



Susila Dharma
International

Activities in

Latin America

February , 2004



Iguaçu Falls, Argentina and Brazil

Photo: Viktor Boehm

The motivation for assembling this Susila Dharma report came from the two Latin American Gatherings that were held in Colombia and Brazil in 2003. Being together with so many of our Latin America partners was an inspiration, and we wanted to share information about their work with people who were not able to attend the gatherings. This report has been assembled from information collected from people involved with the activities described.

This report is organized by country and includes information about the role and activities of Susila

Dharma SD national committees, followed by a description of various projects in each country.

Susila Dharma International (SDI) is the affiliate organization of the Subud World Association that supports social and humanitarian activities of its members. The source of Susila Dharma work is an awareness and recognition of our common humanity that motivates people to take action and work for others and their communities. All projects described here provide services to people in their community without discrimination.

Rosanna Hille, SD International

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ARGENTINA

SD Argentina

SD Argentina takes an overview role working with the Subud national committee to subject projects in Argentina.

During the economic crisis of 2001, SD Argentina received a large donation to be used for feeding children. This was used to support



Eugenia Molina, Eduardo Fermani and Rasjid Cesar, SD Argentina.

a series of *Comedor* or children's dining rooms in Buenos Aires.

With a second donation earmarked for this purpose in 2003, additional dining rooms were established in Mina Clavero and La Estrella. In Mina Clavero, the Comedor provides meals for 100 kids with a 12-month grant that pays food costs of two meals per week. The money will be provided in stages in order to monitor its use. The grant was also used to rebuild the bathrooms in the Comedores with the help of local volunteer labour. SD Argentina is also helping to introduce ICDP (see page 4) to the mothers of these children.

Ramona and Oliverio (SD Argentina working team) visited the Tucuman Project (see page 7), which was introduced to SD Argentina by Lawrence Leetz of SD Netherlands. They were very happy about this visit to Tucuman. They were very well received and they saw a lot of work on the land that

was bought with the support of SD Netherlands.

In December 2003, Eduardo Fermani, the Chair of SD Argentina, paid a visit to a remote village in Northern Argentina, La Estrella. Here is his report from that visit:

La Estrella

"La Estrella Community, Rio Pilcomayo, Salta Province, is 180 km from Tartagal Town, border with Paraguay.

This community is composed of the Chorotes, Chulupies and Wichis, all indigenous peoples from this region. They belong to this land, and they survive on fishing from the Pilcomayo River. However, river pollution has complicated the situation of all these

communities, around 50 villages. The average life span for old people is between 40 and 50 years and infant mortality is 200 per 1,000.

The Comedor of La Estrella provides one meal per day to 190 members of the community. SD Argentina gives \$350 (\$US120) each month, to cover 50% of the project cost for one year. The other 50% is granted by ASDA Foundation (Diplomat Ladies Association). Direct beneficiaries of this food grant are those 190 people who have no possibility of getting a job or a subsidy from the government. The strategy is to support the Comedor so the adults don't have to leave the community for several months, and can dedicate their time to work on the newly cultivated fields in the community.

The community project of La Estrella which involves both the Comedor and the irrigation system for the cultivated field, is

coordinated by Mr. Daniel Nieli. Daniel, a social worker who has a degree from Buenos Aires University, moved to La Estrella during the 1992 cholera outbreak. He is the only non-Indian in the community where he has lived ever since. With the agreement of the community, he married a Chorote woman and they now have 5 children. Daniel is the link between the community and the Foundations that are helping them.

The Foundation Redes Solidarias, run by Mrs. Mercedes Bocca, is authorized by the community to fund the Comedor and provide other resources for the irrigation projects. This foundation was able to obtain grants for the irrigation project: solar panels that supply the energy for pumping good water during day and a water tank as a reservoir. This water irrigates the cultivated field. The grants for the Comedor have ended, but Susila Dharma will continue with their grant for one year. Redes Solidarias will continue supporting the irrigation project that will improve both the crops and the community's health.

During the trip I was able to see the finished small schoolroom for the village. This school project was possible due to a grant from SD Argentina during Rasjid Cesar's term as Chair. The community is very satisfied with this project, because they contributed the physical labour to finish the school building and SD Argentina's grant bought some of the building materials.

In the community there is one vehicle with a broken engine, which belongs to Daniel. It was used to help people to get to the nearest health centre at Santa Victoria or Tartagal. Daniel is very sad about this, because they often need to get urgently to the health centre, mainly when a baby is about to be born.

This visit to La Estrella was the strongest experience I have since I began working for Susila Dharma. The great contrast in the way they live and seeing the poverty of people who have nothing on the material side. Now I understand the reality about the many times I heard about poverty in Northern



Children from the La Estrella community, Argentina.

Argentina. I understand and realise that kids died here because there is no food and that this part of Argentina is hidden at the back of our houses.

It's very hard to get to La Estrella. I left Tartagal for a drive of only 180 km and it took 9 hours on a hot and dirty road to get there. I thought of pictures from Africa. After only two days at La Estrella I have enough to write a book, but this enough for now."

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Fundación Despertar

by Regina Bianchi

During 2003, Fundación Despertar continues its work with the community of Villa Benegas, a small village with 67 inhabitants that is 17 km. from Mina Clavero. The work of Despertar is framed in the mission to: "Strengthen resilience behaviours in kids and young people." By resilience we mean the capacity to go through hard situations and even be transformed by them.

The activities take place in the school of Villa Benegas has 16 students. Despertar gives creativity workshops to the children twice a week during school hours. These workshops are coordinated by two members of the Foundation and are jointly run with the families, the school and the community.

This workshop is part of a 3-year (2003-

2005) program. In the first half of 2003, a diagnosis was made in order to adapt the project to the reality and needs of the children of this community. In the second half the work was to deepen the 3 pillars of the resiliency: self-esteem, creativity and sense of humour.

In order to do that, Despertar gave workshops of self-expression through movement, plastic arts, puppets, reading and story telling, games and problem solving.

A toy library and a mobile library were created. This enables the children to take toys and books to their homes. This activity has a great impact in the families because it means that siblings, parents and grandparents share the games and readings.

Another community activity was to repair the first-aid post, which now has a bathroom, a cement floor, two windows, a water tank and painted walls. All this was possible thanks to a donation by SD Argentina, individual donations and the cooperation of the residents with their labour. Through the collaboration with a medical team of the "Cooperativa Eléctrica," Despertar obtained a monthly health visit to the Villa Benegas. Now all the children and the 60% of the women have had a health check-up. Workshops on diarrhoea, parasites, hypertension and hepatitis were given to the community.

In November 2003, Despertar presented a project to the Catholic University of Cordoba and received a subsidy to give training workshops about resilience to the rural schoolteach-

ers. This project will start next year and its aim is to develop the abilities of the teachers so they can strengthen resilient behaviours in the children of their rural communities.

2004 Objectives:

- Creativity workshops with a focus in resilience in the rural school of Villa Benegas.
- Training workshops about resilience to rural teachers in May and August.
- Evaluation and follow up of the projects elaborated by the teachers that attend the workshops.

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ICDP

by Lailah Armstrong

During 2003, an International Child Development program (ICDP) Project took place in Mina Clavero sponsored by SD Britain.

Two Subud members living in Mina Clavero, Virna Casuccio and Ramona Koch, felt that the community around them would benefit from ICDP training. They were very successful in advertising, informing and raising awareness about ICDP in the various communities in and around Mina Clavero and were able to interest 40 people, includ-



Workshop in self expression, Despertar Project, Argentina.



Camila Romero, ICDP.

ing doctors, social workers, teachers, parents to come to seminars in January and April 2003. The seminars were held by a team of ICDP

facilitators from Buenos Aires, who formed and registered the NGO called *Entrelazos*: Camila, Liliana, Zulema and Sabrina. This team had previously implemented ICDP in the south of Buenos Aires, in the area of Berazategui and were now contacted to do the training in Mina Clavero.

After the seminars, half of the participants decided to work as ICDP promoters in small-scale projects. They implemented ICDP with their own colleagues with small children, as well as with poor families living in Mina Clavero and the neighbouring town of Cura Brochero. Their work was supervised by Entrelazos.

These small projects generated enthusiasm for ICDP in general and there was evidence of a positive impact on the families involved. Among the promoters, there were 8 who then decided to start training new people as ICDP promoters and these projects are currently developing.

There were two other ICDP initiatives in Argentina: In the poor community of Don Torquato, in the area of Tigre, north of Buenos Aires, an ICDP project had been developing since 2002, by a team of 4 facilitators, Lamberto, Rasjid, Marcelo and Sebastiano. From the group of mothers that participated in the initial training, 10 wished to be trained as ICDP promoters, so the team supervised their work with new families. Another group of 5 persons, living in Buenos Aires decided to work in Tigre and they carried out small-scale projects with poor families. A number of ICDP seminars were held for medical professionals working in Health Centres in 2 communities, Don Torquato and Rincon.

Following the initiative of Lawrence Leetz (SD Holland), Lailah Armstrong (UK) held an ICDP training seminar in Tafi del Valle, near Tucuman. A training programme

was set up for 2004, in cooperation with the facilitators from Entrelazos. A team of local community mothers, doctors and teachers will start working in 2004 as promoters of the programme. The key institutions involved so far are the Cooperative of the local indigenous people and a local school. There have been requests for training from several other institutions.

ICDP in South America and the Latin America network

by Rasjid Cesar

I've been working for 4 years as a representative of SD Argentina. It was a real blessing for me because this work made me investigate and learn a lot about the social and cultural work that we Subud members should bring about in the communities in which we live. How we are supposed to be using our spiritual understanding to improve and to change the painful situations we human beings go through during our crazy growth, full of jealousy and perversion in the world, which sometimes carries the name of "globalisation" and "technological progress".

From my role in SD, I understood that it was necessary that we Subud members

work together to fundamentally realise social projects in which we could apply the guidance we receive and put into practice the Subud values (Susila, Budhi and Dharma) or at least, that while making this effort we would begin to understand: What these values mean and how far they are developed within ourselves?

That is how, since 2000 I helped the child development program of ICDP, created and promoted by European Subud members, to become stronger in South America. Subud members of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay initiated this process with very good results in the field. I participated actively in the process in Argentina and I collaborated twice with the project in Brazil with Eleazar Luft of CeLuAn (page 7). In 2001 I initiated a process in Uruguay, where I was born, to start ICDP. At this moment I am evaluating an intervention in the field, which started in November of 2003. This is being done with an important NGO in Uruguay, El Abrojo that works with children, young people and poor families who live on the streets.

During this process I felt more and more strong and clear that it is fundamental that we really function as a network within Subud. I really expect that the social and cultural work of Subud members, through our cultural association and SD will become something effective and that it will generate



ICDP training session with mothers in the Tigre area outside Buenos Aires, Argentina.

concrete improvements for the people who are suffering from all kinds of needs and being excluded from society. But, to make this happen, it is necessary that Subud members work in harmony, trust and above all, with a lot of surrender and sacrifice and with a sense of work, effort and involvement. It is not enough to change the world with “feelings” and “correct attitudes”. It is necessary that we leave aside competitiveness among each other in our Subud organization and stop being afraid to put into practice our spiritual awareness.

I think that we need to be critical towards the work we do and that we need not be afraid of people who are critical, but to bring about real activities for the organizations. In the double action of being critical and self-critical, we will find the tools to transform Subud into an effective organization. We should learn as much from our mistakes as from our positive experiences.

That is why I dedicated myself during these three years, to pushing forward the growth of an ICDP program in my region. If this work has benefited many children and poor families, I feel that what has to grow alongside the projects is our Subud organization itself. For example, the newly born Susila Dharma Network for Latin America (created in Brazil 2003 - see page 20) should produce its first fruits and that it should fundamentally be a space for exchange to identify what type of programs we could implement in America to beat poverty, exclusion and injustice. It is obvious that we will not solve these problems alone, but Subud has the obligation to fulfil its part and do it correctly.

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ICDP is coordinating the expansion of the ICDP network in Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, and the ICDP training policy is planned and implemented through the work of ICDP international consultants, supported by ICDP project committees, appointed for each country.



Members of the Indigenous community in the Valley of Tafi, Tucuman, Argentina.

La Obra Madre

This program in Buneos Aries uses theatre to work with children and young adults with special needs.

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Tucuman Project

The Tucuman Project in northern Argentina is a local initiative that supports the rights and development of an indigenous community, who have been dispossessed of their traditional knowledge, skills and lands. Working closely with the community, SD Holland has taken the lead by raising funds for the purchase of lands traditionally, and now once again, held in common by the community and managed according to customary law.

Lawrence Leetz: “Marcos Pastrana is the coordinator and originator of the (INCAI) cooperative. He

started three years ago making the indigenous people aware of their ancestral heritage and values. He started training courses and reintroduced the concept of cooperatives the way of life of the old communities. What I experienced was that with the buying of 4 hectares of land, SD Holland has helped the “El Takellar” cooperative to consolidate its position in the Valley of Tafi affecting 10,000 people. We are helping to speed up a process that they started three years ago. Some indigenous families had joined together



Lawrence Leetz (left) and Marcos Pastrana (right).

(in respect of their ancestral values) to take a stand against abusive authorities. They school themselves, cultivate crops without chemicals and respect nature. I told Maarten Giel (SD Holland) that this is a project we should be proud of and that we should keep supporting them and recognize that finally we have some well-organized ancestral communities to assist. When people see the photos of the Incai project, they are moved and want to make a contribution to my 'wool project', a little fund to buy wool for these hard working women of Tafi."

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BRAZIL

**CeLuAn, ICDP
and a Child's
Garden of
Peace**

by Illène Pevec

The purpose of these educational projects located in the town of Santo Angelo (about 80,000 population), state of Rio Grande do Sul in the southern end of Brazil, is to support the full personal development of children and youth and to provide parenting and job training support to their parents.

This collaborative work is based on:

1. Community visioning.
2. Healthy living, including the planting and harvesting of food and medicinal plant gardens.
3. General education in environmental principles, Brazilian culture, arts, manual skills like gardening, sewing and woodworking, basic computer education, and interpersonal communication skills.
4. Creation of micro-enterprises
5. Development of local leadership, both youth and adult .

The people involved are about 200 children and their parents from several slums and three Brazilian Subud members, Eleazar and Ignez Luft and Theresinha and their

families, some local agencies, school teachers and community leaders and myself, a USA Subud member.

In 2002 I was able to go twice to Brazil to work with the children, youth and families that I had begun working with in 2001 when we began the Child's Garden of Peace (Progeto Sossego do Meio Ambiente). During the first visit Eleazar Afonso and Ignez Luft, my Subud hosts, who run an association called CeLuAn (Centro Ludico Angelus) were very busy with their own school and were only able to participate in weekend activities. When I returned in January of 2002 it was summer vacation time. The Lufts made their facilities, a school

in the garden work and in play activities. In the Brazilian Spring of 2002 (September/October) we worked further with the teens to utilize and expand their natural abilities with the younger children. Brazilian culture does not segregate people by age. People customarily do things in multi-age groups. The older teens naturally care for the younger children. We ran a parent and pre-schoolers program during both visits. We required a family member to come with the pre-schoolers so that parents could learn how to play with and support the development of their children.

By September, Eleazar and Ignez had begun their ICDP training and were work-



Child's Garden of Peace, Santo Angelo, Brazil.

building with a young children's playground, and the outdoor gymnasium with playing field, small forest and swimming pool, available to run a summer camp for the children from the slum where a Child's Garden of Peace activities was active. Myra Margolin (USA) came as a volunteer in this period and taught both art and English at the summer camp. Ignez participated with the children and youth and Eleazar did administrative support and barbecuing for feasts. We established a model that trained the teens 15 and over to be camp counselors to the younger children.

This model of developing the teens' leadership capabilities has continued to work very well. Each teen has a group of children they are responsible for supervising

ing with parents in the community teaching ICDP's principles. I saw a larger participation by parents in the community work as a result of this, and a greater commitment to supporting the work we were doing with the children and youth. Much of the program I developed with the youth in these two months was to prepare them for the trip to Iguacu Falls, where the teens would supervise small groups of the 10 to 14 year olds. None of them had ever gone away on a trip except perhaps to visit a nearby relative and it was important to have a cohesive, responsible group for the safety and enjoyment of all. The youth 10 to 18 had developed a list of Principles of the Project in January, and those were our guidelines for group and personal behaviour.



Illène Pevéc



Afonso Eleazar Luft

Ignez had trained the teens in traditional Brazilian songs and games and taught them how to make toys and activities from recycled materials. They used these games and materials in their daily work with the younger children. All children continued to come in the morning or afternoon for 2.5 hours of activity. With those over 10 who were going on the trip, we focused on activities that developed observational skills such as silence, listening, drawing and journal writing prior to the trip. We worked on group dynamics and respect for each other. We had a nature study of local trees and plants to prepare the youth for the natural environment of the Iguacu National Park.

This development of interpersonal skills has continued as Ignez, Eleazar, and Theresinha have continued to work with the same youth and add more to the program since we all returned from our October 2002 trip to Iguacu Falls. The Child's Garden of Peace now seems to be fully integrated into CeLuAn's programs. CeLuAn uses the structure of continuing to develop the leadership skills of the adolescents to work with the many younger children. Some mothers have completed the ICDP training and have become regular members of the team. The purpose of the activities with the children and community adults is to develop community and individual self-sufficiency so that people can provide for their own needs and those of the children in the community. The mothers now working in the program earn a small salary for their work, as do the teen counsellors. To date all this money comes from funds raised in North America.

The name CeLuAn translated means a center for play as a means of personal devel-

opment in Santo Angelo. Eleazar and Ignez Luft have closed the school for middle class children that they ran successfully for 17 years and now devote their professional lives to programs for the children and parents living in the nearby slums. All the funding for these programs comes from the US and Canada, with ICDP funding for the work they do with parents coming from SD Britain.

With money from the Lewis Foundation, I purchased some sewing machines to run a sewing program for youth and parents. The purpose was for them to gain a new skill, be able to provide some basics for their families and perhaps develop mini-enterprises that could help support their families. Ignez was the instructor and parents and youth have learned to make underwear, shoulder tote bags, tea towels, slippers and small rugs. To date these have all been for personal use, which for many is a step forward.

At the same time in 2003 programs were run to teach ICDP skills to the teens who supervise the younger children in creative play activities. The children come at different times depending on their age and range from 2 to 14. The counselors are youth 14 and up, with new youth in training all the time as they come of age. Most of the counselors are young people who have been part of the Child's Garden of Peace from its inception.

The school age children come in differ-

ent groups depending on whether they go to regular public school in the morning or afternoon (they have a 4 hour school day). Each day's activities for children of all ages include an opportunity to practice and learn good personal hygiene and nutrition. The younger children are picked up from their homes by their group leaders and walked to the CeLuAn facility. All children wash their hands with soap before the daily snack and brush their teeth afterwards.

The children sing, play circle games and tell stories to reinforce oral abilities, listening and the continuance of Brazilian culture. The teen leaders prepare the snack for the children, usually whole grain bread with a fruit spread and milk or fruit juice, sometimes cheese and/or fresh fruit. Most of these children are underweight and rarely get milk or juice at home. One of the purposes of the Child's Garden of Peace has been to plant enough fruit trees in the neighbourhood so that eventually there is a supply of fruit in the neighbourhood free for the picking, but so far only the passion fruit vines have matured to provide fruit.

About 200 children and youth have been served by these programs that now continue most of the year. In the summer swimming and swim lessons are part of the activities which is a favourite of everyone. In the middle of 2003 wood-working was added to the activities so that children and youth are now learning how to make some useful wooden items for home, like stools. The long-term goal is to develop enough skill



Woodworking workshop for youth at CeLuAn project, Santo Angelo, Brazil.

to be able to sell some things at the Sunday crafts market and realize an income from their own skills.

The CeLuAn programs also offer computer classes for children and youth. They get instruction in PC use and play educational games. For future job training this program is very important and the program will need some new computers and software.

CeLuAn wants to make these education projects self-sustaining. The region of Santo Angelo is called "The Missions." If you saw the movie by the same name you know that the Jesuits came and established agricultural missions to the Guarani Indians in the 1700s. In these missions groups of 1,000 to 3,000 Indians lived in a variety of locales, including Santo Angelo, with 2 or 3 priests. They farmed collectively and made the rest of what they needed in artisan workshops. They were totally self-sufficient until the Portuguese and Spanish armies destroyed them in dispute over whom would control the land. The Lufts hope to use their land to make a re-creation of some aspects of these old missions. This would serve as a tourist attraction for the many visitors who come to this historic region and as a way for the young people and some of their parents to have a way to earn a living as artisans. A small percentage of sales would go to supporting the programs with the children on an on-going basis. CeLuAn has the physical infrastructure they need for the workshops, and need about \$20,000 for machinery, materials, marketing materials, etc. These plans will be developed further and described in more detail by CeLuAn.

The organic gardening program has been moved from the community center where the Child's Garden of Peace began to another site in the community due to some disputes with the president of the community center. The children and youth have just planted a second garden on the Celuan land close to their other activities. The children, youth and parents work at both. One of the challenges continues to be how to involve the adults and getting people to eat vegetables to expand their diets, a practice with which they are not familiar.

Some of the Celuan activities are also carried on at the Catholic Church in the

community just two doors away from the community center where we began the initial activities in 2001.

I have written this report based on the reports sent to me by Eleazar Luft. I apologize if I have left out anything or misunderstood anything of the many activities being carried on by CeLuAn. I encourage anyone with skills in teaching English as a second language or any arts and handcrafts, computer skills and small enterprise and marketing skills to go to Santo Angelo to volunteer. The children are the most enthusiastic students imaginable, and the Lufts are kind and gracious hosts. Be prepared to pay a small room and board fee to help develop these programs into mini-enterprises that can help remove these families from the cycle of poverty endemic in the region.

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CHILE

SD Chile

The SD Chile team was chaired until recently by Sabrina Castillo who has now moved to Holland.

A new team is in place under the coordination of Sarah Becker. Before she left, Sabrina sent us this description of an activity of SD Chile.



Celebración Fiestas Patrias at Colegio Peabody, Chile.

Celebración Fiestas Patrias

In Chile, on September 18 and 19, we celebrate the National Party or Independence Day. The tradition is to celebrate with a national dance called *cueca*, traditional food like *empanada*, and of course the national drink of a good Chilean wine.

In 2003, SD Chile celebrated this date with the children of the Colegio Peabody. Three weeks before, Henry Castillo taught the children to dance *cueca*. So many loving and dedicated boys and girls were ready to show their parents and teacher what they learned and how fine they danced! It was really wonderful to see these little children dance with so much energy and happiness on the stage. Particularly thanks to the Local Committee of Providencia, who gave the drinks and *adornos* for the school.

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COLOMBIA

SD Colombia

At the national Subud meeting held in Amanecer Armenia on October 11-13, 18 people attended the Susila Dharma meeting; they came from Popayan (2), Cali (4), Pamplona (1), Bucaramanga (1), Armenia (3), Bogotá (3) and Amanecer-Armenia (4). At the same time a census was made of people interested in working for the charitable arm of Subud, and the ground rules for forming SD Colombia (SDC) were agreed upon before the election of the national representative. Moreno was elected as the chair of SDC.

The first meeting of SDC was held on December 6th and 7th in Bogotá, but after several attempts to communicate, only half of the original group were able to meet: Bucaramanga, Pamplona and Bogotá. Marcela made it clear that the chair of SDC works both for the National Committee and Bogotá group.

The Bogotá group has performed several activities in order to collect funds toward a solidarity fund to help Subud members - a bookmark with a message about the meaning of Susila Dharma and a Christmas greeting was created and sold to members. The Bogotá group is already interested in SD and Marcela hopes the same will happen all across the country.

Activities since October 2003

At the December 2003 meeting the representatives from Pamplona, Bucaramanga and Bogotá designed a program for 2004, which is available to anyone who is interested. SDC intends to show this work plan to the SD representatives of other groups in Colombia, so all of them may start working on it and the results can bring a solid structure to SD Colombia.

The team paid a visit to four projects:

1. El Refugio, works on behalf of youth at drug risk in Bogotá.
2. Community Center "Guía de Amanecer"

Association, cares for the children of working mothers and provides education to low income women in a poor area of Bogotá.

3. Seeds of Love and Faith Foundation (FSAF), gives protection to children displaced by violence and living under the poorest conditions in Bucaramanga, Santander.

4. Semillitas and Amanecer School educates children from the countryside of La Tebaida, Quindio and children living in Amanecer.

To help the development of SDC activities, the following is required:

- a camera
- grants to increase the Solidarity Fund which has just started. We have been able to give assistance to only 2 out of 6 people who are jobless and sick in this moment.

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El Refugio

Eight years ago four women jewellers in Bogotá who felt concern about the risks and violence facing young people, decided to put their knowledge at the service of the community. They created the Fundación



Benjamin Barrera and Nury Bonilla manage El Refugio project.



Students get training in art & design at El Refugio, Bogotá.

El Refugio, which offers a comprehensive training program with the aim to prevent social problems for children and young people from various high-risk zones within the city of Bogotá. Their Foundation was registered as a charity in 1994 and is under the management of Nury Bonilla and Benjamin Barrera.

The project offers three programs: the first is focused on individual self-awareness, the second involves learning about his/her environment and responsibility towards the community, and the third is a technical and artistic training program in micro-enterprise development including job placement at the end of the training.

The position of infants, children and young people, who represent almost half the total population of Colombia, is still precarious. The children and their families served by the project are in a condition of critical poverty, involved in the informal sector of the economy, with low and unstable incomes. They live in peripheral urban or high-risk areas, in accommodation scarcely fit for human habitation.

The aims and objectives of the program are: to strengthen the various programmes offered; to widen the programs to serve up to 200 youngsters; to acquire the tools and materials needed for the development of the programme and to have enough funds to pay the professionals and other staff who run the project.

The work of El Refugio was recently interrupted because they lost their premises and finding a new location has become a priority. They need assistance to secure a loan or donations to enable them to buy a

property for the project.

Financial support for the production process, which is an opportunity to create an effective solution for the problem which affects the young people the most – the lack of income in their households. Support is needed for the purchase of raw materials, optimization of equipment, labour for the manufacture of samples and products for sale.

Funding for the prevention programme is needed because the problems facing children and young people in the city of Bogotá are getting worse every day. The Refuge has several years of experience achieving good results through the implementation of the programmes, and they can call on experienced professionals. There are very few preventive projects in Bogotá.

With some support from a member via SD International, the project has been able to publish a catalogue of the jewellery they produce, participate in a trade show and gain new markets.



Children from the Semillitas project, Fundación Amanecer, Colombia.

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Fundación Amanecer

A brief history of the social project development at Amanecer:

1992 – “Semillitas” pre-school program began for children of seasonal coffee workers who lived near Amanecer.

1993 – Subud World Congress at Amanecer.

1994 – ICDP was initiated as a program to reach the wider community.

1997 – “Talentos” began as a program of Semillitas.

1999 – Earthquake – Amanecer takes on a much bigger social role in the area for at least a year. The Fundación receives a large influx of funding.

2000 – “Escuela Nuestra Fatima” began as an elementary school for the Amanecer Community children.

2003 – ICDP, based at Amanecer, receives funding from UNICEF to implement a national program.

Semillitas

This early childhood education programme for the children of poor families from the surrounding area was the first effort at Amanecer to reach out to the community.

Semillitas began very small, but has grown over the years, finally expanding to 180 children in the wake

of the earthquake that hit Armenia and the surrounding area in 1999. It has now come back down to size, with approximately 30 children and families benefiting from its services. But while much about Semillitas remains the same, it is important to recognize its work as the “bedrock” upon which other initiatives, such as the Colegio and ICDP Colombia were later built.

Based on the small annual support

received from ICBF (the Colombian agency for child and family welfare) and a small contribution from SD Canada and SD Holland, the program continues to function. However



Chayatun Valencia.

there is no money for capital investments, such as the purchase of a new and more secure vehicle to transport the children to and from Amanecer. SD nationals who want to support this important purchase can contact Lawrence Leetz of SD Holland (Lawrence_leetz@hotmail.com).

Colegio de Nuestra Fatima

The Colegio is a primary school providing classes from Kindergarten to Grade 2. There are 17 children presently enrolled, and the hope is to gradually build up the number of students and eventually including more grade levels.

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Fundación Amor

The Fundación Educativa Amor in Soacha, on the outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia, has provided primary and secondary education in its Colegio for students from poor families since 1988. The project was created to allow children to learn and play in a safe environment, free from the pressures of the street and the violence of a civil war that has lasted more than 40 years and is now moving to the cities; and to give them a few hours of respite from their often serious family problems.

The Foundation offers various afternoon activities for the students, their families and others from the community, such as recycling used goods, producing handicrafts, clothes design and dressmaking, computer training, and learning to bake and process



Students in the schoolyard at Fundación Amor, Soacha, Colombia.

fruit in the project-owned facility. In their free time, students organize themselves into clubs - sports, painting, reading and theatre. Workshops on drugs, AIDS, alcoholism, intra-family violence and human rights round off an education that aims to produce graduates that will be agents of change in their generation.

There is a steady influx of refugees from the rural areas of Colombia. These displaced people are helped by FE Amor to resettle and retrain. FE Amor, in cooperation with the University of Colombia, has published a book which is used in the training of social workers throughout Latin America - *Stories of Violence: The Impact of Forced Displacement on Children and Youth*. A small organic garden has been created to demonstrate how organic farming can be done in urban areas. A chicken coop provides eggs for the school restaurant.

Since October 2000 FE Amor has been run by Sebastian de los Rios, one of the founders, assisted by 15 staff and teachers. In 2003, 270 students in 11 grades were taught in the Colegio Amor, among them some handicapped children who are well integrated. FE Amor is registered as a Foundation and administered by a Board. The goals of the project are to:

- provide a traditional, comprehensive education to low income children and young people.
- involve the surrounding community in order to improve community relations and promote peace.
- eliminate school dropout rates by using an experiential pedagogy founded on social values, practical education for employment,



Sebastian de los Rios, FE Amor project leader.

and using “love” as a transforming agent.

- generate a culture of citizenship by encouraging social skills to resolve family, community and social conflicts.

The Colombian Government recognizes the need for private schools like the Colegio Amor, and provides scholarships for about a third of the students. For some families however, the school fees are hard to maintain throughout the 10-month school term, so approximately 70 students drop out each year.

In 2002 a “Scholarship and Working Fund” was created to help the project deal with such hardship cases.

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Fundación Semillas Amor y Fe

Semillas de Amor y Fe is a project working in a squatters’ community, mainly displaced by the war, outside Bucaramanga. It is the work of a very strong team of committed Subud members from the Bucaramanga group who speak with insight and sincerity about their experience of being guided to recognise which community they should work with and how to work to improve the well-being and self-reliance of children and their families. The project provides a pre-school programme to approximately 70 children and their families. The team goes beyond offering a simple educational programme, to work with families to ensure parental support of the children, a sense of responsibility for the development of the project, and a willingness to contribute what they can.

For more than three years, the team has been working without any support from abroad. They were aware from the beginning that they would have to prove the validity of their ideas and work before seeking any outside support. The project is funded through



Founding team of Fundación Amor y Fe.

minimal contributions from families, and a lot of local support from friends, family members and numerous sponsors in the community. Of approximately 33 “sponsors” or “padrinos”, all are local and only three are Subud members. This means the project enjoys a high level of support from the local community, and people who are close to the work it does, both financially and morally.

The squatters’ community is now being granted some permanent land on which to build houses further out of the city. The team is committed to continuing the work that they have begun, which is showing good results both with the children and their families. They would like to purchase a piece of land in the new neighbourhood that is being created. While parents have volunteered to provide building materials and the labour to build the centre, outside funding will be needed to purchase the land.



One family assisted by Fundación Amor y Fe, Bucaramanga.

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ICDP Colombia

The International Child Development Program (ICDP) is one of the most impressive cases of the work of Subud members, which has a broad and far-reaching social impact, well beyond what we normally expect or can anticipate. This has been possible through years of committed work in

UNICEF Colombia for a continuation of the last year’s ICDP project (which received \$55,000 US, was nation-wide and reached over 60,000 children). This year they received \$35,000 US for refresher workshops, for printing the ICDP materials as a kit for wide use in Colombia, and for the making of a promotional video showing the impact of their work last year.

On the 5th of November, ICDP was officially launched in Colombia by UNICEF Colombia Director Manuel Manrique at the UNICEF premises in Bogotá. It gathered 80 key government and non-government organizations and networks, including universities. The promotional video was shown and the new ICDP materials were put on display. A publicity campaign was organized through the leading newspaper *El Tiempo*.

In December, a new project proposal



ICDP Colombia: Lailah Armstrong, Patricia Garcia, Amata Aristizabal, Ilaina Ramirez, Anisa Andrade, Chayatun Valencia and Marzuki Andujar.

Colombia with the ICDP methodology, on the part of Lailah Armstrong and her core group of five women trainers: Chayatun, Ilaina, Amata, Anisa and Patricia. These 5 trainers, Marzuki Andujar and Lailah legally registered ICDP Colombia in May 2003, as a branch of ICDP International, with an office at Amanecer. They also signed a contract with

was agreed between ICDP, UNICEF and the director of ICDBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar) for Narino, which is the poorest area of Colombia and one of the most affected by the armed conflict. The project aims to reach 200,000 children through the ICBF network, by giving ICDP training to 3,500 ICBF community workers who will implement the programme with 55,000 families. A research study to evaluate the impact of ICDP will be led by the director of the research centre in Medellin working in cooperation with the University of Narino.



CUBA

SD Cuba

SD Cuba plays a central role in liaising with supporters overseas - applying for funds on behalf

of projects that needs support, receiving the funds, distributing them, overseeing the projects and reporting back to funding organizations. Vivian Amalia Vazquez, a medical doctor in Manzanillo, is the Chair of SD Cuba and is assisted by the past Chair, Kamil Ojeda. Here is Amalia's report about Susila Dharma activities in Cuba.

Projects in Cuba

"Republic of Nicaragua" Junior High School takes care of about 400 students while the Primary School for Special Education "Nueva Juventud", has about 120 kids in the process of learning and developing their psychomotor skills. Both schools are being supported by SD with items such as hygiene and cleaning supplies, school material, food for the children, presents for the best students for learning performance and to hold celebrations and parties during the Student's Day (April 4th) and at the end of the school term in July. Last year an air conditioner was also purchased for the computer lab at Republic of Nicaragua to protect the machines and guarantee their life expectancy.

In Camagüey, a city located 400 miles east of Havana, a very interesting job is being done to support a Children's Home where close to 20 children and adolescents live. These boys and girls do not have a family of their own, and they lack of material as well as spiritual support.

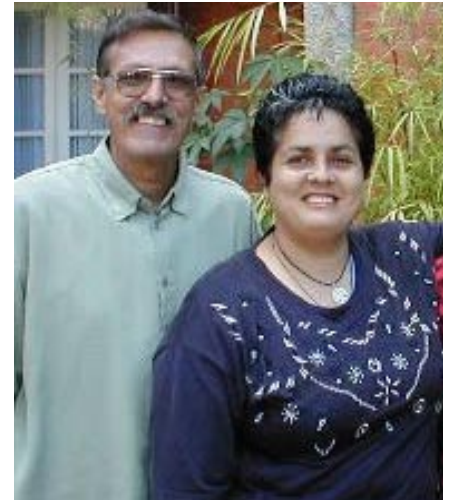
SD is working in two projects in the city of Manzanillo, where nearly 200 Subud members lives. One project is a nursery home clinic located in the community of Los Letreros, in the outskirts of the city. The old people there suffer from a number of different pathologies. SD is giving support to buy hygiene and cleaning material, both for the patients and the clinic, food to improve

their physical condition and we share our spirituality with the project leaders.

The second project in Manzanillo is the Project HOPE, which brings together people suffering from different illnesses who live in very poor social-economical conditions, who are assisted by the government but with serious limitations, due to the low monthly pensions of less than US \$5. Amongst the patients there are people suffering from AIDS, Down Syndrome, and other chronic neuropathies. Some of these patients suffer from incontinence and I particularly want to express our gratitude to the members in SD Canada, who have given a great support to this project by sending a number of oilcloth mattress covers. I personally thank you on my behalf and on behalf of the patients' relatives.

Thanks to the support received from Subud members in the world, it has been possible to continue working in each one of these projects.

We have recently started to work on a new SD project in Manzanillo. It was conceived in February and we started to work on it in March 2003. The project is the result of efforts by two Subud members in Manzanillo who are working together with others in the city. The project takes care of around 200 handicapped people, suffering



Kamil Ojeda and Vivian Amalia Vasquez.

from moderate mental retardation. The project delivers workshops to help these people develop skills for manual work, so that they feel useful to the society. Some of the objects made in these workshops are even being sold and the money collected helps to pay for a small stipend each person receives to help improve their living conditions.

This is a kind of joint effort, which involves several institutions. We have managed to involve the Direction for Public Health in Manzanillo, the Ministry of Education, The Ministry for Work and Social Welfare, The Cuban Women Federation and The Higher Institute of Pedagogy



Young people who live in the Children's Home, Camagüey, Cuba.

with Susila Dharma. We hope in the future to have the co-operation of the Ministry of Culture and the Institute for Sport and Leisure Time Activities as well. The project is called Soñar Despiertos, which translates to Project Daydream.

The Susila Dharma Emergency Aid Fund is given to each of the Subud groups on the island and the SD representative in the group administers it. That person is in charge of making decisions on how this fund is to be used, and he or she is assisted by the local helpers in some cases. This fund covers the needs of Subud members as well as people from the community with special hardships: sickness, natural disasters, accidents, etc. During the last two years the amount of this Fund has diminished. The SD Cuba team feels that the money is being used well.

During 2002, SD Cuba held a Regional Workshop with the SD representatives from the 6 groups in Manzanillo and the group in Niquero. It was not possible to have a national workshop due to the limitations in transport and accommodation, but the workshop was very useful because it included 7 of the 11 SD reps in the country. We discussed strategies and policies for our future work.

We have the feeling that the members in Cuba are committed and feel the projects as something important in their lives. A very strong link has been established with the local and national helpers and it is customary to visit both the projects, as well as the members who are sick or facing hardships. We have improved our spiritual awareness and have gained consciousness that it is important to keep a balance between giving and receiving. Consequently we are in the process of learning how to give our individual best to the rest of human kind.

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Workers in the health food enterprise at Asociacion Vivir, Ecuador.



ECUADOR

SD Ecuador

The SD group in Ecuador is up and operating. Each person on the team

now has concrete tasks in planning an SD workshop for Zone 8, as was decided by the Latin American SD Network when they met in Brazil in August. With the assistance of SD International, they hope to offer a program to strengthen skills of project leaders from Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. Look for announcements of the details about dates, place and content of workshops soon.

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Asociación Vivir

Targets/ Main activities

Asociación Vivir is a private non-profit organization in Tumbaco/ Quito, Ecuador, which began in 1987 and was officially registered in 1991. Vivir promotes a health

care system that encourages people to take control and responsibility for their own well-being. The idea for helping local people came from a physician, Dr. Mariana Eliana Galarza de Garzón. Vivir's main target is to empower people by giving them the tools that they need in order to understand how to maintain good health. Therefore, it aims to transform the Ecuadorian healthcare system through a self-developed innovative model of Health Promotion.

The Integrated Health Care Center offers a combination of medical services, integrating western medicine with homeopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic, psychology and dentistry. Systematic training in nutritional cooking, prevention of frequent diseases and simple home remedies to treat common ailments are part of the educational program. It helps people reconnect with their own ancestral beliefs, healing practices, values and customs. According to Vivir's approach, prevention is far more important than curing, and also far more affordable. Although the health model promoted by Vivir can be applied to any social group, the poor people have certainly benefited most.





Dr. Mariana Eliana Garzon presenting the work of Vivir in Brazil, 2003.

Current activities:

In 2000, Vivir was selected by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the fifteen best models of health promotion world-wide. Since then, the recognition and respect for their approach has grown at the national and international level. By now, a number of programs are partly supported by Ecuadorian governmental institutions, private foundations and enterprises as well as by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). In 2002, the new training center in Tumbaco was inaugurated. In the same year, the core instrument, Eliana Garzón's new book *The Power of Food (El Poder de la Comida)*, was launched with a big ceremony. Now, Vivir's health care model is taught and implemented by responsible actors within and outside Ecuador:

- Training courses in Health Promotion are carried out for professionals of public institutions, i.e. doctors, nurses and medical staff.
- The S.I. Escuela Program (Integrated Health and Nutrition from the School) is implemented in several provinces of Ecuador, as well as in the entire Tumbaco valley, in order to create a "healthy valley". This program reaches children, teacher and parents, and therefore leads to an improved awareness and health conditions in entire communities.
- Health Promotion is put into practice

also in local enterprises in order for the community to fulfil social standards as well as enjoy an improved state of health for the staff.

- Vivir is expanding its medical center with a medical spa.

Biggest problems and challenges

Although an increasing number of institutions and organizations are supporting Vivir, the broad range of activities requires far more funds. The highly professional staff in the medical center as well as fundraisers, consultants etc. are not being paid appropriately and tend to leave Vivir for a better-paid job. Also, Eliana and her husband Marcus are heavily overworked. Therefore, an assistant has joined the team, funded by a group of SD Nationals.

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Inka Samana School

José María Vacacela and Uraida María Carmen Vacacela operate an indigenous school in the mountains of Ecuador, which offers both elementary and high school. They reported these activities for 2002:

"In 2002, we finished the construction project that we had between UEAITIS, SD Germany and the German government. The project finished, but the building didn't. We started a bigger building and it is still unfinished. We have asked Ecuadorian govern-



The school overlooking the countryside in Ecuador.

ment organizations to finish it, but have not received an answer yet. Since October 2002 we are using a new room in the unfinished building for the high school.

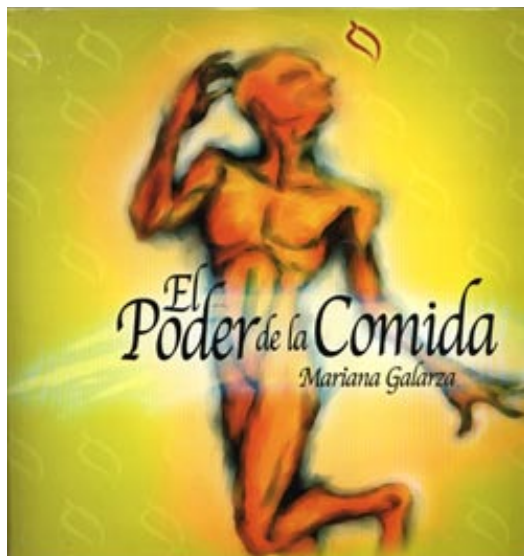
Every year we travel to study in a place chosen by the high school students. In 2002 they chose the Galapagos Islands. We worked together to raise funds and in June we went for seven days.

The projects such as the furniture workshop, store, and credit bank are working well.

A volunteer from Switzerland came to teach English, but she got sick in a month and returned back to her country.

Since October, the high school students are planning the travel plans for 2003. In May we will go to Cusco & Macchupichu. For this we started two activities:

1. A used articles and clothing market.
2. An artistic show.



"Power of Food" - nutrition as a source of health.



Jose Maria Vacacela (center) and Julia Frischeisen-Köhler from SD Germany (right), an Inka Samana partner.

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Sintral (LETS) Network

by Mauricio and Rebeca Wild

European Experiences

Between June and October, we have again been giving courses on education in Spain, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Frequently in workshops and slide shows, questions arose about how the economical framework influences the efforts of respecting the laws of development in children and adults and how financial pressures endanger the relaxed environment which is necessary for authentic life processes.

In several places where people have already been practicing alternative economy, we were also invited to share our experience and show slides of the Sintral network in Ecuador. Contributions made on a voluntary basis have helped to keep the network going. In Vorarlberg, Austria, we were invited to a celebration of the local LETS group who

last year had organized various activities in order to finance a 5-ton truck for Sintral. It was very touching to listen to their accounts of how their initiatives had turned on a dynamic process in their own group.

Exchange of Goods and Services in Ecuador

During the summer months of 2003, the following activities and developments have taken place in Sintral:

Due to the imposed dollarization, the economic situation has been deteriorating considerably in Ecuador. In the Pestalozzi

School where the first group of alternative economy had been started years ago, this condition is also reflected. During the current school year only 20% of the children are able to pay full tuition. This has caused a new shift towards alternative economy. It is now 88% of the parents who partially or totally pay tuition with Sintral checks. This accounts for more than 30% of the income of the school. The low salaries of teachers and other staff are supplemented by alternative currency. Substitute teachers and other services are paid the same way, in order to lessen this year's unavoidable deficit.

During the last months, thanks to the dedication of three drivers who drove a total of 47,000 km, many products have been transported between the Andean and Coastal regions, some on bad roads.

This is how during these last months 66 Sintral markets could be organized, most of them serving transactions between Andean and Coastal regions.

From the Andes the trucks transported mainly potatoes, wheat, barley, corn, beans, vegetables, herbs, used clothes and handicrafts. From the coastal regions to the highlands the trucks were usually fully loaded with bananas, platanos, fruits of many kinds, coffee, cocoa, sugar cane, raw sugar, pumpkins and other tropical prod-

ucts. The Sintral communities in the Andes who during the dry season often suffer from a very poor diet, were extremely thankful for all these products.

The three drivers put emphasis on being accompanied by people of the different Sintral groups taking turns in travelling with them from one region to the other -not only to help to load and unload heavy cargoes and to assist those with difficulties in filling out their checks, but also not to be left alone all night on long journeys on dangerous, sometimes foggy roads.

Through these trips, people have made personal contact with individuals of other Sintral groups, their conditions of production, their various forms of life and often very different mentalities.

This is how many intercultural encounters and a better understanding of the situation of other people go along with agreements upon the exchange of goods which favors a more direct and autonomous process of trading goods. And so simple transactions lead to human relations, which go far beyond exchanging one currency (charged by interest rates) for another (without interest). In our view, the real content and purpose of this change means to create circumstances suitable for more worthy human relationships.

Trips between markets usually last from 3-8 days, depending on distances and the need to collect products from one little farm to the other. Whenever possible, the drivers also dedicate time for dialogues about the experiences and meaning of Sintral. After markets they often visit people in their houses or huts, play the guitar, sing and dance with the people or play with their children.

Costs for fuel, oil and repairs of the trucks, for buying additional products and meals for the drivers and their companions, must still be financed with official currency.

Various activities in SINTRAL

- Each Tuesday morning, in the premises of the Autodidactic Network of the Pestalozzi School, the drivers and other volunteers who help to coordinate the network meet to exchange their experiences, to coordinate and reflect on what happens in Sintral.



Mauricio and Rebeca Wild.

- In the same premises there have been several meetings of regional coordinators and of farmers for whom SWISSAID has financed a training program in organic agriculture. During this training they visit organic farms and shops working in alternative technology, in order to gain practical experience.

- After lengthy negotiations, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Mines and Roads, through the mediation of the Fundación Niñez y Vida (Terre des Hommes Ecuador) has again put the old Mitsubishi truck at the disposal of Sintral. Some Sintral groups have started fund-raising activities to finance the motor.

- Groups of the very poor town Esmeraldas who urgently need agricultural products, have begun to offer services to the network. An afro-music and dance group has traveled with Sintral trucks to other places to play for special feasts and have returned home with all kinds of food. Some women have offered courses in basket and shoe making, sewing and other handicraft in exchange for agricultural products.

- Another group in the Coastal region has put several hectares of land at the disposal of another group in the Andes. Here they share their experience in planting rice at times when agricultural activities in the highlands are paralyzed because of lack of rain.

Centers for Autonomous Activities

This is the youngest and for us maybe the most significant branch of Sintral activities, because here we are creating appropriate circumstances for children and adults where they can interact with many kinds of materials, learn cultural techniques and create a community of autonomous self-educators without vertical relationships or regulations. We have visited centers where all age groups, from small children to grandparents, have played and worked together for hours without being directed by anybody.

At the moment such centers are functioning in eight places in the coast and the highlands. Further centers are in the process of being developed. Didactic materials are being elaborated in the carpentry shop and by a group of volunteers of the Pestalozzi School as well as by Sintral members in Esmeraldas. At the moment we are preparing materials for 15 centers.

Edgar Espinoza, a former Pestalozzi teacher, has been taking care of these centers during the last year. After our return from Europe, Mauricio and Rebeca have also started to travel, sharing our experiences with these centers. During the last week of November, all the coordinators and people interested in creating their own center, have come for training to the Pestalozzi. They have visited the Pestalozzi, practiced and produced materials, worked in silk screening and carpentry, have invented and presented a theater about Sintral, eaten and celebrated together with music and exchanged experiences with Pestalozzi parents.

In these centers the experiences and know-how gained in the Pestalozzi School during the last 26 years can be of great benefit. So hopefully within the framework of Sintral, our old dream can be fulfilled: to prepare environments of excellent human qualities and for free decision making put at the disposal of all sorts of people in their own communities, without the condition of paying tuition.

However, in our view it is very important

that in each community, language and other materials should be developed with content from their own cultures. Thus people can profit from our non-directive approach to education, but without being invaded by foreign values and understanding.

In the housing project of the Fundación Educativa Pestalozzi, a house is being built with the concept of a "Buckminster Fuller" structure, called dymaxion. Once we have the means to finish it, it will be used as a model and training place for other centers for autonomous activities. In August 2003, volunteers from various Sintral groups came to help to put up the main structure, in order to gain experience with this novel way of building, since it is relatively cheap, but strong and beautiful. Later on we hope to try out this technique with bamboo and other local materials.

Support of Sintral

As described above, the network of alternative economy in Ecuador still depends on supplements of regular currencies for financing fuel, spare parts, travelling expenses, subsistence of drivers and other expenses, such as for the creation of centers for autonomous activities.

First of all we would like to thank all those who last summer have organized our seminars in Europe and thus have indirectly supported Sintral. Also we give our thanks to all those who, through regular or occasional donations have made possible to continue with the exchange of goods and to develop new aspects of Sintral.

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PARAGUAY

Vida Plena

by Benita Gavilán

In the Vida Plena Foundation, two Subud members, Eugenia Weber and Benita Gavilán are working with a third person in the educational project called Vida Plena Educational Center in the town of Fernando De La Mora, just next door to Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. Children aged 3 to 13 are being attended in a non-formal, inclusive, active and self-guided learning environment in the mornings. In 2003 we had 22 registrations of which fifteen had to be financed with donated scholarships.

Working with the children in an



Benita Gavilán

open classroom situation is one of two areas where all the three staff are actively involved, the other being workshops with and home visits to our pupils' parents

and other families of this part of town. We are trying to show parents how they can improve their children's physical and mental health and interaction with them, right from the start. This is done through teaching about natural breastfeeding habits and practising the eight simple ICDP guidelines. A third area of activity is working as facilitators in institutions where 160 children and/or young people are being attended. These are: a private day care facility for the children of low income, working, single parents where we were working with a group of caregivers; and a non-governmental organization that looks after sexually exploited teenage mothers. Those ICDP facilitator activities have been made possible thanks to funds we received from SD Germany.

Both Eugenia and Benita, hold La Leche League Certificates as leaders for mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding. All of us working in Vida Plena are mothers

who at some moment have breastfed our babies and older children, even during our kindergarten and preschool working hours, as is our legal right but rarely practised in other work places. Thus the pupils and their families were able to witness natural mothering and nurturing habits, which they will never forget and hopefully repeat when they themselves become mothers and fathers!

At the Brazil Gathering in August Benita tried to convey the meaning and aim of her concept of a child and mother friendly educational institution to Subud members. Shortly after that, SD Britain provided a grant to start training Eugenia and Benita as ICDP trainers in a six-month project. In November, Benita offered the first workshop to ten new facilitators and she is currently supporting them with follow-up visits at their work places. Eugenia will offer another workshop in 2004.

Our school year ends in December. In addition to the usual closing ceremony with pupils and their parents, we organized a family outing to a small farm with animals, sports grounds, swimming pool and horse riding. This helps to bring us together in a different natural setting with lots of informal interaction and learning opportunities for parents and their children. Human mothering and fathering should go hand in hand with respect to natural resources – this is our aim.

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PERU

Dharma Bakti

In his dental practice, Arief Berrocal offers one day a week to low income patients.

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Donated computers are delivered to schools by SD Suriname.



SURINAME

SD Suriname

by Herman Jatin

Susila Dharma Suriname has a lot of activities at the moment. Since last year August, we have a partnership with a Dutch Foundation, called "Stichting Zorg samen voor Suriname", which means "Take care together for Suriname". Until now we received already eight 40-foot containers with goods, such as clothes, shoes, beds, linens, chairs, tables, furniture, schoolchairs and tables, wheelchairs, crutches, books etc.

These goods are distributed to people in need, schools, institutions for handicaps etc. Also a project to renovate school-toilets has been executed with financial aid of 4000 Euro from Susila Dharma Netherlands. The total project cost was 7500 Euro. The activities of receiving goods from Holland are ongoing.

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Latin America is one of the most active areas where Subud members are working in the social and charitable field. During the Brazil Gathering in 2003, the members present decided to create the Latin American Susila Dharma Network, which signaled a commitment to begin to support each other in order to strengthen their ability to carry out Susila Dharma activities.

We invite all those who have taken an active role in developing or supporting the development of Susila Dharma in Latin America, to submit additional information about anything described in this report to Susila Dharma International.

Donations to Susila Dharma International

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Susila Dharma International

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Tel 1-604-728-7122

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Email: info@susiladharm.org

Web: www.susiladharm.org

Donations to projects may also be given through your Susila Dharma National organization