

**A Global Partnership:
Giving Voice to the
People of El Salvador**

Algonquin College SalvAide Project
AMED Presentation 2011
Toronto, Ontario

Presenters

- ▶ Helen Crowe
(recent Social Service Worker Diploma Graduate and 2011 delegate)
- ▶ Melissa Proulx
(recent Social Service Worker Diploma Graduate and 2011 delegate)
- ▶ Lisa Shaw-Verhoek, MSW
(Co-ordinator of the Social Service Worker Program)

Purpose of the Presentation

- ▶ Explain how the Social Service Worker (SSW) Program at Algonquin College in Perth has partnered with SalvAide, an Ottawa based NGO
- ▶ Discuss the experiences of the students who have participated in a two week study tour
- ▶ Explore connections made with people, agencies, BSW Program and communities in El Salvador
- ▶ Share some door prizes

Why work locally and globally?

- o There are needs at both levels
- o We have a lot!
- o We have a responsibility to learn about social welfare here and in other countries
- o Globalization has made our world smaller
- o Exploring social safety nets in various countries is an important part of SSW education

Why partner with Salvadorians?

- › To support the people of El Salvador
- › To increase our cultural competence with student immersion in another culture and language
- › To learn about poverty in a context outside of Canadian poverty
- › To link with Social Service Providers in the field who share best practices
- › To meet Social Work Professors and Students to compare and contrast field placement and social service realities in the two countries

Why partner with Salvadorians?

- › Experience the technique of Popular Education (Equipo Maiz)
<http://www.equipoaiz.org.sv>
- › (We have some samples to pass around and there is a newsletter in your package)
- › Done with comics/pictures shared and discussed orally so people with literacy challenges and children can readily understand
- › Common topics are:
history/colonization/health/sexuality

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

› Article 25) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, (herself and of her family) including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>, Retrieved Nov. 5, 2008

Where is El Salvador?



Where? Urban and Rural

- › Capital city: San Salvador
- › Lower Lempa region of St. Vicente
- › Community of San Jose los Flores in the Territory of Chalatenango
- › Communities of Copapayo and El Barrio and Pepeistenango near Suchitoto



Challenges in El Salvador

- ▶ Civil War (1980–92) resulting in PTSD
- ▶ Peace accord was signed in 1992
- ▶ Natural disasters (Hurricane Mitch, earthquakes, floods, mudslides)
- ▶ Poverty (many of the people we meet live on less than a dollar per day)
- ▶ Limited support from the government
- ▶ Outward migration to the U.S. (illegal)
- ▶ Youth gangs are a HUGE issue!

How?

- ▶ Partnership with Ottawa based Non Governmental Organization
- ▶ Registered Canadian Charity
- ▶ www.salvaide.ca



3 Employees

- › Rene Guerra Salazar (Executive Director)
- › Jing Dou (Administrative Assistant -Part-time)
- › Miguel Mejia (El Salvador Representative)



Organizations in El Salvador

- › CORDES (technical skills)
<http://www.cordes.org.sv>
- › CRIPDES (capacity building, supporting women and youth in particular)
<http://www.cripdes.com>
- › Both were “born” (created) in refugee camps



Our partners?

- The target groups with which we partner include:
- › Women
 - › Seniors
 - › Children and Youth
 - › War Injured/War Amputees (both Combatants and Veterans)

Others that we meet include

- People from the Social Work Department (Five Year Program) at the University of El Salvador in San Salvador



Social Work Professors



Canadian Embassy Ambassador



Canadian Embassy



Our partners

Women, Children/Youth, Seniors, War Injured

Women

“Educate a woman and you educate a family”



Women and Food Security



Women and Food Security: Animal Banks (cow, pig, chicken, talapia)



Corn is a food staple for tortillas but it needs to be ground so there is a lot of work for women. Communal dough mills are \$1800 each.





CORDES and Methane Projects



CORDES and Methane Projects



Water: Bicycle Pump technology from Cuba (notice amputation)



Water: Youth Employment



Water Filters like a Brita filter



Water Privatization

- ▶ Two social workers and a driver from CRIPDES and 13 others were arrested and charged with terrorism (like the U.S. Patriot Act) over the privatization of water.
- ▶ The two women were flown in helicopters and told they were going to be thrown out of them (a technique used during the war by the death squads)
- ▶ After several months of incarceration, in the charges were dropped
- ▶ For days over 100,000 people demonstrated outside of the court house for them
- ▶ They are brave BSW grads who inspire my students

Water/Gold and Silver Mining: Canadian Companies Pacific Rim and Au Martinique are examples



Helen with Bernardo from CRIPDES who has presented to MP's in Canada on about the mining issue in El Salvador



Water/Gold Mining: Has been well researched and the people do not want it. Education is important.



CORDES and Housing: Old House on the left, new house on the right





**Health Promoters:
Women in the communities
empowered
by CRIPDES**



**HIV/Aids: Support and Education,
A CRIPDES Project needing funds**



Vitamins: All types requested



Co-operatives/Community Economic Development

- › Artisan/Crafts/La Palma Style
- › Fernando Llorc
- › Women and men being paid a fair price



Dried Fruit Co-operative Using Solar Technology



Coffee Co-operative

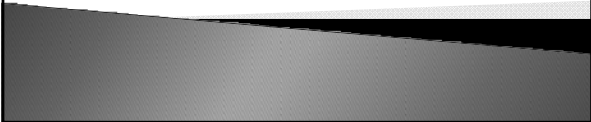


Cashew Co-operative

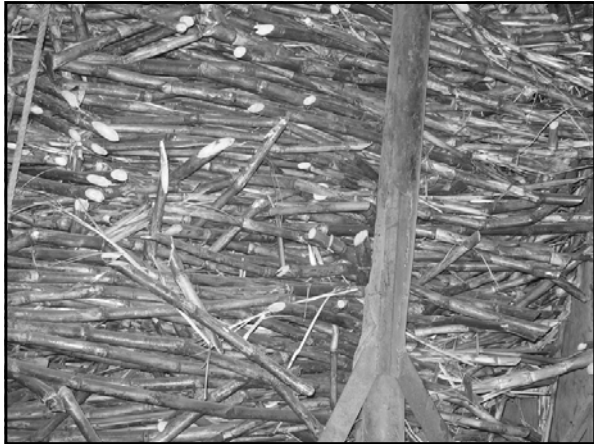


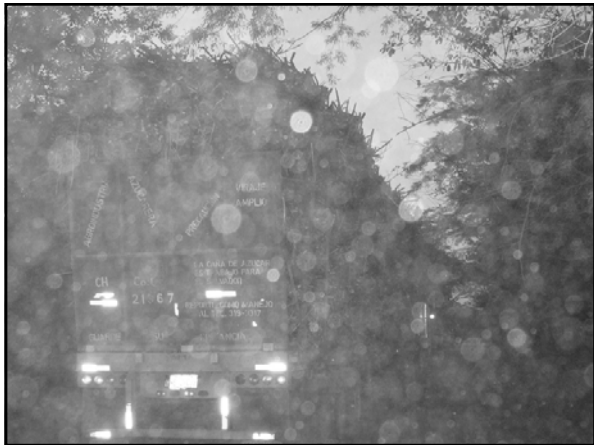
Sugar Cane

Some pictures to help us understand

















Sugar cane field behind the soccer field

- › Notice the smoke in the next picture
- › The sugar cane stocks are burnt first so the workers don't cut their arms on the leaves that are like razors
- › Many injuries occur in the field from the machetes that are used and it is very smoky
- › Some families with children are working in the fields
- › Amnesty International has cited El Salvador for child labour violations
- › Coca Cola is the chief purchaser



Alternatives for work are the Maquiladoras: Free Trade Zone Sweatshops (\$5.00 per day)



Children and Youth
"Food, education, future employment"

Biggest need

- ▶ High school scholarships through CRIPDES
- ▶ \$400 per year
- ▶ We have sponsored eight
- ▶ Pays for food and transportation
- ▶ Many teens cannot go to high school because their families are too impoverished and need them to work
- ▶ Many youth try to go to the United States
- ▶ Despite coyotes, many die
- ▶ Gangs membership is another option

Supporting Schools/Art/Music

- ▶ Each time we go, we deliver school supplies
- ▶ We have purchased 28 guitars and taken three from Canada
- ▶ Always looking for recorders
- ▶ We have painted murals and then the paint we have purchased can be used for other murals with the youth
- ▶ CRIPDES has difficulty getting money to pay for supplies and transportation for youth leaders to run programs



New government: there are some changes but more are needed

- ▶ Government now provides uniforms and basic school supplies
- ▶ Schools are crowded and in some areas, kids can only go half a day because of the high volume of children and limited space in the schools
- ▶ lacking computers and scientific calculators
- ▶ Many try to provide nutrition programs (beans and rice) for the children
- ▶ Potter Jackie Seaton from Perth has helped us through the Empty Bowls Project donating money (www.emptybowls.ca) for the lunch programs

Scholarship Recipients: gender equity/receive leadership training

Teachers want more education in the area of Special Education



Our Mural at a school



Mural: Helen and Melissa



Finished Mural



Seniors

Many, many challenges

Seniors: No Canada Pension!



**Seniors: Basic needs/Perth
Salvation Army gives us clothing**



Seniors: Money for food



Seniors: Money for medicines



Seniors

- ▶ They want sewing machines so they can produce things for their families and to sell

Seniors as caregivers

- ▶ Many seniors are caregivers for their grandchildren because the parents are in the United States caring for someone else's children
- ▶ United States remittances are critical to the economy of El Salvador's people
- ▶ The recent recession has affected the amount of money flowing southward

War Injured War Amputees

Physical and mental effects for the person,
the family, the community, the country!

War Injured/War Amputees

- › They are young
- › They are women
- › They are men
- › They have children
- › They need to work to provide for their families
- › They experience PTSD
- › They were promised pensions and land...many have been without so the struggles continue

They see some answers

- › Micro-credit mostly for vegetable seeds and basic farming tools to provide food for their families and to sell or trade for other goods
- › Scholarships for their children for high school
- › Women like to open small stores
- › One woman we helped needed money for hair scissors and clippers so she could start her own haircutting business. She paid back her loan of \$20 in our micro-credit program
- › The average amount needed is \$300. There are 2000 people who are interested in this

San Jose los Flores Executive



St Vicente Executive



Why do I do this?

- ▶ So SSW students who study at Algonquin will understand that people in developing countries know how to take care of their families and communities, that they are resourceful and resilient and if they had the money that Canadian agencies had...would they ever accomplish a lot!
- ▶ At the beginning, some of my students believe that we are going to help "the poor people"...it is my students who are helped by the Salvadorians. The shift in thinking is transformative.

Maria Maura: her yard is our classroom



Maria Maura



- ▶ **Pro Search (Pro Busqueda)**
<http://probusqueda.org.sv>
- ▶ Started by Father Jon Cortina
- ▶ Many children disappeared
- ▶ Adopted in U.S., Canada, Europe
- ▶ Red Cross and others were told the children were orphans
- ▶ War trophies
- ▶ University of California at Berkeley (DNA Project)
- ▶ Counselling before reunions



This presentation is dedicated to her in support of her search. One found, three to go.

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