded in 2003 in Guatemala, Chiapas (Mexico) and Honduras, as well as Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

We channeled over US\$775,000 (Cdn\$1,033,330) of your funds to these amazing projects that are designed and implemented by community-based organizations and NGOs themselves.

Southern Mexico and much of Central America continue, not surprisingly, to be characterized by poverty, repression, high degrees of impunity and low levels of real democratic participation. Through 20 years of work in the region, Rights Action has learned to have a long-term, generational vision of change, working to empower people from one community to the next, laying the foundations for decent and health communities.

At the same time, we increasingly understand that it is crucial to educate for change to global economic, military and political policies dominated by the wealthy and powerful countries and institutions of the global north.

Please share this information with other interested persons and organizations, and send us your comments and questions.

Grahame Russell & Annie Bird, co-directors
416-654-2074 info@rightsaction.org www.rightsaction.org



©Jonathan Moller

TAX CHARITABLE

contributions: Make checks payable to "Rights Action" and mail to either our US or Canadian office.

UNITED STATES

Rights Action
1830 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009

CANADA

Rights Action
Box 73527, 509 St. Clair Ave W.
Toronto ON, M6C-1C0

DONATE ONLINE IN THE

USA! Go to our website at www.rightsaction.org. *This can be done anonymously.*

CHIAPAS

- ▶ **La Voz de Cerro Hueco:** Legal, humanitarian and public support work for political prisoners.
- ▶ **Mujeres de Maiz en Resistencia:** Education and training for women's loan-funds and productive cooperatives in Mayan communities.
- ▶ **Palenque Loan Funds and Education Program:** Loan-funds for Mayan women's collectives and scholarships for community-elected girls to go to high school.
- ▶ **Red de Defensores Comunitarios:** Mayan focused human rights work, with a particular focus on Covenant 169 of the ILO. Opening of legal defense offices in rural communities.
- ▶ **SADEC (Salud y Desarrollo Comunitario):** Education, training and supplies for health and dental promoters and midwives in Mayan communities.

COSTA RICA

- ▶ **Guanacaste Dry Forest Conservation Fund:** Support for the purchase of land as part of the Area de Conservacion Guanacaste (ACG).

GUATEMALA

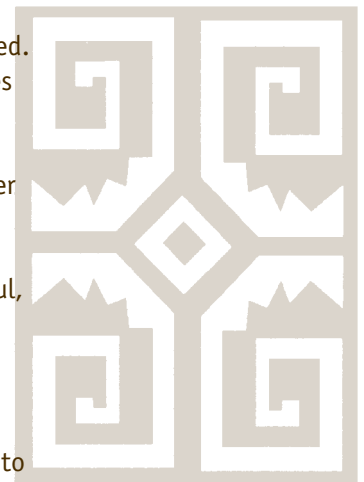
- ▶ **ACOGUATE (Programa de Acompañamiento Guatemala):** International accompaniment for persons at risk for their community development and human rights work, including participation in the genocide cases against former military regimes.
- ▶ **ADIM (Asociacion de Desarrollo Integral y Multiservicios):** ADIM promotes economic and social development of former CPRs (communities of populations in resistance) in Sierra de Chamá and Chajul, Quiche, including a community pharmacy and 'roving medicine chests' in isolated communities.
- ▶ **ADIVIMA (Asociacion del Desarrollo Intregal de las Victimas, Maya Achi):** In a post-genocide context, ADIVIMA carries out: exhumations of mass graves; building commemorative monuments; human rights education; seeking justice for repression. Rabinal, Baja Verapaz.
- ▶ **AMES (Asociacion de Mujeres en Solidaridad):** AMES educates women and girls about human and labor rights; trains auxiliary nurses, focusing on sexual and reproductive rights; educates and organizes maquiladora workers.
- ▶ **ANH (Asociación Nuevos Horizontes):** ANH, a women's organization in Quetzaltenango, operates a medical clinic, a legal clinic; a shelter for battered women, day-care centers, and provides skills training and publicly educates about gender issues.
- ▶ **ASCRA (Asociación Campesino Río Negro 13 de Marzo):** Founded by survivors of the Rio Negro massacres committed to make way for the Chixoy hydro-electric dam project, ASCRA demands justice from the State, World Bank and Inter-American

Development Bank, and works to re-build Rio Negro.

- ▶ **ASECSA (Asociacion de Servicios Comunitarios de Salud):** ASECSA works to influence national health policy, supports the national community-based health promoter system, and trains Maya-Achi women health promoters and midwives in Cubulco, Baja Verapaz.
- ▶ **ATI (Asociacion Toto Integrado):** In Totonicapan, ATI trains Maya-Quiche women about natural medicines, self-esteem, domestic violence, pregnancy, sexuality, venereal diseases, etc.
- ▶ **BJP (Bufete Juridico Popular):** This community legal aid clinic is operated by Maya-Achi genocide survivors in Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, providing legal assistance and human rights education.
- ▶ **CCDA (Asociacion Comite Campesino Del Altiplano):** In 6 departments of the 'altiplano' (highlands), CCDA works on: the peace accords and rural development, including land struggles; a micro-credit program; production of fair trade coffee.
- ▶ **CEDAP (Centro De Apoyo En Justicia Penal Y Resolucion De Conflictos):** Formed by returned refugees in Ixcán, Quiché, CEDAP provides legal support to victims of crimes and human rights violations, and aims to establish six community-based clinics.
- ▶ **CENTRO EDUCATIVO MAYA AJ SYA, PATZICIA:** In Patzicia, Chimaltenango, the Centro Educativo provides bi-lingual primary schooling education to poor children based on Mayan Cosmovisión.
- ▶ **CEPAHER (Centro de Educacion Popular "Padre Hermogenes"):** Organizational training for community-based organizations working on issues of land struggle, justice and impunity.
- ▶ **CIEP (Center for Research and Popular Education):** Community organizational training with displaced populations in Peten. Women's empowerment training in Rabinal and Peten.
- ▶ **CODECA (COMITÉ de DESARROLLO CAMPESINO):** CODECA provides human rights and land and labor rights support for families working on export-plantations on the south-west coast, Suchitepéquez and Retalhuleu.
- ▶ **Colegio Miguel Angel Asturias:** Scholarships and primary schooling for children, plus a specialized training program for teaching bi-lingual, multi-cultural education. Quetzaltenango.
- ▶ **CONAVIGUA (Comite Nacional de Viudas):** In collaboration with the FAFG (Fundación de Antropología Forensic de Guatemala), CONAVIGUA supported mass grave exhumations inside the former military base of San Juan Comalapa.
- ▶ **CONIC (Coordinadora Nacional Indígena Y Campesina):** CONIC supports communities involved in land struggles, based on the Mayan cosmovisión of local populations and on national and international indigenous rights.
- ▶ **CRPQ (Consejo Regional Del Pueblo Qeqchi):** Organizational support of Qeqchi communities working on mass grave exhumations, reparations and community development. Chisec, Alta Verapaz.

- 
- ▶ **CUC (Comite de Unidad Campesina):** CUC, the oldest land rights organization in Guatemala, providing legal and other support to communities involved in land disputes and rural development and agricultural labor policy negotiations. CUC is doing a study related to lands negatively affected by the Chixoy hydro-electric dam.
 - ▶ **Defensoría Indígena de las Verapaces:** The Defensoría provides legal support for indigenous women in cases related to domestic violence, rape, divorce, child support and land conflicts. The Defensoría aims to establish a network of community legal promoters.
 - ▶ **Dominga Foundation:** Support for Denese Becker, also named Dominga Sic Ruiz, a genocide survivor from the Maya-Achi village of Rio Negro, Rabinal, who lives in the United States and works to support the survivors of her home community.
 - ▶ **Entre Ríos:** The Entre Ríos Cooperative provides primary and middle schooling for the returned refugee population of Saxajche, Peten, including dormitories and agriculture, computer and life skills training.
 - ▶ **ETESC (Technical Team for Community Health Education):** ETESC supports mass grave exhumations, health and dental education in returned-refugee communities, as well as a water project in Buena Vista, Huehuetenango.
 - ▶ **FAFG (Fundacion de Antropologia Forense de Guatemala):** In conjunction with massacre survivors, the FAFG carries out exhumation of mass graves and forensic study of remains to determine identify and cause of death.
 - ▶ **FAMDEGUA (Familiares de los Desaparecidos):** FAMDEGUA supports community-based exhumation processes, including the construction of monuments and legal cases for crimes of the past.
 - ▶ **FECAIRAN (Federacion de Cooperativas del Peten):** FECAIRAN comprises seven cooperatives in the Petén, and provides capital for production and marketing of sesame seed, rice, maize, beans and pepitoria (squash seed).
 - ▶ **FNE (FUNDACION NUEVA ESPERANZA):** FNE, established by Reebok Human Rights Award winner Jesus Tecú Osorio (nominated by Rights Action), provides a comprehensive education program for Maya-Achi children of victims of the genocide in Rabinal.
 - ▶ **FUNCEDESCRI (Community Development Training Center):** FUNCEDESCRI provides education and training for community development projects. FUNCEDESCRI is reforesting an area of cloud forest near Coban, Alta Verapaz, that serves as a reserve and training facility in sustainable forest management.
 - ▶ **GADIMFS (Grupo de Accion Para El Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer y Familia):** GADIMFS provides medical, psychological and political education and training, and direct services to women in San Marcos.
 - ▶ **Ixcán Fronterizo and Ixtahuacán Pre-schools:** Pre-schools in Fronterizo and Ixtahuacán, set up by the women's organization Mama Maquin, provide daycare for children. Three women from the region have received basic training in childcare techniques.

- ▶ **Joyabaj Education Project:** The Joyabaj Education Project (Quiche) has two components: the Patzula middle school and a scholarship program for high school and university students.
- ▶ **Los Cimientos:** In 1996, a group of displaced families returned to Los Cimientos in Chajul, Quiche. Civil defense patrollers, settled there by the Army, refused to leave. After being under constant threat and intimidation, the group accepted a government resettlement offer. The community is demanding government compliance with the agreements.
- ▶ **Maya Ixchel Women's Association:** Maya Ixchel promotes participation of indigenous women in community development in Huehuetenango, San Marcos and Chiquimula. A Maya Ixchel leader received a scholarship to study a Diploma in The Rights and Cultural and Ethnic Reality of Indigenous Communities, at the University of San Carlos.
- ▶ **Monuments to Truth, Exhumations and Community Healing:** Across the country, communities are digging up mass graves where their loved ones were dumped. They properly re-bury the remains and build monuments to commemorate their names and lives.
- ▶ **Movimiento de Campesinos de la Aldea Ilom:** This Movimiento works to recover land in the Ilom village illegally appropriated by a landowner.
- ▶ **Movimiento de los Desarraigados:** In northern Quiche (Ixil, Cotzal, Nebaj, Chajul, Cunen y Uspantán), the Movimiento works for community development: facilitating productive projects; human rights education; resolving land conflicts; working for reparations; locating clandestine cemeteries.
- ▶ **Peten Health Workers Scholarships:** Scholarships for health promoters in Peten to attend high school and university.
- ▶ **Posada del Anciano Peregrino:** In Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa, the Posada supports elderly destitute people: providing food bags and breakfasts, advice and emergency aid, medical attention, medicines, loans.
- ▶ **Q'ANIL (Asociación Integral de la Juventud Q'anil):** Scholarships, tutoring, vocational training, cultural and educational activities for Ixil youth, Nebaj, Quiche.
- ▶ **Rio Isquizal Asociacion de Mujeres:** This Association, founded by returned refugee women, promotes the participation of indigenous women in community social, political, and economic activities. They are building a Women's House in San Sebastian, Huehuetenango, to serve as an office, meeting place, bakery and health clinic.
- ▶ **ROMERITOS (Asociación para los Derechos de la Niñez Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero):** Los Romeritos is a safe shelter and educational environment for impoverished children from urban barrios, providing food, education, medical and psychological attention.
- ▶ **Santa Maria Tzeja Education Project:** Primary and middle school program, plus high school and university scholarships for Mayan students from isolated communities in Ixcan, Quiche. In Santa Maria Tzeja, Rights Action also supports a women's cow





producing project.

- ▶ **Ximbaxuc Community Development And Water Project:** Support for community members trying to get potable water to the village of Ximbaxuc, Quiche.

HONDURAS

- ▶ **COPINH (Consejo Civico de Pueblos Indigenas e Populares de Honduras):** Based in Lenca descendant communities in western Honduras, COPINH (2002 recipient of the Body Shop Human Rights Award, as nominated by Rights Action) carries out education and activism related to integral community development. COPINH works throughout Central America to build alliances in support of community controlled development alternatives to the “free” trade development model.
- ▶ **COPINH (Montana Verde Emergency Support):** COPINH supports the isolated community of Montana Verde, under siege from landowners and politicians using the legal and penal systems against community leaders. Two community leaders – tortured while illegally detained – received 25 year sentences for murder, after “trials” plagued by substantive and procedural violations.
- ▶ **COPINH (Computer Training Project):** Rising Roots, a US-based activist group, supported this community based computer training project with COPINH.

NICARAGUA

- ▶ **Aldea Celeste Child Development Centre:** This Centre provides daycare for children, including full-day preschool for children three years and older.

PROGRAM AREAS

• Education

Rights Action coordinated a series of forums with representatives of all the education projects we support, enabling them to: learn from one another; determine best practices; discuss education policies in the region; compare teaching pedagogy and methodology.

• Emergency support

On an on-going basis, Rights Action helps people ‘at risk’, and witnesses to human rights violations, along with their family members, to get out of their home countries.

• Human rights accompaniment

Rights Action coordinates the presence of volunteer observers accompanying human rights defenders ‘at risk’ of threats and attacks for their community development work. This includes: preparing urgent action requests, helping with US and Canadian refugee applications, coordinating legal support, and providing documentation for political asylum cases in the US and Canada.

• Micro-loan funds and productive projects

Rights Action coordinated a forum with representatives of the micro-credit and productive projects we support: to learn from one another’s experiences; seek out best

practices; discuss government and donor credit policy and priorities in the countries of the region; etc.

EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM

Chixoy Dam Reparations Campaign

On-going work to enable the survivors of the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacres to receive compensation from the government, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, for death, damages and displacement resulting from the Dam construction.

CICIACS: Work to End Impunity

Grassroots education and organization concerning the CICIACS commission being set up to investigate and report on endemic impunity in Guatemala.

CANCUN: WTO Meetings

Travel funds, and other support for education activities in Cancun, Mexico, related to community and global development issues, during the annual meeting of the World Trade Organization.

PPP & Community Development Alternatives

Project activities (direct funding, publications, forums, alliance-building) focusing critical attention on the negative impact of the “free” trade development model (including the Plan Puebla Panama), and on a multitude of community controlled development alternatives.

Educational Delegations and the Human Rights Activist Seminar

Rights Action hosted delegations and a human rights activist seminar to Guatemala and Honduras, educating North Americans about poverty, repression, enviro-destruction and discriminations, about community controlled development alternatives, and about how North Americans can be involved in work for a just and sustainable global order.

Photo Journalism

Support for the work of a photographer to document the work of a variety of our partner groups.

Speaking Tours

Rights Action organized educational speaking tours in North America for our staff along with: Jesus Tecu Osorio (Guatemala), Maria del Carmen (Peru) and Bertha Caceres (Honduras). Our guests from the global south educate about their struggles to end poverty, repression, enviro-destruction and discrimination.

Awards

After being nominated by Rights Action, Guatemalan journalist Luis Barillas received the 2003 Press Freedom Award from the CJFE (Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression).

EMAIL LISTS

If you would like to be on our e-mail list and receive regular information about the work and issues that our partner groups are addressing, please let us know: info@rightsaction.org.

EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO GUATEMALA

July 16 – 26, 2004

Please join the Rights Action Human Rights Seminar and Delegation to Guatemala (and possibly Honduras).

For more information, email: info@rightsaction.org.

BOOK FOR SALE

Rio Negro Massacres/Memorias de la masacre de Rio Negro, is a book by Jesus Tecu Osorio, that details his eye-witness account of the Rio Negro/Chixoy massacres and his experience as a survivor. Available in English and Spanish from Rights Action info@rightsaction.org.

RightsAction

1830 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20009



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WASHINGTON, DC
PERMIT 735