



ITEMS



COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

\$3.00 Suggested Donation

Winter 2010

CVSA Attends UN NGO Forum, 'The Road to Build Just Economic and Social Governance'

INVEST YOURSELF Presented to Ecuadorian President Correa



Photo: United Nations

President Rafael Correa Delgado of Ecuador addressing representatives of over 160 nations on June 25, 2009 at the UN Conference on the World Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

The New 2010 *INVEST YOURSELF* Available NOW!

The 2010 edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* was completed just in time for the start of the New Year! With this new issue, *INVEST YOURSELF* once again leads the field as the most comprehensive and longstanding periodically published guide to full-time and part-time volunteer opportunities with non-government organizations throughout the U.S. and the world.

CVSA volunteers have launched a 2010 *INVEST YOURSELF* publicity and distribution campaign to reach tens of thousands of potential volunteers. Join us in carrying on outreach to college campuses, public libraries, religious congregations, professional associations, retirement clubs, bookstores and other venues suggested by CVSA members, especially to your friends, associates and in your own communities. CVSA's message of the urgent need for

Continued on page 2

CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus, upon invitation from the Bolivian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, attended a UN NGO Forum held in conjunction with the historic Conference on World Financial Crisis and Development at UN headquarters last June. CVSA's executive director delivered information packets about CVSA along with copies of *INVEST YOURSELF* and formal letters to Bolivian and Ecuadorian officials, welcoming listings in CVSA's catalogue of volunteer opportunities by any non-government organizations offering volunteer opportunities that benefit their populations.

Angus personally presented the keynote speaker, Ecuador's President Rafael Correa Delgado, with a gift of *INVEST YOURSELF* when they met on the receiving line. She extended an invitation to President Correa to publicize Ecuador's volunteer development projects throughout North America in future editions of *INVEST YOURSELF* and expressed CVSA's solidarity with the people of Ecuador in their nation's struggle for independence from exterior financial control and elimination of poverty in their homeland. President Correa responded with a hearty "thank you" and a hug.

The function, held on June 25, 2009, was co-sponsored by the Bolivian and Ecuadorian Permanent Missions to the UN to provide a private audience for representatives of NGOs, labor organizations and faith-based groups, including Jubilee

Continued on page 6

ORGANIZATIONS FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Bethex Federal Credit Union, Bronx, NY
National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, New York, NY
Voice of Calvary Ministries, Jackson, MS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Rise of the G-192: UN General Assembly's Historic Conference on the Global Financial System.....6
Credit Unions Benefit Low-income Communities.....9
Dignity & Defiance in Bolivia: Book Review.....20
Op-ed: Volunteer Alternatives to the "Economic Draft".....23



ITEMS is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**, the consultative and coordinating body of more than 200 non-government, voluntary service organizations based in North America that support or place volunteers with projects and programs serving people in the U.S. and internationally. **CVSA** seeks to interpret, extend, promote and support the world of voluntary service and involvement programs, and maintain and expand the ability and right of individuals to donate their time and services to persons, groupings and communities of people in need, free of government restraint.

ITEMS is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members represented in **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**. **ITEMS** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

Many volunteers and volunteer organizations learn the hard way: through their own experiences, using trial and error. We find that wasteful and contrary to the basic principle of organization: that an organization is stronger than an individual. Collective experience is therefore also more powerful than that of a single individual, or, for that matter a single organization.

Your submissions to **ITEMS** of information, news, advice, photographs and graphics depicting your work or simply your comments and concerns are instrumental to the process of growth and advancement of voluntary service as a whole. We always look forward to receiving them.

Editor.....Susan Angus
Production Staff.....Andrea Bomar, Susan Louie,
Marjorie Pollice, Rita Rochford
Contributors.....Andrea Bomar, Adam Hunt, Sylvie Packard
Photography.....Celeste Tandy, United Nations
Photo Gallery Library
Printer.....Wall Street Group, Inc.

ITEMS is free to **CVSA** members. **Subscription** rate for U.S. residents is \$15/year. Canadians and those abroad please add \$5 for additional mailing costs. Send your subscription order and submissions of articles for publication to **CVSA**.

CVSA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable corporation with an all-volunteer staff; volunteers are always needed and tax-deductible contributions are welcome.

Call or write CVSA: 160 West 120th St., 2nd Fl., New York, New York 10027, (646) 486-2446.

INVEST YOURSELF 2010 **Available Now**

Continued from page 1

dedicated volunteers to serve people in need and organize for sustainable, meaningful improvements in their daily lives is more critical than ever.

Each CVSA membership organization listed in *INVEST YOURSELF* offers hope to many of those now struggling to survive hardship and despair in this, the most disastrous economic depression since the 1930's. People in every state in the country not only need the kind of material aid that volunteer organizations can provide, but also need a voice in building the real solutions to the problems—and that takes leadership emanating from within each community. *INVEST YOURSELF* is the guide to action for people interested in investing themselves in service to others, building solutions and constructing a better world.

IY Produced Entirely by Volunteers

The CVSA volunteers who participated over the last two years in all aspects of the work it takes to produce *INVEST YOURSELF* have made this issue the best edition yet.

Andrea Bomar volunteered to take on the job of Production Coordinator, keeping track of the details involved in completing the desktop publishing stage of the project, which included photo captions, indexes and the many rounds of copyediting and proofreading.

Rita Rochford made hours of phone calls tracking down the directors and volunteer coordinators of the catalogue's listings to update each organization's entry and work to convey each group's message.

Susan Louie devoted many hours of patient desktop design work on *INVEST YOURSELF* and provided on-the-job-training to other volunteers.

Adam Hunt coordinated the Volunteer System to enlist the volunteers and match the skills needed to accomplish this project.

Marjorie Pollice helped our record-keeping stay on track.

Celeste Tandy contributed her photography skills, making sure all the photos in the catalogue looked sharp and professional.

Niberca Polo volunteered her time and talent to design the cover again this year. CVSA first met Niberca when she



Photo: CVSA

Rita Rochford (left) and Marjorie Pollice (right) on the phone to member organizations for their IY text updates and photos and to find out how they and the people they serve are doing in this disastrous economy.

was a graduate student at Parsons The New School for Design, four years ago. Now she has a studio of her own and teaches classes at Parsons. Niberca has successfully captured and beautifully conveyed the spirit of *INVEST YOURSELF* in her cover design again with this edition.

Many other volunteers helped with proofreading and copyediting at all of the various stages of production. We thank all our volunteers!

CVSA Greatly Appreciates Command Web's Support

CVSA extends special thanks to Andrew Merson, President and CEO of Command Web, who donated the printing and binding of *INVEST YOURSELF* and Dennis Bunnell, President and CEO of Newton Falls Fine Paper, who donated the excellent quality paper. We thank Command Web and Newton Falls for making it possible for

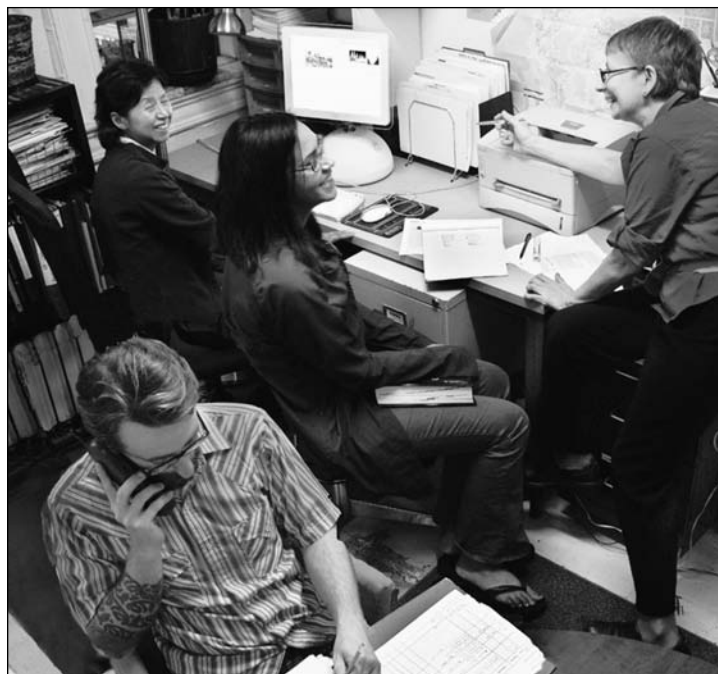


Photo: Celeste Tandy

Susan Louie (left back), design volunteer and trainer, Adam Hunt, on the phone for more volunteers, Andrea Bomar (middle), IY Production Coordinator, Susan Angus (right), CVSA Executive Director and Editor of *INVEST YOURSELF*; each played an important role in producing this edition.

all the organizations listed in *INVEST YOURSELF*, who will use it to find people who want to aid others and enrich their communities through volunteer service and action, to be represented by this high-quality, professional publication.

Andrew Merson has donated the printing and binding of each edition of the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue since 1997. It has been done at Bind-Rite Graphics, one of the Command Web family of printing companies. In the time since the last edition was published, Bind-Rite moved from South Hackensack, New Jersey to a much larger new facility in Robbinsville, New Jersey, with new state-of-the-art press and bindery equipment.

Continued on page 4

St. Dymphna's

Restaurant and Bar

118 St. Mark's Place
New York
(btwn 1st Ave & Ave A)

212-254-6636
www.stdymphas.com



bite
bringing a taste of the good life to all

**fresh, tasty and affordable
Mediterranean cuisine**

take out/delivery or seat-in (14th st)
211 e. 14th st. 212.677.3123
335 lafayette st. 212.431.0301



The Crooked Tree
Crêperie • Café • Restaurant
110 St. Marks Place, NYC (212) 533-3299
the.crookedtreenyc@gmail.com www.myspace.com/thecrookedtreenyc

HORUS CAFE
III



Mediterranean Cuisine
Cooked Over Seasoned Wood Chips
Catering & Birthday Parties
293 East 10th Street, NY, NY 10009
Tel: 212-228-4774 • Fax: 212-228-7399



HALLOWEEN ADVENTURE
MAKEUP-WIGS-COSTUMES-HATS-GAGS-MAGIC
ADULTS CHILDREN
212 673 4546
2 ENTRANCES
104 4TH AVE. & 308 BROADWAY AT 11 ST.
NEWYORKCOSTUMES.COM

INVEST YOURSELF 2010

Continued from page 3

The 2010 edition was printed at the new plant, and CVSA volunteers were amazed to watch as all 5,000 copies of the cover were printed in less than half an hour! The whole job, which included perfect binding, was overseen by Helder Gomes, Bind-Rite Robbinsville Production Manager, who has supervised the *INVEST YOURSELF* printing for the previous three issues as well—each time with great care and skill.

Further, it was Mr. Merson who helped us make the connections to arrange for the donation of paper we needed for the 2010 issue of *IY* by suggesting we contact Dennis Bunnell of Newton Falls.

IY Paper Comes from Newton Falls, New York

Newton Falls Fine Paper is a paper mill in the western Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York and has an inspiring story of its own. Founded in 1894 by the Newton Family, the mill had several subsequent owners and was closed in 2000, one of the 150 paper mills around the U.S. that closed in the past decade. When the Newton Falls mill closed, with it went jobs for hundreds of workers, and the small town, left without its major employer, suffered all the ripple effects as families had to tighten their belts and other businesses lost their loyal clientele.

After the mill was shut down, former Newton Falls workers—Andy Leroux, a third generation mill worker, and Levi Durham—talked the owner of the mill into hiring them to maintain the equipment and provide security. The local development corporation and a team of local volunteers consisting of small business owners, retirees, teachers and elected officials worked to find a new owner who might be in a position and could be motivated to buy and reopen the plant.

Meanwhile, Leroux and Durham and two other workers were at the plant every day to maintain the physical plant, funded by the company that still owned the dormant assets. They also gave tours to potential buyers, some of whom would have taken the machinery out of Newton Falls.

In late 2006, Chris Westbrook, President of the Clifton-Fine Development Corporation, found Mr. Bunnell, born in Buffalo, New York, who had once served as the mill president. Bunnell, inspired by their dedication, saw the potential. He found financial partners in Canada and bought the mill, which began manufacturing paper again in September 2007.

Today the mill employs more than 115 people, about half of whom are former workers there. They produce high-quality



Photo: CVSA

Helder Gomes, Production Manager at Bind-Rite Robbinsville, with Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, while *INVEST YOURSELF* was being printed on the state-of-the-art press in the background. We thank Helder for taking all of our "is it done yet?" calls with cheer and for doing a great job.

coated paper 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A full story of the Newton Falls mill reopening was told in *The New York Times* on June 13, 2008. Mr. Bunnell explained to his interviewer, "A mill is machinery and people. What makes the difference in this case is that the people who work here truly care about this mill."

Upon receiving our paper request, Mr. Bunnell told CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus that he was glad to be able to help with our volunteer opportunities catalogue. And we are very appreciative of the support from Newton Falls Fine Paper, strengthening the independent volunteer service and action movement. Mr. Bunnell requested 100 copies of *INVEST YOURSELF* to use as samples of the mill's product, which CVSA has gratefully sent to the company.

Calling All CVSA Members and Listing Organizations!

There are many ways you can take part in distributing *INVEST YOURSELF* in your community. You can do so in the course of your routine activities, from your own office and staff meetings, and through outreach work, taking copies of *INVEST YOURSELF* to distribute from your booth at a community event, via speaking engagements or meetings with other community members. You can point out the page your listing appears on, as well as the numerous and diverse efforts taking place around the country in cities and towns where people you meet may like to travel or where they know a friend looking for constructive and creative outlets as a volunteer.

We request that you place a notice in your membership mailings or newsletters to publicize *INVEST YOURSELF*—we

would be more than happy to provide you with a display. Your public and school libraries and resource centers are excellent locations for using IY as a resource, as well as volunteer and career placement programs.

As we get more copies of *INVEST YOURSELF* into the hands of potential new volunteers, organizations listing in the catalogue benefit. A CVSA volunteer will be calling for your ideas! Or call our office anytime at (646) 486-2446 or (877) 867-6150. We look forward to speaking with you soon! ☺

Order your copies now! *INVEST YOURSELF* 2010

Descriptive listings of hundreds of full-time and part-time volunteer opportunities with non-government, community based organizations throughout the U.S. and the world.

288-page paperback;
over 200 organizations with volunteer opportunities; photos; geographic index and skill/area of interest index; articles by volunteers about their experiences.
\$10 donation plus postage, bulk rates available.
Call CVSA at (646) 486-2446 or (877) 867-6150 or send in the order form on page 28.



Located in the Adirondack region of New York, **Newton Falls Fine Paper** has a huge impact on the local economy. Generations of families have worked at our paper mill and have a strong bond with the company. We are constantly developing environmentally conscious strategies to reduce wastes and we have a unique approach to paper offerings. We offer the same quality matte-free sheet paper at a lower weight. This gives the customer a choice: buy more paper for the same price, or buy the same amount of paper for less money. **The customer saves either way.**

For all of your fine paper needs.

(866) 738-5844 • 875 County Route 60 • Newton Falls, NY 13666 • info@nffp.com



Photo: United Nations

President Correa holding a press conference at the UN June 25, 2009 about the General Assembly Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

CVSA Meets Ecuadorian President Correa

Continued from page 1

South and Our World is Not For Sale. The limited-seating forum was entitled “People’s Rights, Not Corporate Profit: The Road to Build Just Economic and Social Governance.” Both President Correa and President Evo Morales of Bolivia had been scheduled to speak. Unfortunately, President Morales was unable to attend due to delays in his flight into the U.S.

President Correa’s talk recapped positions he had presented to the General Assembly that morning, calling for an approach to solutions in the world economic crisis that are viable to the realities and dire need for development of nations in the global southern hemisphere.

President Correa was at UN headquarters, along with delegations from over 160 other nations, to address what was only the second world conference ever held on international finance and economic policy. The UN convened the first such conference, attended by representatives of 44 nations, in 1944 at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, which resulted in the creation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and currency exchange rates and established the U.S. dollar as the global reserve currency.

President Correa opened his presentation to the private NGO audience lamenting the fact that President Morales could not be present, by saying, “You see, I was an academic. I studied economics, and you know how many useless things

are learned in that field! But I always learn from Evo!” Evo Morales Ayma is Bolivia’s first indigenous president. A former leader of the Coca Growers Union, he was elected as Bolivia’s president in January 2006 and continues to have the support of the overwhelming majority of people in Bolivia, historically the poorest country in South America, for his government’s economic, environmental and social policies.

President Correa praised Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President of the 63rd General Assembly of the UN, for his tireless work in organizing this momentous UN world conference to re-examine global economic policies. “What he has done is daring. D’Escoto is a prophet of hope for the 21st century and he has dared us all to take action.”

President Correa had spoken for an hour that morning before the World Conference participants in the UN General Assembly hall, focusing on concrete proposals for building new regional and global financial structures oriented toward making it possible for countries of the global south to create new means of economic, technical and social development, independent of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Correa advanced a strategy of developing nations investing their national monetary resources into such development and poverty eradication versus the perpetual servicing of onerous exterior loans. Scores of countries have become harnessed to IMF and World Bank debts that they could never fully pay off and that have bound them to servicing external demands.

“For over thirty years we have not dared to question these policies, these ‘truths.’ Now, here, we dare to speak. We blaze a trail as we walk, daring to bring up alternatives.”

President Rafael Correa of Ecuador
at the United Nations

After his enthusiastically received address before the General Assembly conference, President Correa held a press conference and then proceeded to speak for another hour to the guests at the NGO Forum, expounding on the significance of the world conference and its far reaching potential for reshaping the terms and direction of development.

President Correa explained that he wants the people of North America to understand how imperative it is for developing nations all over the world to free themselves from the “Washington Consensus” on how finance is currently controlled, to break with the “colonization of thought” and



build alternatives. He talked about how the poverty in Ecuador and other nations of the southern hemisphere will be perpetual if the global architecture of the current financial system is not changed.

Correa a Volunteer Prior to Rise as Political Leader

Rafael Correa Delgado was born in 1963 in Guayaquil, Ecuador's second largest city, into a middle class, though struggling, family; when he was five his father was unemployed. After high school, Correa won a scholarship to study economics at Guayaquil's prestigious Catholic University. After graduating, while his contemporaries sought lucrative jobs in the relatively vibrant private sector of the late-1980s Ecuador, Correa spent a year as a volunteer with a Salesian Catholic mission in the high-altitude, poverty-stricken area of Zumbahua in the central highlands, teaching local Indians and developing small businesses. The experience gave him a working knowledge of the indigenous Quechua language and an understanding of the poverty that afflicts most of Ecuador's Indians, who make up about 40% of the population.

Correa continued his education in economics but carried with him the deep concern for the impoverished conditions of people in Ecuador. He went on to earn a master's degree in Belgium's Catholic University of Lovaina, where he also met his wife Anne Malherbe, and he earned a doctorate in economics from the University of Illinois in 2001. He became Ecuador's finance minister in April 2005 and had been in office for 106 days when he resigned from that post in August 2005 on the basis of disagreements with the President's economic policies. Correa had tried all means at his disposal to diminish Ecuador's dependence on loans granted by the IMF and World Bank and had started to divert half the profits from the country's oil stabilization fund towards social spending. At the time of his resignation as Finance Minister, Correa was the most popular Minister in that administration. Ecuador has generated billions in profits for foreign-owned oil companies; yet its people are among the most impoverished and its Amazon environment is polluted by foreign corporations with impunity.

Correa was first elected president in 2006 as an underdog candidate campaigning against Ecuador's richest man, Alvaro Noboa. He was re-elected by a landslide in April 2009 in the first Ecuadorian presidential election since 1979 in which no run-off election was required. During his first presidential campaign, Correa promised constitutional reform, which was carried out in September 2008 when 65 percent of Ecuadorians voted to approve a new constitution. The new constitution, among other issues, tightens controls on vital

industries and reduces monopolies, declares some foreign loans illegitimate, allows idle farmland to be expropriated for redistribution, allows the president to stand for a second four-year term in office and provides free health care for older citizens.

Correa Brings his Experience in Ecuador to World Scene

President Correa was clear and emphatic in his presentation about the road Ecuador is taking and his advice to other developing nations of Latin America, Asia and Africa. He said to get to the heart of the problem we have to talk about things the G-8 and G-20 will not discuss. He said, "Our manifesto is based on mutual respect, solidarity, justice, environmental sustainability and the preeminence of human beings over capital. The constant violation of these principles caused the crisis that is still spreading, menacing, with strong destructive effects, the countries of the South."

Correa outlined the course of policy decisions leading to the current crisis: "After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States decided to lower interest rates to a minimum to reactivate consumption and production. This decision, in a deregulated environment, exacerbated the growth of subprime credit, second-category subprime loans with extremely high risk.

Continued on page 12



Photo: CVSA

Ecuadorian President Correa speaking with audience members following his June 2009 address to representatives of civic and non-government organizations at the United Nations New York headquarters.

110 East 7th St. NYC 10009 phone: 212.777.2151

www.porchettanyc.com

delivery available
catering available



PORCHETTA



The Rise of the G-192: UN General Assembly's Historic Conference on the Global Financial System's Impact on Development

by Adam Hunt

At the Follow-Up International Conference on Financing for Development held in Doha, Qatar in December 2008, the members of the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly authorized Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the General Assembly, to prepare and convene a UN Conference on the World Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development, to be held before the end of the 63rd Session. The General Assembly sought to thoroughly document and analyze the causes and develop solutions to the world financial crisis and its impact on the future of development in the world.

According to d'Escoto, members wanted to achieve consensus on a plan of action for "building a new international economic order based on the principles of equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among states." The conference was to have the participation of every member nation, and its outcome was to be for the benefit of the people of the entire world community, not just the wealthy of the developed nations, where the financial crisis originated. In preparing for this conference, d'Escoto introduced the term "G-192," referencing the total membership of the General Assembly.

Preparation for the Historic World Conference

The UN Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development was held June 24-30, 2009 at UN headquarters in New York City. High and middle-level representatives from the 192 member nations extended the conference by two days from its original three-day schedule, coming to consensus on an Outcome Document that was then ratified by the General Assembly in session on July 9, 2009. The General Assembly's process to convene this conference, the compromises made in the course of the debates, the final outcome on agreed-to action, the conference itself and the current fight for implementation of these actions have been given little-to-no U.S. media coverage.

The first step taken by General Assembly President d'Escoto in preparation for this conference was to establish an 18-member Committee of Experts to "review the workings of the global financial system" that caused the worldwide crisis

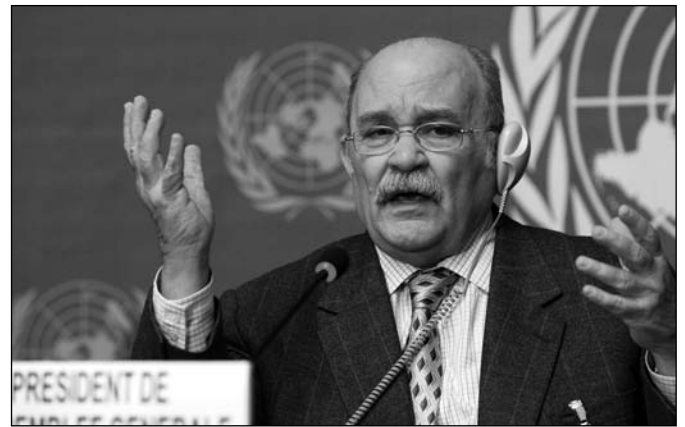


Photo: United Nations/Pierre-Michel Viot

H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, M.M. addressing the March 2009 high-level meeting of the tenth session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

During Father d'Escoto's term as President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly, a year-long rotating office, he worked tirelessly to organize, promote and chair the first international financial conference since the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, held June 24-30, 2009 at UN headquarters in New York.

Ordained a Maryknoll Priest in the early 1960s and dedicated to improving the lives of the poor, Father d'Escoto has traveled extensively throughout the world. In 1970 he founded Orbis Books, the publishing arm of Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, which became a leader in religious publishing, with works on theology and current affairs, often from a Third World perspective.

Father d'Escoto served as the Republic of Nicaragua's Minister for Foreign Affairs from July 1979 to April 1990 and played a key role in peace processes to end internal armed conflicts in Central America in the 1980s. He is a member of the highest governing body of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua, currently serves as Senior Advisor on Foreign Affairs to President Daniel Ortega and chairs Nicaragua's National Committee on Water.

and present proposals for action "to secure a more stable, sustainable and just global economic order." Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize winning economist and former vice president of the World Bank, was appointed chairman of the Committee by

Continued on page 18



CVSA Members Find Credit Unions a Key Tool to Benefiting Low-income Communities

by Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director

Commission of Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) member organizations may find one of the newest volunteer opportunities listed in the 2010 edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* offers an approach to creating favorable financing of your programs and/or clients as you traverse the veritable minefield of the U.S. credit industry.

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions (The Federation) consists of over 200 community based credit unions (CDCUs) across the U.S., promoting locally sustainable economic growth for households, small businesses and community organizations alike.

CVSA visited one of the Federation's affiliated credit unions in August 2009 in the Bronx, New York to learn more about the history and workings of this financing alternative, their involvement and education of volunteers on their staff, and how it is they can often offer loans to persons and groups otherwise deemed ineligible for credit by major banks. We learned of their efforts to promote a ways and means of enhancing economic growth within economically depressed communities.

Pamela Owens, Director of Education and Training at the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions' headquarters in New York City, arranged for CVSA volunteer Rita Rochford and I to visit the Bethex Federal Credit Union in the South Bronx where we interviewed its founder and CEO, Joy Cousminer, who graciously provided information to share with other *INVEST YOURSELF* volunteer organizations within low-income communities that might benefit from their experience in starting a community development credit union.

We learned from the staff at Bethex that it takes hard work and an organized community to build and maintain a credit union, but the results of this labor have provided a mechanism to utilize what financial assets people do have for making investments that build, rather than destroy, livelihoods and improves versus tears down the economic base of the local community.

Credit unions often start out as entirely volunteer efforts. "The credit union movement in the United States is exactly 100 years old now, and the historic role of volunteers in the development of credit unions has been at the heart of



Photo: CVSA

Staff members of Bethex Federal Credit Union in the Bronx, New York, with founder and CEO, Joy Cousminer (center, in black), greeted CVSA volunteers to tell their story of how community development credit unions work.

it," Cliff Rosenthal, President of the Federation, explained to us on a recent phone interview.

CVSA had first met Rosenthal in October 2008 at a Templeton Foundation forum titled "A Return to Thrift," which focused on the problems of the American debt culture. When we learned from his remarks that all community development credit unions rely on volunteers in many key ways and urgently need more volunteers who have a commitment to community economic development, we invited the Federation to submit a listing for the new edition of *INVEST YOURSELF—The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*.

The Federation is calling for more people to join the credit union movement as a proven and viable approach to keep hard-earned money from being pulled out of low-income communities as well as to open up access for working-class households and small groups to capital and financial services generally closed to them.

The differences between credit unions and banks are fundamental and have never been more apparent than in the



Photos: CVSA

Cesar Maldonado, Teller, and Rosalie Sanchez, Payment Specialist. Almost everyone on the staff started as a teller, then received further training on-the-job to be able to move up into other positions. Five Bethex staffers are also in college while working full-time at the credit union.



Jorge Flores serves on the Supervisory Committee of Bethex, which is responsible for watching over the members' accounts and ensuring the records of the credit union are being maintained in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations. The committee members serve as volunteers. Flores also serves as the Chief Tax Officer, another volunteer role.



Andrew Neilan, a Fordham University student who volunteers at Bethex, works on expanding their marketing tactics. He has been generating interest at Fordham University to open a branch of Bethex on the campus.



Margarita Garcia (left), Main Branch Office Operations Manager and Elsa Simo (right), Mortgage Loan Officer/Marketing Director. All of the staff at Bethex are from the community it serves and most of them live within two train stops or walking distance of the office.



Maria Estrella (left), Chief Loan Officer and Elizabeth Urena (right), Loan Officer. Bethex's office space is located in the lower level of an apartment building, accessible from the street, but not spacious. The staff are resourceful in how they use the space and work as a team.



Beverly Stewart is in charge of Member Service, which means she helps new members open their accounts and explains how to use all the products and services of the credit union.



Credit Unions Benefit Low-Income Communities

Continued from page 9

current financial crisis. Credit unions are owned by members and pay dividends to their members, not outside stockholders. Credit unions offer lower loan rates, higher savings rates and fewer service fees. They are not for profit, but also not for charity; they are financial institutions formed by an organized group of people with a common bond. That common bond could be simply living in the same geographic area. The people who serve on their boards are not compensated and receive no bonuses; they are committed volunteers. Nearly one-quarter of all credit unions have no full-time employees. More than 120,000 volunteers currently help direct credit union operations in the U.S.

The Federation represents more than 225 credit unions in 46 states, serving over one million people in low-income urban, rural, and reservation-based communities; it provides capital, professional education, technical assistance, and targeted research and training to member credit unions. The membership of community development credit unions consists primarily of low-income and working people, immigrants, people on low fixed incomes, people running small businesses, people who are otherwise without access to capital and otherwise in need of financial services.

Rosenthal added, "We have found the biggest obstacle to credit union growth is that popular consciousness about what they are is not high—people do not know what a credit union is. They think it is a credit bureau, or a union, or think it is employment-related only." Rosenthal is eager for more community leaders to understand how CDCUs work and how they help people build a financial base rather than be prey to check cashers, loan sharks or other exploitative and predatory lenders.



Photo: CVSA

Joy Cousminer (left), founder and CEO of Bethex Federal Credit Union, explains the dynamics of the credit union in the life of the community to CVSA volunteer Rita Rochford (right).

A living example of this is Bethex Federal Credit Union, which was organized in 1970 by Joy Cousminer, together with a group of "welfare mothers" who comprised her Adult Basic Education Class. They wanted an alternative to the monthly rush to the pawnshop or loan shark to solve their ongoing cash-flow emergencies.

Cousminer explained how their credit union began, before the days of seed money and grants. They operated on an uncompensated volunteer basis, saving their nickels and dimes in true grassroots fashion. Once the founding members had sufficient capital, they began to make small loans. Sometimes there was not enough money to meet all the borrowers' needs, and a waiting list was set up. The returns were invested in the membership and the community again and again over the years, providing the foundation of what Bethex is today.

Bethex is now one of the most successful full-service CDCUs in the country, with \$16,000,000 in assets, serving over 9,000 members who are primarily people with low-paying

Continued on page 16

PHOTO TECH

REPAIR SERVICE, INC.

110 East 13TH ST., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003
TEL. (212) 673-8400 Fax. (212) 673-8451
Expert REPAIRS on all Photographic Equipment
Cameras • Lenses • Video • Digital

AUTHORIZED WARRANTY SERVICE FOR:

CANON	FUJI	KODAK	KONICA
LAMINEX	MINOLTA	NIKON	OLYMPUS
PENTAX	POLAROID	RICOH	YASHICA/KYOCERA

www.phototech.com service@phootech.com

Open: Mon-Fri: 8-4:45p.m. Wed: 8-6 p.m. Sat: 10-3 p.m.

YOUR EAST VILLAGE SPECIALIST FOR

RENTAL LISTINGS
COMMERCIAL LISTINGS

SALES LISTINGS

WE HELP YOU FIND YOUR DREAM PLACE
&
KEEP A SMILE ON YOUR FACE

KINGS COURT
REAL ESTATE
MANAGEMENT, INC.

99 ½ ST MARK'S PLACE
NEW YORK, NY 10009

OFFICE. 212.388.0036
FAX. 212.918.9062

[HTTP://WWW.KINGSCOURTYREALTY.COM](http://WWW.KINGSCOURTYREALTY.COM)



CVSA Meets Ecuadorian President Correa

Continued from page 7

“In 2004, a decision was made to raise the rates to offset inflationary outbreaks. This decision did not stop bankers, who resorted to securitizing their assets to have more liquidity. But when delinquency grew and it was revealed that the largest banks had committed a good chunk of their assets in subprime loans, panic spread. Mistrust reduced the amount of money, volatility shot up and stock markets crashed.

“While we all know that this crisis originated in U.S. financial markets, it is no longer only a financial crisis, since the whole world has been negatively affected, and the developing countries of the South, which had no responsibility whatsoever in causing the crisis, have become its main victim.” He explained, “For years, the United States maintained huge trade and fiscal deficits, with the support of the International Monetary Fund. Any other country would have been forced to devalue and ‘correct’ its unbalances. However, in this case, the double standards that prevail in the governance of the IMF forced it to choose complicity, which led to the unhinging of capitalism. And now, the G-20 wants to recapitalize it just like that, without even moving one chair from its Board of Directors! If the speculative markets of the capitalist core were directly responsible for this world crisis, it would be absurd and irresponsible to let the solutions be proposed, programmed and executed by the same system that caused it.”

President Correa also pointed to the difference between a real economy and a fictitious, speculation-based economy, which was a subject raised throughout the five-day UN conference as well. He said, “The world financial debacle is just a symptom of the crisis of a system that gave privilege to the speculative-financial economy over the real economy—where goods and services are actually created to meet the needs of human beings. I hope we never forget this,” Correa emphasized “The economy is a science of real variables, basic capacity of production, which in turn depends on availability, allocation and efficiency of the use of productive resources. In the last years, everything went wrong because some people pretend that money could generate more money by itself, not looking at the consequences on the real economy and the people it supports!”

Correa spoke of the millions of jobs being lost right now throughout Latin America and the Caribbean due to the sudden diminution of foreign demand for their goods. “This year

we may lose between 2.3 and 3.2 million jobs, according to ILO (International Labor Organization) estimates.”

He said, “From October 2007 on, when the gravity of the crisis could no longer be denied, immense amounts of money have been ordained to ‘rescue’ the private financial sector. It is estimated that in 2008 alone those disbursements totaled some nine trillion dollars, without any oversight or control mechanisms, and without knowing where these funds have gone or how they have been used. How does this make any rational sense to anyone trying to be a responsible global citizen?”

Fighting “Colonization of Thought”

Turning to his primary theme in calling for action on the part of leaders in the developing world, Correa said, “We have the historical responsibility of seeking the reemergence of our peoples, of walking with our own strength, starting by redefining the global financial system.

“We (in Latin America) have had a crisis of thought—we were colonized even to the extent of our thinking. Let us not be colonized intellectually—let us generate our own thinking, our own responses, based on our values, our conditions, principles, our traditions, not based on alien interests. For over thirty years we have not dared to question these policies, these ‘truths.’ Now, here, we dare to speak. We blaze a trail as we walk, daring to bring up alternatives. In Latin America, and in general in the developing world, we have the full creative, technical and political capacity to promote our own responses, we have no need of supporting or fostering them through bizarre proposals that are alien to our regions, as happened with the so-called Washington Consensus—and, I must add, I don’t know why it was called ‘consensus,’ since we were not consulted! Latin America was never consulted.”

President Correa summarized what must be done: “Our peoples deserve no less than what the constituents of rich



Volunteer in Thailand

Track of the Tiger
www.track-of-the-tiger.com
tiger@loxinfo.co.th

North by Northeast Tours
www.north-by-northeast.com
info@north-by-northeast.com.th



Eco Explorer Co.
www.realexperiencethailand.com
volunteer@realexperiencethailand.com

The Mirror Foundation
www.hilltribetour.com
moo@bannok.com

1-800-thailand

www.tourismthailand.org

info@tatny



countries are demanding: (1) financial regulation with more controls on investment funds and greater international coordination; (2) regulation of international commodities markets and subcontracting; (3) a new industrial policy committed to the promotion of environmentally friendly industries; and (4) universal social policies, that is, coverage for all the citizens and development of public insurance programs.”

He further said, “The history of underdevelopment, dependency and domination of Ecuador and Latin America is also the history of the foreign debt. Bonds, renegotiations, conditioned policies and debt agreements have been the modern mechanisms of personal domination through forced and hereditary indebtedness, which in Latin America was called ‘concertaje.’ You do not need bombers anymore—the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the unregulated stock markets, the modern ‘encomenderos,’ are the true traffickers of insatiable wealth at the expense of the education, health and food of our children, 26% of which suffer from chronic malnutrition in a country such as mine. All this at the expense of peace, well-being and the very life of millions of our fellow countrymen and women born as slaves of a foreign debt.”

Of the future of the World Bank and the IMF, he reiterated. “The IMF has betrayed all the principles on which it was based; the World Bank and IMF were created to stabilize world demand—but they have been the prime factors in destabilizing world demand through their adjustment and counter cyclical policies. I say they should be eliminated. But if you want to keep them because of vested interests—well, at least change how they are governed!”

Significance of World Conference

President Correa stated that the outcome of this historical world conference is not going to meet all the expectations of the developing countries participating, and he said, “We

have faced great resistance in bringing this issue to the Parliament of mankind, the General Assembly of the United Nations, a universal and democratic forum.”

He expressed the importance of utilizing this international arena, while acknowledging the shortcomings of the Conference’s outcome, saying, “However, [the conference] has the merit of having marked the beginning of a process of political consensus to make a comprehensive reform of the current international financial system, thanks to the commitment that all the countries are assuming here and now. Now we must define the institutional path towards coordination, dialogue and monitoring of what is decided here.

“It is under the aegis of this G-192—of all those of us who are different but equal—that we must discuss comprehensive, equitable and democratic solutions to this crisis, which originated, as always, in greed and disdain. It is we, the ‘different,’ who must guide the convulsed world of today. Time is of the essence. This can only be possible with the required political will—not with market mechanisms—but with a new ethics of global coexistence, and with a profound process of decolonization of our thinking.”

He said the world conference “...must be the turning point towards the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in world governance. We must advance towards a true democratization of international relations, beginning with substantial changes in financial institutions.”

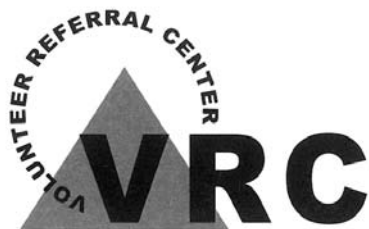
Correa’s presentation to the gathering of NGO representatives drew standing applause and he, in turn, applauded the audience. He stayed a few minutes afterwards to greet some people from the audience when the program concluded.

Continuing to put his government’s principles into action on the world scene, President Correa personally went to Haiti in January 2010, the week after the devastating earthquake, where he met directly with Haitian President Preval about how Ecuador could best aid the relief and rebuilding efforts, and met with other Caribbean presidents to coordinate joint efforts. ☺

CVSA Needs Office Supplies

- Letter size paper
- Index cards (3” x 5” and 4” x 6”)
- Clear Packing tape (rolls)
- Envelopes (9” x 11”)

If you can donate, please call (646) 486-2446, or bring them when you come to volunteer at CVSA.



*Bridging Volunteers and Agencies
throughout the five boroughs of New York City*

161 Madison Ave., Suite 5 SW, New York, NY 10016
(212) 889-4805
www.volunteer-referral.org

"Pizza Is Our Specialty"



Open
7 Days a Week
465 6th Ave.
(corner of 11th St.)
New York, NY 10011

FREE
DELIVERY

(212) 243-3010
(212) 243-2253
Fax: (212) 627-3352

GROOM-O-RAMA, INC.



AKC, APR, ACC, UKC, ACA
Puppies, Kittens
Food, Supplies and
Grooming

496 Sixth Avenue (between 12th & 13th)
New York, NY 10011
(212) 627-2899



95 East 10th St. New York, NY 10003
(212) 979-9398

Gourmet Ice-Cream Made on Premise

PLEASE PATRONIZE the
throughout the pages of this no
supporting CVSA's work to



80 University Place
New York, NY 10003

Serving breakfast, lunch and

Flea Market *Café*

\$13
1 COURSE
& 1 DRINK

\$15
2 COURSE
& 1 DRINK

\$17
3 COURSE
& 1 DRINK



Brunch: Saturday & Sunday from 10am to 4:15pm
Dinner: Monday to Sunday 5pm to 12pm



131 Avenue A, New York, NY 10009 ♦ 212-358-9282 ♦
www.fleamarketcafe.com



LUNASA

enjoy the fruits of your labor

Half-priced happy hour Monday-Friday from 4-7PM
126 First Avenue (Bet. 7th & St. Marks) ♦ 212.228.8580
New York, NY 10003 ♦ www.lunasabar.com

business sponsors displayed
newsletter and thank them for
promote volunteer service.



ce at 11th Street
3 ♦ 212-620-5544

dinner ♦ 8 am til late night



"Best New
Vegetarian
Restaurant"
Village Voice

Vegetarian,
American
(Traditional)

Weekdays 11am-11pm Sat & Sun 10am-11pm

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner served

Quick Delivery Fast Take-Out

Beer, Wine Margaritas & Fresh Sangria also served

328 E. 14th Street (btwn 1st & 2nd Ave.) NY, NY 10003 212-598-9998

Cheryl's
Global Soul



Mondays: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
for coffee & lunch

Tuesday - Thursday:
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday:
8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Open 'til 12am on first Saturdays

Sundays: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**236 Underhill Ave
Brooklyn, New York
718.529.2855**

Comfort in food, comfort in music, and comfort in ambiance
Hip and family-friendly
Chef Cheryl Smith's signature global home-style cuisine

16 Handles

Create your own dessert!

16 Frozen Yogurt Flavors Daily
30+ Toppings
Kosher Certified
Eco-friendly spoons and containers

153 Second Ave. (between 9th and 10th St.)
New York, NY 10003 ♦ 212-260-4414 ♦ www.16handles.com



Life Cafe Inc
East Village, NYC

343 E 10th Street
New York, NY 10009
P 212.477.8791 F 212.388.0010
info@lifecafe.com

Life Cafe Nine83
Bushwick, Brooklyn
www.lifecafe.com

983 Flushing Ave
Brooklyn, NY 10009
P 718.386.1133 F 718.356.7833
life.nine83@lifecafe.com



We Specialize In:
{Printing • Wedding Invitations • Craft Items}

Tel: 212.463.7035

Fax: 212.463.7022

23 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011

PAPERPRESENTATION.COM



Credit Unions Benefit Low-Income Communities

Continued from page 9

jobs, unemployed or living on low fixed incomes. “Most of our members earn \$15,000 to \$18,000 per year,” Cousminer said. “All our services are available to all our members on the same terms. This includes members who are recipients of public assistance and social security, and members who are paid ‘off the books’ as ‘casual labor.’”



Photos: CVSA

Joy Cousminer founded the Bethex Federal Credit Union in the South Bronx 40 years ago and is still its CEO, training a new generation of credit union staff and officers. She also helped start the Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union and the Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union. Cousminer received the 2006 Herb Wegner Award for Individual Achievement, the credit union movement's highest honor, recognizing unwavering dedication to the movement's philosophy and ideals.

Cousminer can tell hundreds of stories of how the credit union made it possible for someone to keep a business open, not lose his or her job, pay off medical bills, save for school costs and other family needs through personal participation in the credit union. Yet, she also sees many threats to the growth and future of the community based credit unions.

To begin with, she points to the push from the federal administration that regulates credit unions, National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), that is discouraging the creation of new credit unions and encouraging existing smaller ones to consolidate into bigger credit unions.

“When we began our credit union in 1970, it was the Department of Agriculture that you registered with,” Cousminer explained. “In 1972, the government created a separate regulatory body, which is now the NCUA. It does seem that NCUA regulations are making it harder and harder to start new credit unions. It now takes up to three years to get a new credit union chartered.”

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions describes in its instructional literature how the entire credit union system is an example of self-sufficiency

and cooperation. This cooperative financial system operates at no cost to the government. By pooling their resources and working together, the credit unions manage their own money problems among themselves. They even finance the NCUA and their own insurance programs and place no burden on taxpayers because they take no government assistance.

Another threat cited by Cousminer is to the tax-exempt status of credit unions, which is one of the factors that allows them to function. Big bank lobbies continue to press in Congress for credit unions to be taxed just as are for-profit banks, and for them to be subject to increased and costly regulations. For low-income credit unions, the margins of profit—which go right back into services to the community—are quite narrow, particularly when compared to for-profit banks; therefore, if forced to pay taxes in the same manner as for-profit banks, many community credit unions would be pushed out of existence.

“Credit Unions are already the most regulated and supervised entities around. We have regulatory agents here checking our books and records constantly,” Cousminer continued. “The truth is they don’t want poor people to have control of money. So we have to work harder, stay vigilant towards unfavorable policy and regulations changes and make noise about our needs to not allow them to change what this institution is able to do for people.”

Cousminer gave an example of the pressure credit unions are currently facing from the federal regulatory body. “Nobody is poorer than the people here in the Bronx, yet the



Cafe Mogador

*Moroccan Food,
Breakfast, Brunch,
Lunch, Late Dinner.
Music, Belly Dancers
Wed Nights.*

101 St. Marks Place
New York, NY
(212) 677-2226
www.cafemogador.com



delinquency rate on the loans (at Bethex) is only 4 to 4.5%. And that's people coming into the office on their own to personally make their payments, not through automatic deductions from their account or paycheck," Cousminer said. "The credit union staff works with people who become delinquent on their loans, lowers the interest rates, extends the period of time they can pay it back, lets them pay the principal—they do whatever it takes to work out what is feasible for the member to be able to repay the loan back into the credit union, when necessary.

"Yet, the NCUA is saying this delinquency rate is too high, and threaten to penalize us with a low rating. Well, what bank has that good of a delinquency rate?!"

A full-service community development credit union can provide checking accounts, savings accounts, check cashing, ATM access, small unsecured loans for family needs, small-business loans and housing loans. They also provide counseling, financial literacy and community education on money and financing.

"Many little credit unions were started in New York originally by churches to make it possible for their members to get small loans," Cousminer explained. "They were organized for emergencies, a place for church members to go to for rent loans or other immediate needs. When they were started they weren't thinking of becoming a full-service credit union. NCUA says that the church credit unions aren't meeting the needs of the members. But I see them serving an important purpose and doing a lot of good things for people. In many cases there are older people on the board, who have time and a lot of experience." Many church credit unions are still entirely volunteer run. "It is up to them to decide how best to meet the needs of their members."

Cousminer gave another example. "There was a credit union that had a retired woman who volunteered every day to keep the credit union open. The NCUA approached the board of that credit union and recommended that they "fire" the volunteer in the interest of expanding the offerings of the credit union to a broader and younger potential constituency. Then down the road, when there was no one available to keep the credit union open every day, the NCUA came back and said, 'We're going to shut you down because you don't have anyone to keep your credit union open every day to serve your membership.' They were better off doing what they had been doing before!"

We also spoke with Phil Reed, President of Voice of Calvary Ministries (VCOM) in Jackson, Mississippi, about

his experience with community based credit unions and their role in his community. VCOM, a CVSA member organization that has been listed in *INVEST YOURSELF* for many years, is a non-profit, interdenominational Christian community development organization that has been serving the poor in the Jackson area since 1960. Reed explained that he and two other pastors founded the Fellowship of Hope Credit Union in Jackson about 20 years ago. It involved eight churches in Jackson that were already working together on various cooperative programs; they decided to also start a community based credit union to provide credit union services to low-income people who didn't have access to bank accounts.

When they met with the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) to find out how to get a charter, they learned there hadn't been a faith-based credit union chartered in 20 years and it could take years to get one started. They looked into partnering with an existing one that had made \$160,000 in bad loans. The Mississippi Banking Commission and the NCUA told them they had to raise \$45,000 in capital in 45 days to offset the bad loans on the books in order to take over that charter. They did that, and Phil Reed was elected chairmen of the board.

At first they only did "signature loans" such as \$2,500 to \$5,000 for automobiles needed for work granted on the basis of the person's signature, no collateral. Reed served as chairman for ten years, until the credit union grew to having \$10 million in assets about six years ago. The credit union was competing with commercial banks in the area at that point. He felt he needed to step down and hand it over to somebody who "knew what they were doing."

Fellowship of Hope Credit Union now has \$200 million in deposits, provides full-services to its members and has

Continued on page 27



UNITED WORLD COLLEGES

The United World College (UWC) schools, located in 12 countries around the world, are committed to the ideals of peace, justice, international understanding and service to needy communities. U.S. citizens apply to the UWCs either in the 10th or 11th grade for this two-year, pre-university program of International Baccalaureate studies and community service. All 50 U.S. students admitted to the UWCs each year are awarded full scholarships covering tuition, room and board for the two-year program. Information about admission can be found on the admission section of www.uwc-usa.org, and the application deadline is early in January for fall admission.



Photo: United Nations/Paulo Figueiras

Joseph Stiglitz (left), internationally renowned economist, was commissioned by Fr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann (right), President of the 63rd UN General Assembly, to chair the Commission of Experts on Reform of the International Monetary and Financial System. Here, Stiglitz addresses a September 2009 press conference on his committee's final report.

G-192 Conference on Economic Crisis

Continued from page 8

d'Escoto. In April 2009, the Committee submitted their report and proposals to the General Assembly.

The Committee of Experts identified in their Recommendations to the General Assembly the "loose monetary policy, inadequate regulation and lax supervision" of the current dominant economic order as key factors. The experts stated that the belief that "unfettered markets are, on their own, quickly self-correcting and efficient, is flawed. Globalization too was constructed on these flawed hypotheses, and while it has brought benefits to many, it has also enabled the defects in one economic system to spread quickly around the world."

In his initial "Draft Outcome Document" for the Conference debate, d'Escoto pointed out that instability

causing such hardship for the majority of the people is not new. He said that four major market crashes have occurred in the last 150 years, and 22 recessions in the United States since 1900. Many suffered devastating hardships while the opportunity to accumulate more wealth during these crises only benefited a relative few. Promises to reverse this lack of economic stability with laws, rules, regulations and institutions, he pointed out, have never succeeded because those with the most capital are able to actively innovate and escape the intended control.

For this reason, the General Assembly wanted to go beyond superficial short-term reforms and launch a new economic world order that could ensure economic disasters of this magnitude never happened again.

Definition of the Problem

In the first draft of the "Outcome Document" d'Escoto emphasized a critical factor in the cause of the crisis. "According to the UN Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), financial service profits as a percentage of total corporate profits [in the world] rose from 6% in the 1980s to 40% in 2007. Through the shadow financial sector, hedge funds and derivatives, virtual financial sector market value grew to six times (about \$300 trillion) the real world economy (about \$50 trillion) by 2008. The principle should be that the financial sector provides services to the real economy at a reasonable cost and not be the prime center of profit accumulation as recently occurred with disastrous consequences. When the financial sector becomes hegemonic, a bubble and crash are to be expected."

The document explained that the "real world economy" constitutes people working and actually producing goods and services that are exchanged; and that the "shadow economy" is composed of market speculation and financial instruments such as "credit default swaps," a form of insurance against

**Accept the challenge.
Share the success.**

AMIGOS offers 6-8 week summer programs in which students immerse themselves in a Latin American community and collaborate on sustainable development projects. Participants will strengthen their Spanish skills, experience a new culture on a personal level, and work together with community members to accomplish shared goals.

AMIGOS
Amigos de las Américas

www.amigoslink.org
800-231-7796

**International Insurance
for Voluntary Service
Outside the U.S.**

Offering short and long term insurance solutions for participants in volunteer programs abroad.

the Gateway Plans
Opening the way to international insurance solutions

the Gateway Plan
Administrator
800-282-4495 or
202-367-5097
email: gateway@marshpm.com
www.GatewayPlans.com



loan defaults, which accounted for an estimated \$60 trillion of the worldwide derivatives market.

Recommendations for Action

The Committee of Experts advised that to end the financial crisis, the advanced industrial countries first must stimulate their economies through public spending on public projects and devote at least 1% of these funds to help boost the economies of the least developed countries.

The Committee also encouraged the IMF and World Bank to make loans to developing countries, but stressed that the developing countries need “more policy space,” or more say in how to implement the loans. The Committee emphasized that the current conditions attached to these loans have done more harm than good, stating, “They (the loaning institutions) required or encouraged countries to adopt the deregulatory financial policies that are now recognized to have contributed to the current economic crisis.” In order to change these policies and practices the Committee said the World Bank, IMF and related institutions must become more transparent and democratic in giving developing countries a voice in their governance in order to deal with crises more effectively.

Representatives of a number of developing countries stated that reform of these institutions was not enough; that nothing short of replacing these institutions entirely with newly formulated international and regional financial institutions could solve the problems.

The Committee also called for the regulation of derivatives, of credit rating agencies, and said the host countries should be able to regulate foreign companies within their borders. They advocated building the institutions necessary to enforce these regulations on a global scale immediately.

The Committee pointed to examples of the success of new regional trading efforts already being developed, where

states within certain regions are building trade alliances for mutual benefit, taking measures to expand their liquidity among themselves, free of IMF or World Bank requirements (such as privatizing public services). For instance, the Asian Chiang Mai Initiative is an agreement recently made between China, Republic of Korea and Japan with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) whose members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, creating a regional monetary fund that will allow the members to control their own financial needs and liquidity in the future.

In Latin America, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) was formed five years ago and now has a membership of eight Latin American and Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. ALBA recently established a regional financial mechanism to promote trade via payment compensations without having to use the U.S. dollar, via an accounting unit called the SUCRE (Single Payment Compensation System).

In 2007, the Bank of the South was constituted with the objective of financing programs and projects of economic and social development in the region without World Bank or IMF loan policy impositions, historically detrimental to the long-term development of borrower nations.

The Consensus of the Conference

After dozens of preliminary debates and roundtable discussions on the analysis and report produced by the Committee of Experts, the General Assembly scheduled the World Conference for June 1-3, 2009. In mid-May, the General Assembly postponed it and reset the date for the end of June because the United States and some European Union members objected to many of the actions outlined in the original draft document. More time was taken to negotiate

Continued on page 26



The Heller Service Corps, one of Furman's largest student groups, demonstrates the university's vigorous commitment to engage students in serving the community.

For more information on the Heller Service Corps or other service opportunities at Furman
www.hellerservicecorps.org
or call 864-294-2000.



FURMAN



**Book Review:**

Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization

Editor's Note: While attending a special event co-sponsored by the Bolivian and the Ecuadorian Permanent Missions to the UN on June 25, 2009 (see page 1), CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus met Melissa Draper who was volunteering for the Bolivian UN Mission to coordinate the RSVPs and logistics of the event that day. It turned out that Draper was the perfect person to talk to about projects and programs in Bolivia that could benefit by being included in INVEST YOURSELF, as she has been deeply involved as a volunteer in Bolivia for years, occasionally volunteers for the Bolivian Mission to the UN when they need help with events, and she is the co-editor with Jim Schultz of Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization, published by University of California Press in 2009. Draper visited the CVSA office and spoke to the staff about her volunteer experience in Bolivia, and subsequently provided text for a volunteer opportunity listing in the 2010 edition of INVEST YOURSELF for the Association of Andean Artisans (AAA), a cooperative in Bolivia which encourages local women to revive their tradition of weaving and develop a sustainable operation through sales of the textiles locally and abroad.

Draper also wrote an article that appears in the newly published 2010 edition of INVEST YOURSELF that provides valuable insight, based on personal experience, into the preparation necessary to allow someone from North America to have a successful and meaningful volunteer role in social or economic development organizations in developing nations.

by Andrea Bomar

After having the opportunity to meet Melissa Draper at the CVSA office and hear about her experiences as a volunteer with various grassroots groups in Bolivia, I was eager to read *Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization*, which she generously donated to CVSA for our volunteer educational library. I found the book very informative. It successfully explained complex issues in terms simple and straightforward enough for someone with little-to-no knowledge about the subject matter. For instance, I began to understand sophisticated concepts like nationalization and multilateral debt, which are often thrown around as jargon by those in the know and used as jargon to mystify those uninitiated in the financial or governmental sectors.

The first chapter, entitled: "The Cochabamba Water Revolt and its Aftermath," tells the impressive story of a community's victory over a huge multinational corporation in

regaining their rights and control over their water. Other chapters give informative accounts of the varied roles of Bolivian women in globalization; the nationalization of Bolivia's oil and gas resources; the political implications of foreign debt and the deadly consequences of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) policies; Bolivia's U.S.-imposed "War on Drugs" and what it means for farmers of the culturally significant coca leaf; the entirely foreseeable and preventable environmental disaster caused by a subsidiary of Enron and Shell; and insight into the reasons behind the widespread emigration from Bolivia.

Although each eye-opening chapter is written by a different author involved in these subjects, the entire book flows seamlessly from one chapter to the next, and draws upon the wealth of insights that each author has to offer.

***"What do Bolivia and its stories
teach us about how to make
globalization a force for justice
and equity, instead of a recipe for
exploitation and abuse?"***

— Jim Schultz, *Dignity and Defiance*

Two main lessons stood out in particular. First, *Dignity and Defiance* gave me a deeper understanding of how, in addition to allowing conditions of extreme poverty to continue to exist—a crime unconscionable enough on its own—multibillion dollar corporations, governments of wealthy nations and international financial institutions that tout mission statements of goodwill and development assistance in

**Bridal
veil
Falls**

www.bridalveilfallsnyc.com
custom veils and headpieces

445 East 9th St.
NYC, NY 10009
212-674-3900
Customveil@aol.com





fact play an undeniable role in worsening and even directly creating these deplorable conditions. Secondly, I gained further appreciation for the potential power, as depicted in these articles, that community organizing can have to address serious challenges and create positive change for those in need.

As explained in multiple chapters of the book, large-scale entities, such as governments of powerful countries in the North, multinational companies and banks, often implement policies and act with little regard for those most affected by severe poverty—and they do it, all too often, under the guise of offering economic assistance to poor communities. They make false promises to provide much-needed social services and infrastructure development. Bolivia is the poorest country in South America. Because of the nation's chronic battle with poverty and immense debt, Bolivia has relied on loans from external institutions such as the IMF, which has left the country in the position of being a guinea pig for lenders testing dubious global economics theories. I learned that, time and time again, the IMF and other financial giants encouraged the Bolivian government to keep borrowing larger and larger amounts of money to pay off existing and new debts that were increasing at an alarming rate, rather than investing the little money it actually had in critically needed social services—including education, health care and infrastructure projects such as water access and roads.

At first glance, it may seem like the blame lies with the Bolivian government; if such programs are urgently needed, why doesn't the government just allocate the borrowed money to the development and implementation of such services?

The various authors of *Dignity and Defiance* shed light on the fact on the fact that the money loaned to Bolivia by the IMF, other institutions and foreign governments comes with strings attached. Those strings all too quickly become intertwined into a dangerous web of impossible promises, unrealistic expectations and perpetual, insurmountable debt from which Bolivians find themselves unable to break free.



For example, as detailed in the first chapter, Bolivia found itself coerced into privatization of its public water systems in two major cities. This led to a major revolt among the citizens. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), based in Washington, D.C., deemed the local government incapable of running the water system in Cochabamba and “strongly encouraged” Bolivia to look to foreign companies to come in and take over. Thus, U.S.-based Bechtel—the engineering firm also known for such large-scale projects as the Hoover Dam, Boston’s “Big Dig” and, most recently, a large contract under the Bush administration to rebuild Iraq—entered Cochabamba’s community and raised water rates with the result that many families could no longer afford access to this vital resource. Factory workers, farmers, environmentalists and other community members banded together and formed an alliance which then gave presentations to other concerned members of the community, to mobilize support by explaining what was going on, discussing strategies, and inviting them to join in the fight. The people of Cochabamba sent their message loud and clear to both their government and Bechtel through a series of general strikes and road blockades. The government responded by

Continued on page 22

Best Restaurant On This Small Planet

*“Macrobiotic, natural, organic,
vegetarian food has polished its image
thanks to Souen.”*
-New York Post

*“Best vegetarian
restaurant & seafood, too.”*
-New York Press



Over 20 years.

With good health a priority,
Souen prepares unusually delicious
natural food with a Japanese twist,
using macrobiotic principles,
organic produce
and fresh seafood.

Souen 13th 23 East 13th St.

bet. 5th Ave./University Pl. (212) 627-7150

Souen SoHo 210 6th Ave.

at Prince St. (212) 807-7421



(Printer puts
logo here)

THE WALL STREET GROUP

High quality, fast turnaround, affordably priced printing,
with complete art, desktop, camera, press,
bindery and shipping departments.
Manufactures an excellent product
with a service-oriented approach.

One Edward Hart Drive Jersey City, NJ 07304
(201) 333-4784 or 1(800) 344-0280
info@wallstreetgroup.com

RECYCLE by PASSING IT ON!

When you finish reading this
issue of ITEMS, **don't** toss it in
the recycle bin!

We ask that you recycle this newsletter in a
different way. Please share it with friends and
colleagues, or bring it to your local library,
church, school or college!

It's a great way to build the movement
while still saving the environment!



Go Abroad.

Cross-Cultural Solutions
is a recognized leader in the field of
international volunteering, with over
4,000 volunteers each year.

PROGRAMS FROM 1-12 WEEKS

• Brazil	• Guatemala	• Russia
• China	• India	• South Africa
• Costa Rica	• Morocco	• Tanzania
• Ghana	• Peru	• Thailand



Contact us today. Cross-Cultural Solutions
www.crossculturalsolutions.org/IY
info@crossculturalsolutions.org • 1.800.380.4777



LUDLOW GARAGE, Inc.

Auto Body Repair & Auto Body Service

Jerome, Mario & Stefan

151 Attorney Street
New York, NY 10002

Superior
Quality

212-505-0869 or 212-673-7086
www.ludlowgaragerepair.com
ludlowautorepair@verizon.net

Dignity and Defiance in Bolivia

Continued from page 21

suspending constitutional rights and sending in military troops. After days of violence that resulted in the shooting and death of a teenaged boy, and the wounding of several hundred others, Bechtel officials turned tail and fled the country, thereby prompting the government to cancel its contract with them.

Even though the successful revolt was against a major U.S. company, not a single reporter from a U.S. newspaper was in the city to cover the story. It didn't take long, however, for communities in countries around the world—Uruguay, India, and Atlanta, Georgia to name a few—take inspiration and follow Cochabamba's example in similar battles against the privatization of public water systems. Eighteen months after its officials fled Bolivia, Bechtel filed a lawsuit demanding \$50 million to recover costs and claimed lost profits even though the company invested no more than \$1 million in the project in the first place. The city of San Francisco (location of Bechtel's headquarters) responded by passing a resolution urging the corporation to drop the legal case against Bolivia, but to no avail. Finally, four years later, after years of protests by outraged people around the world and a heap of negative publicity, Bechtel finally gave up and dropped the suit.

This is just one of the many struggles that Bolivia has faced in recent decades. However, every chapter gives examples of the powerful actions taken by communities that organized to address these threats to their survival head-on through fighting for change.

The overarching message of *Dignity and Defiance* is not that Bolivians are opposed to globalization—on the contrary, it is that Bolivia is putting its foot down to imposed globalization. Bolivia seeks, instead, to experience globalization on its own terms: equal access to resources like water, fair access to foreign markets, the freedom to run and maintain its own democratic process without interference of, or exploitation by, other governments or institutions, and the ability to preserve its own cultural traditions in the face of the North's attempt to impose a standardization of alien beliefs, values and way of life.

This book offers extremely relevant lessons to members of the voluntary service movement and is a valuable resource for anyone with a desire to change the world for the better. ☺

**Op-Ed:**

Full-time Volunteer Service as Alternative to the “Economic Draft”

by Sylvie Packard

An alarming by-product of the U.S. economic depression is the sharp rise in young men and women—many with skills, education and some job experience, yet jobless—enrolling in the military and being sent into combat abroad. The unstable economy is creating particular desperation among young people who cannot find gainful employment; hence, an increasing number are joining the military as a means to “ride out” bad economic times.

“We see many joining the military now, over the last year, particularly African Americans in our community. They are seeking employment or the money for education,” Ann Moran Smith, director of The Ministries, a community based social service agency in Coram, New York and member of CVSA’s Executive Board, recently told staff of CVSA.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, there are now 25 million people in the U.S. who are unemployed or working part-time because they cannot find full-time work and are unable to support themselves on their earnings. Government studies say that for every 10% rise in unemployment, there is a 5% rise in military recruitment. In short, while there is not a formal universal draft in place, there is an economic draft: people joining the military for purely financially motivated reasons.

The military is tightening its entry requirements due to this increase in enrollment. According to an April 19, 2009 article by *Washington Post* staff writer, Ann Scott Tyson, “The Army last month stopped accepting felons and recent drug abusers into its ranks as the nation’s economic downturn helped its recruiting, allowing it to reverse a decline in

recruiting standards that had alarmed some officers. While shunning those with criminal backgrounds, the Army is also attracting better educated recruits. It is on track this year to meet, for the first time since 2004, the Pentagon’s goal of insuring that 90 percent of recruits have high school diplomas.”

Coupled with seeing no other alternative for employment, many new recruits also joined the military this year with the notion that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq signified reduced risk for new GIs who enter active duty now. However, as of July 2009, the U.S. expanded the size of the Army by adding 22,000 new troops, for a total of 569,000 soldiers, and most are now heading to battle in Afghanistan, where the casualties are rising with each passing month.

Material incentives for joining the military, such as a free education following service and life-long health care for soldiers and their loved ones, can look good when the cost of tuition and health care is now out of reach for so many. However, returning vets over the last ten years have had little luck with getting those expected benefits due to the various requirements for length of service and in regard to discharge status. [Editor’s note: See *ITEMS* Fall 2008 article, “U.S. War Veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan Struggle for Survival... on the Home Front” for more background.]

According to public and private reports that have come out since 2008, the statistics of those unable to get promised and needed benefits have only gotten worse. For example, the backlog for unprocessed claims to the Veterans Administration (including claims for educational programs and appeals of denied claims) is nearing one million. There are currently

*Continued on page 24*RESTAURANT • BAR • www.7acafe.com

7A 24 hrs.

109 AVENUE A (AT 7TH ST.) • NYC • 212.475.9001

Extra \$2 Off Coupon

Recycle INK & TONER Refill

Bring it, Fill it and Print it!
Save Money. Save the Environment

32 E. 13th St. lower level New York NY 10003
Between 5th Ave. & University Place
212-463-7141 www.riceink.com
Monday to Friday 8:00am ~ 6:30pm

RICE
Recycle Ink Cartridge Experts



Alternative to the “Economic Draft”

Continued from page 23

400,000 unprocessed claims for physical and psychological injuries alone, many for those suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Some 115,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have been diagnosed with PTSD—which is approximately one in five soldiers—yet only 51,000 have been granted disability benefits for this claim. In order to receive government support for this common condition directly associated with military service, veterans are required to prove the stressor causing PTSD by providing incident reports, buddy statements and medals, along with jumping innumerable other hurdles to get their claims filled.

In July 2009, *The New York Times* reported the discovery of benefits applications from 2008 being tossed in disposal bins throughout several claims departments, signaling the unjust handling of the distribution of veteran's benefits. Phone calls from GI's and vets are flooding the National Veteran's Suicide Prevention Hotline, which received 22,000 calls in 2008, the year it was established, and more than 150,000 calls over the last two years. Veterans are dying by suicide at a higher rate now than during the Vietnam War, and the Department of Defense recently reported that the suicide rate in the military now exceeds that of the civilian population for the first time since such records have been kept.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, which became effective on August 1, 2009, is supposed to significantly improve educational benefits for veterans and cover 100% of tuition for those discharged due to a service-related disability. But the rise in those disabilities and the severity of the injuries and trauma that service men and women return with counter-balance the

potential benefit of that promised education. In addition, as of the end of September 2008, out of 277,000 applications filed by veterans and their families under this program, only 20,000 have been processed and paid, causing thousands of vets to take out student loans, put off buying textbooks, dig into savings or drop out of school.

An Alternative: Invest Yourself in Building a Better Future for Many

If you are unemployed and considering joining the military for economic reasons, that is not your only option! Full-time volunteer service with non-government organizations here in the U.S. can provide tremendous opportunity to do important work, create change in our society, save lives, learn new skills and gain great experience. Volunteer service with a community based organization and serving others in need as an alternative to joining the military or settling for a minimum wage job is something that deserves serious consideration!

A common myth among many young people about “full-time volunteering” is that it is a privilege reserved only for the wealthy who can afford to work without getting paid. Although full-time volunteering does not pay a salary, many non-government organizations listed in *INVEST YOURSELF* offer room and board during the length of a volunteer commitment, along with covering other basic survival subsistence needs. For many young people who work minimum-wage jobs full-time, their pay barely covers rent, utilities and the expenses of basic living necessities. Without money left over to save or invest, they are not really being paid for their labor—they are merely being sustained so they can return to work the following day.

A volunteer position with an organization that is saving lives and building positive programs of development and aid will often provide training, leadership and teamwork experience as you work with others to create long-lasting, positive social change.

Taking a stand and joining the thousands of volunteers who are committed to social, economic and environmental justice can offer someone even more than the timeless satisfaction that comes from helping others. The experience provides the opportunity to explore causes that may hold personal significance and could possibly redirect professional or personal goals. The possibilities are endless: just by perusing *INVEST YOURSELF* you will find there are full-time volunteer opportunities with many non-government organizations throughout the U.S., engaged in everything from organizing for access to comprehensive health care, building legal

Graduating soon? No job?

**SEIZE THIS TIME TO
INVEST YOURSELF!**



Call COMMISSION on
VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION
(646) 486-2446 or (877) 867-1560



programs dedicated to fighting for access to legal recourse for a growing portion of our population, constructing or organizing for affordable housing, living wages, providing aid to families with loved ones in prison, providing care for the elderly and advocacy for their rights, programs for environmental sustainability and conservation, disaster relief, ending hunger and homelessness, and much more. These community based organizations need volunteers now more than ever before.

Some young people struggling to find work in the field of their studies might choose to volunteer for a time in order to improve hands-on problem-solving skills and their ability to work in a team environment, enhancing their qualifications to find a job in the increasingly difficult job market. Many others may find themselves dedicated to the path of social change, realizing that such movements throughout history have been led by volunteers.

There are full-time volunteer opportunities and placements available internationally as well, and picking a volunteer position far from home can broaden your world view and provide a unique opportunity to accomplish amazing things in service to others and yourself.

Like any experience, the more you invest of yourself, the greater the results will be. Volunteering engages people that are dedicated to the common goal of promoting positive change. Now, more than ever, all those in search of meaningful work need to band together with organizations that need you to strengthen our communities and take the steps that will build a better world in which the right to live decently is materially available to all people.

Help spread the word about the need for community based volunteer service! Get a copy of *INVEST YOURSELF* and share it with others!



Manhattan Mini Storage

17 locations throughout Manhattan

Free roundtrip car
services for your
first visit.
Call for details!

1-800-Storage

www.ManhattanMiniStorage.com

***Please patronize the businesses
displayed throughout this newsletter.
They sponsor CVSA's publications
and help make our work possible***

Bway.net is the last of the independent ISPs!



bway.net

dial-up, DSL,
hosting, design

We have been in business since 1995,
offer everything from email to ethernet,
and are very proud supporters of CVSA.

212-982-9800 info@bway.net
www.bway.net



local, organic,
recycled, fair-trade,
re-purposed,
biodegradable,
products and gifts

139 ave a/9 st new york, ny 10009 • (212)254.5400
sustainable-nyc.com

LMD
NEW YORK
floral events interiors

437 EAST 12TH ST www.lmdfloral.com
PROUD SPONSOR OF CVSA



G-192 Conference on Economic Crisis

Continued from page 19

a draft outcome document that could be debated and adopted at the conference, and the conference finally started on June 24, 2009.

Representatives of the 192 member countries of the General Assembly agreed on many points of action in the final outcome document, including “to strengthen the ability of the UN to fulfill its development mandate.” Major points in the outcome document include the following: Member nations should,

- commit “to a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system;”
- “resist unfair and discriminatory treatment of migrant workers and the imposition of unreasonable restrictions on labor migration... while complying with relevant national legislation and international instruments;”
- “maintain and deliver” their existing aid commitments to help developing countries counteract the crises and continue to develop.
- recognize the “critical need for expanding the scope of regulation and supervision and making it more effective with respect to all major financial centers, instruments and actors, including financial institutions, credit rating agencies and hedge funds. The need for tighter and more coordinated regulation of incentives, derivatives and the trading of standardized contracts is also apparent.”

However, in regard to the last point, the U.S. and several representatives of the European Union insisted on adding wording saying they “reject the imposition of needlessly onerous regulatory requirements,” but gave no definition of what they consider “onerous.”

The participants agreed the current international financial institutions needed reform to make them better at preventing future global financial crises, and reform of the governance structure of the IMF and World Bank to make them “fair and equitable” in representing developing nations. However, the majority of the developed nations blocked passage of language in the Outcome Document that defined the reforms to the financial institutions that the Document originally called for.

Many developing nations of Latin America and Asia went on record stating that the final agreements were not enough, but that they were willing to work with what was

agreed to as a beginning. At the conclusion of the meeting d’Escoto explained, “The conference, the process of preparation, and its outcome were all historic events that served not only to open up the global dialogue on the necessary response to the crisis, but also reaffirmed the indispensable role of the General Assembly, the G-192, as the legitimate forum for truly global and, therefore, legitimate discussion and decision on the vital issues of both global crisis response and deep structural reform of the world financial monetary architecture.”

As Aja Dr. Isatou Nje-Saidy, the Vice President and Minister of Women’s Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia, stated at the conference, “For a crisis that we did not trigger, but for which we bear the greatest burden, it is absolutely logical that decisions about us be taken with our full participation. The evolution of the crisis has clearly engendered the need for equity in international financial decision-making and regulation. Every nation should have a say in the development of a just economic system—it should no longer be the reserve of the privileged few. It is our humble view that the United Nations is uniquely placed to give that voice and platform to developing countries—to call for a rigorous and vigorous response from the international community.”

The U.S. mainstream media gave this conference virtually no coverage, and the American public has never heard an elected U.S. official or financial officer speak about it. The battle for implementation of what was agreed to by this body is now the focus of the developing nations, those who worked very hard as members of the G-192 to reach this level of consensus about global economic policy. ☺

Caravan of Dreams

ORGANIC VEGAN CUISINE
EST. 1991

World fusion cuisine in a romantic Old
World-meets-East Village setting.

Certified kosher by **OKS**

405 East 6th Street, New York, NY 10009
(212) 254-1613 • caravanofdreams.net



Credit Unions Benefit Low-Income Communities

Continued from page 17

several branches including in other parts of Mississippi and Arkansas, where other groups joined with Hope. Reed said, however, that participation by members in the life of the credit union is down; out of 1,500 members only 30 come to the board meetings now. He agreed with Cousminer's assessment that NCUA's policies are making it harder for small community development credit unions to start and to operate and are favoring consolidation into bigger credit unions. He said he'd rather see more grassroots-based credit unions where people have a voice. "Credit unions are a far better model for managing financing than what the banks do."

Reed's advice to groups that want to establish credit unions for their community at this time, since it could take four years and a great deal of work to meet NCUA standards to receive a new charter, is to first see if one already exists in your area that is a good fit, then do some organizing. "Get a bunch of people to join one already in existence, participate in the board meetings *en masse*, elect people to the board, and help steer it in the direction you see is needed, consistent with the needs of the whole membership." He also advised that people not expect that building a credit union is like having a big personal piggy bank. They require leadership, cooperation, work, and you have to have criteria for not making bad loans.


CVSA asked Rosenthal whether more people are joining credit unions now, in the face of the economic depression, the credit crisis and the exposure of the unsound speculative practices of big financial companies and the banks. Rosenthal said his Federation is receiving anecdotal reports, no hard statistics yet, of more people switching from banks to credit unions. He explained that during the last year of the financial crisis, credit unions nationwide have actually increased their mortgage lending substantially, even while banks have been cutting back to insulate and protect their assets.

"On the whole," Rosenthal explained, "the credit union movement is sound and well capitalized. But no part of the financial system has been immune from the toxic overflow of the mortgage crisis. In California, Florida, and other areas where the crisis is most acute, credit unions have suffered losses, not because of loans they made or bad financial policy, but because of the collateral damage inflicted by other financial

institutions. The collapse of the housing market for instance, the halt in new home construction, rising unemployment in the service sector—these and other factors have greatly harmed the low-wage members of credit unions. People have less and less money. Without jobs, workers in hard-hit areas have been unable to pay for their credit union auto loans, for example, and have turned in their keys, trapping them without transportation to seek new employment. With unemployment up from single digit to double digit in one year in many areas, people don't have any money and it seems this will not get better quickly. It will be slow."

Rosenthal described that the challenge of starting a new credit union right now is, "You need substantial capitalization, you need at least several thousand members to begin with and it typically is taking up to three years to get it started, which is too long. We have been trying to change that through our efforts with the NCUA, but that is what it has been taking." There are currently as many as 38 applications in various stages of review and virtually no new charters were granted by the federal agency over the last year.

Credit unions, however, offer a proven model for making positive economic development of a community more possible—one that can help people build some security through a cooperative effort, rather than be victim of the ruthless fleecing poor communities are otherwise subjected to. Many in low-income communities believe community based credit unions are worth the work it takes to build them and continue the fight for the movement to grow.

For more information on starting or joining a community development credit union, or volunteering with one, contact the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions at 116 John Street, 33rd floor, New York, New York 10038, or call them at (212) 809-1850. 



Volunteers are an important part of the quality care we provide at Village Care of New York. With Senior Choices, our complement of programs serving older adults, and our Network of Aids Services, we address many of the most pressing needs in our community. Wouldn't you like to help us in this rewarding experience? For more information, visit our website at www.vcnny.org, call our Volunteer Hotline at (212) 243-3229 or e-mail us at volunteers@vcny.org.

154 Christopher Street, New York, NY 10014 ♦ (212) 337-5600 ♦ www.vcnny.org



**Students!
Want to make a
real difference
this summer?**

INVEST YOURSELF

**in service to others and organize for
solutions to the problems of poverty,
hunger, health care, housing, disaster
relief, unemployment, environmental
destruction and more!**



**Call COMMISSION on
VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION
(646) 486-2446 or (877) 867-6150**

Labor donated

WINTER 2010

SUBSCRIBE to ITEMS! Get a Copy of INVEST YOURSELF!

*Join the growing NON-GOVERNMENT VOLUNTARY
SERVICE AND ACTION MOVEMENT!*

Call (646) 486-2446 or (877) 867-6150

- ☐ Enclosed is my \$15 donation for an annual subscription to CVSA's newsletter ITEMS.
- ☐ I want to order a copy of the new 2010 edition of *INVEST YOURSELF—The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*. Enclosed is my donation of \$10 plus \$2 for postage.
- ☐ Contact me about how my organization can join CVSA.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Organization _____

**Commission on Voluntary Service & Action
160 West 120th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10027**

CVSA HAS MOVED!

**AS THIS NEWSLETTER GOES TO PRESS,
CVSA HAS MOVED ITS CENTRAL OPERATIONS
TO HARLEM, NEW YORK.**

**PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THE NEW ADDRESS, BELOW.
OUR PHONE NUMBER HAS NOT CHANGED.
160 WEST 120th STREET, 2nd Floor,
New York, NY 10027
(646) 486-2446**