



ITEMS

COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION



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Spring 2015

Launch of 2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign Held at 53rd Session of Commission on Social Development at UN



Photo: Ana Quinones

Yael Alonso (right), CVSA Administrative Assistant of CVSA, speaking from the panel of CVSA's side-event to the UN's 53rd Session of the Commission on Social Development, with Jordi Llopart (left), Chief of New York Office of the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

CVSA Member Organizations Offer Their Organizing Expertise to NGOs at UN Conference

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) brought together four of its member organizations to present a workshop titled "Organizing Our Volunteer Power: Shared Experiences from Honduras, Guatemala, the Philippines, and the Bronx on Methods of Grassroots Empowerment to Reverse the Trends of Poverty" to twenty-eight representatives of thirteen non-government organizations (NGOs) affiliated with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the UN at the 65th Annual DPI/NGO Conference held at the UN Headquarters in New York City August 27 to 29, 2014.

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Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) held a side-event to the 53rd Session of the Commission on Social Development at United Nations New York headquarters on February 12. Co-sponsored by the United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV) and titled "Strengthening Voluntary Service and Action for Social Development: Launch of 2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign," the event was attended by 35 diplomatic and NGO representatives from 12 different countries and staff of UN agencies.

CVSA members Stan Brock of Remote Area Medical (RAM) based in Rockford, Tennessee, the largest volunteer-based medical aid operation of its type in the U.S., and Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, founder of First Popular Garífuna Hospital in Honduras which provides free care as a right and is run entirely by the community; along with Jordi Llopart, Chief of UNV's New York Office; and Yael Alonso, Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator of CVSA; provided moving insights to the power of community-based organizations that constitute a growing movement throughout the U.S. and internationally of goal-oriented, volunteer, grassroots leadership struggling to build a better world. CVSA Executive Director, Susan Angus was the moderator for the event.

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Organizations featured in this issue:

Damayan Migrant Workers Association, New York, NY
Grupo Cajolá, Morristown, NJ
First Popular Garífuna Hospital, Ciriboya, Honduras
Remote Area Medical, Knoxville, TN
United Nations Volunteer Programme, New York, NY
Fortune Society, New York, NY

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English Conversation Teacherspg 23



ITEMS



COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

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.

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Commission on Social Development 53rd Session: Rethinking UN Approach to Poverty Eradication

CVSA NGO delegates to the UN, Yael Alonso and Susan Angus, attended several High-level and General discussions of the 53rd Session of the Commission on Social Development (ComSoDev) held February 4 to 13 to hear reports from the participating countries on the progress or lack of progress they have made in achieving social development goals and to observe and participate when possible in the discussions held among nations and UN agencies on how UN policy could better address the pressing needs of people around the world.

ComSoDev convenes the week-long session every two years to assess progress and review policy effectiveness. Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen where Governments reached a then-new consensus on the need to “put people at the centre of development” and pledged to make the “conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration” the overriding objectives of development, the ComSoDev has been monitoring, advising, and advocating governments towards the achievement of those goals.

The theme of this 53rd Session was “Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World,” because “...commitments to poverty eradication, full employment and social integration... remain largely unfulfilled... with unequal and fragmented progress in most of the world,” after 20 years, according to a report prepared by the ComSoDev for the UN Economic and Social Council prior to the session.

Alonso and Angus raised questions during several of the meetings which brought into the discussions the perspective of CVSA member organizations who are on the front lines of addressing rising poverty, inequality and injustice in the U.S. and working in solidarity with efforts of developing nations. Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant, offered in one of the discussions, “I am a full-time volunteer organizer with Commission on Voluntary Service & Action, which was founded directly after WWII in 1945. Our entire staff is volunteer and we



represent 100's of grassroots organizations throughout the U.S. as well as other parts of the world who are addressing hunger, homelessness, lack of access to healthcare, conditions of migrant workers, unemployment, access to education and more. These are organizations that bring together and represent the people who are in need of the very changes in economic and social conditions that this Commission [ComSocDev] is discussing. They endeavor to organize the resources needed and change needed without taking funding with strings and exterior interests attached. This means they rely on dedicated volunteers who are committed to building a better world.

"We have seen that the governments of developed countries, rich countries, such as the U.S. and in Western Europe, where the inequality is rapidly increasing, try to use volunteers and volunteer organizations as a substitute for carrying out their own responsibilities, to avoid taking policy action to end the root causes of the social and economic injustice. CVSA offers to this body a different perspective on volunteerism which is that grassroots volunteer organizations that are exemplifying how government should and could be addressing the unmet needs of people and building solidarity be recognized in that manner.

"And I ask that you look at how we can work with you to build stronger international solidarity in material ways for and with grassroots volunteer organizations that are endeavoring to do this work. The governments of many developing countries, particularly in South America and China where great strides in eliminating poverty and inequality are being made through economic and social policy innovation and solidarity are already doing a great deal of this."

Many of the people who later attended CVSA's February 12th event "Strengthening Volunteer Service and Action for Social Development: 2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign Launch" in the General Assembly Building attended because they had heard Alonso or Angus speak-up during the week's sessions.

CVSA member organizations who wish to learn more about the programs, conferences and campaigns of the United Nations and how to bring information to appropriate arenas in the UN in order to advance solutions to the problems your organization is addressing, please contact CVSA at (718) 482-8724.

2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Launched at the UN

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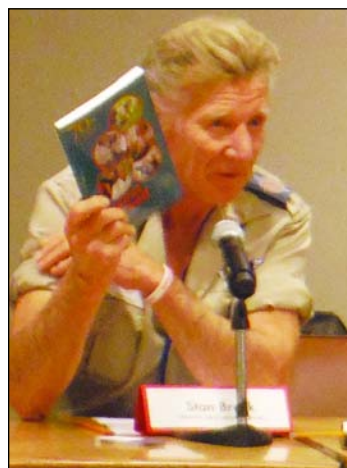


Photo: Ana Quinones

Stan Brock, founder of Remote Area Medical, opens his February 12, 2015 presentation at the UN with praise of the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue.

Brock and Castillo made 30-minute presentations along with short videos about their organizations.

Brock's opening words were, "I am very glad to be here at the UN to talk about Remote Area Medical but first I want to say this volume that CVSA volunteers have produced (holding up *INVEST YOURSELF*) is a real Bible for where to find people who are doing the kind of work that this world really needs, and I thank you very much, CVSA, for that."

CVSA organized this event to provide delegates attending the conference with examples of nongovernmental volunteer efforts working at the grassroots level serving people in need by carrying out programs for social development that are exemplary of how government policy should be enacted toward these problems. The event also launched the 2015 distribution campaign of the 70th Anniversary edition of *INVEST YOURSELF: Guide to Action*.

Representatives of United Nations Permanent Missions including Erika Watanabe Patriota for Brazil, Nosku Lifumbela for Zambia, Dr. Illa Mainali for Nepal, as well as Du Dong, Deputy Director of the International Department of the All-China Youth Federation attended the event in the General Assembly Building. In addition, NGO representatives from Nigeria, Russia, Cameroon, India, South Korea, Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. including David Wildman of the United Methodist Board of Global Missions, Hu Di of Global Volunteers and Sr. Min Ah Ahn of Sisters of Charity Federation attended. These representatives learned about the positive programs that nongovernmental, volunteer-based organizations are putting forward to address poverty, lack of access to health care and other social and economic injustices and inequalities in the developed country of the United States as well as in developing nations such as Honduras.

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2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Launched at the UN

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Photo: Ana Quinones

(Left to right) Panel Speakers Stan Brock of Remote Area Medical and Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry of First Popular Garifuna Hospital; and Moderator Susan Angus, Executive Director of CVSA.

In the brief overview before introducing the two main speakers, Angus noted that the United Nations was founded 70 years ago at the end of World War II with 51 member nations and today the UN General Assembly seats 193 member nations. Stating that, "Seventy years ago the people of most nations in the UN began rebuilding from the horrific destruction of WWII and many so-called 'third world' nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia began fighting for and winning independence from colonial rule." Angus pointed to how much the world has changed since then and that, "CVSA was also founded 70 years ago by a handful of people interested in eliminating the causes of war and in building international fellowship among all people, and began to promote volunteer service as a means to bring people together to work on ending poverty and discrimination on a community-by-community, people-to-people level." She said, "We have seen that there is a great deal to be learned from nations in Asia and Latin America that are successfully eliminating poverty in their countries and advancing the health, education and well-being of the majority of their people. CVSA also has a great deal we can teach from the experiences of grassroots nongovernment organizations that are working in low-income and marginalized communities here in the U.S. who are addressing the basic and growing unmet needs of people, such as the organizations you will read about in the new edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* which we are launching here today."

Brock brought to light for the attendees the extent to which millions of working and disabled people in both rural and urban areas throughout the U.S. do not receive the medical care they need to live healthy lives because they simply cannot afford it.



Photo: Ana Quinones

(Right to left at table) Hu Di, Volunteer Coordinator of Global Volunteers; Joy Cousminer, Founder of Bethex Federal Credit Union, Ame Esangbedo, Liaison with United Nations Volunteer Programme listen to the panel presentations.

RAM was founded by Brock after he was injured in the Amazon, in Guyana on the border of Brazil, and became aware of the fact that many people in these remote areas were days, if not weeks, away from the nearest hospital. Brock started RAM by airlifting medical doctors and supplies to remote villages in Latin America and Africa that were not accessible by paved roads. RAM brought its operations to the United States in 1985 when Brock learned of the severe lack of access to health care for millions of low-income working people here and RAM now does 70% of its medical clinic operations in the U.S. because the need is so great. RAM provides free, quality dental, vision and medical care through modernly equipped mobile medical units with which RAM turns fair grounds, stadiums, arenas into three-day (and night) long medical clinics in rural and urban areas. Each clinic treats from 700 to 1400 people in the course of the marathon events, involving hundreds of volunteer medical professionals and hundreds more local support volunteers. RAM has carried out 749 free medical clinic events in 21 U.S. states, as well as 25 other countries.

Brock explained, "My vision for Remote Area Medical developed when I suffered a personal injury while living among

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Photo: Ed Kimes

(Center front) David Wildman, General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, watches an introductory film about RAM, along with other delegates, including Lobi Redhawk of Gray Panther (end of table, right) and Georgia Demaceob, of the Brazilian Mission to the UN (end of table, left).

the Wapishana Indians in Guyana, South America. I was isolated from medical care, which was about a 26-day journey away. I witnessed the near devastation of whole tribes by what would be simple or minor illnesses if the medical care were available. When I left Guyana, I vowed to find a way to deliver basic medical aid to people in the world's inaccessible regions. I established the non-profit RAM to keep my promise, not only to the Wapishana Indians, but also to thousands around the world in similar conditions. Now 50 years later we are happy to say that we have an operation near the Brazilian border in Guyana with an airplane that provides free air ambulance service for all the indigenous tribal villages, and airplanes fly pretty much every day to take somebody to a doctor."

"But when I came to this country (USA) much later on, I was staggered to see that there were huge numbers of people in the U.S. that did not have health care. There was health care available, but they didn't have access for various reasons and in most cases they simply couldn't afford it."

"So this is a pretty sad situation in the richest country in the world. In a world that has two billion people that don't have access to latrines, and another billion people who don't have access to clean water, and yet here in the United States, where we have all of the above — we have 45 million people who don't have access to health care! In the world organization rankings the United States is number 37. And yet in the U.S. we spend about three times as much per capita on health care than they do in my home country of Britain."

"Our volunteer organization started out with a volunteer of one: me. And we've gone past 85,000 volunteers who are involved now. We provide close to \$90 million of free care a

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Photo: Ed Kimes

Du Dong (left), Deputy Director of International Department of the All-China Youth Federation; Yulia Kulchevskaya (center) of Sail of Hope, based in Moscow, Russia; and Monsurah Alli-Aluwal Uwafuyi, NGO representative from Nigeria.



Photo: Ana Quinones

Georgia Demaceob (front center), intern with the Brazilian Permanent Mission to the UN, and Erika Patriota (behind her), Representative of the Permanent Mission to the UN of Brazil, and Gigi Polo (right), volunteer designer of cover of the INVEST YOURSELF catalogue, watch intently the short videos presented by Stan Brock of RAM and Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry of the First Popular Garifuna Hospital in Honduras.



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year, and have treated over 600,000 patients. Just last weekend, we held a relatively small medical clinic event in our home-base town of Brockford, and we saw 960 patients. 70% of those patients needed dental care, and the same people needed vision care and could not afford a pair of glasses — they are a hazard on the highway. They can't get a job. People hadn't been to a dentist in years and years. We calculated at the end of the event last Monday that something like 24% of people hadn't been to the dentist in over ten years. For so many, this is the only medical care they can get, so they come early and get on line. This is in the United States."

An NGO representative from Nigeria, Monsurah Allu-Oluwafyi, asked Brock to explain how his organization got so many people, including professionals, to volunteer their time. Stan said, "It never ceases to amaze me that there are so many hundreds of thousands of people here in the United States who volunteer. There is a desire among a large segment of the population to volunteer to help folks. A dentist, for example, works five days of the week in the office and then on the weekend turns out and does the same thing he or she does at the office, but not getting paid. As far as it being sustainable, it is only sustainable as long as we can keep getting those volunteers to come. Now, we have a website, www.ramusa.org, and we get a lot of volunteers from our website, but in the early days when Remote Area Medical was not known at all in this country, it was done on the telephone. Going through the phone book, calling dentists and eye doctors and medical doctors, and I said, "Hey, we have this medical event coming up a couple

weeks from now, can you come and volunteer?" It takes a lot of legwork, but it's getting easier as the organization gets better known. You gotta have that word out there for volunteers to understand where to go and why they are needed."

Brock closed his remarks saying, "We do this and will continue to do this, but the last point I want to make, in closing, is just to say, it should not be this way. We shouldn't have to do this. Health care should be affordable to people and accessible to everyone."

The next speaker, Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, described how he and a team of volunteer medical professionals who have been trained at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba, organized their community of Ciraboya on the remote northeastern coast in Honduras, to build a hospital run by the community, that could address the dire unmet health care needs of the indigenous and Garífuna community there. Castillo spoke about his organization's struggle to respond to the health needs of these communities where the government provides no medical services, while also trying to support his all-volunteer staff and supply the hospital with the medicines and equipment they need.

Honduras is the second poorest country in the western hemisphere, second to Haiti, and has long been a country whose wealth is exported to the North. A few powerful industry- and land-owning Honduran elite families and two U.S. corporations (Dole and Chiquita) are enriched while the majority of the people remain extremely poor. The First Popular Garífuna Hospital has not only saved hundreds of lives each year, it has improved the overall health of the whole community through the holistic approach to health care, the community education and the involvement of the community, all done without any financial support from the Honduran government. Dr.

***"This is the power of
volunteering. This is what
we try to explain here at
the UN!"***

**Jordi Llopart, Chief of NY Office,
United Nations Volunteer Programme**

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Castillo showed the images of the new wing to the hospital, explaining it remains incomplete and explaining the urgent need for additional resources from friends abroad to complete it. (See more about the First Popular Garífuna Hospital on page 16.)

Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator, spoke about the role of full-time volunteers in social change throughout history, and the importance of this new edition of the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue of volunteer opportunities. He also pointed out that, "The theme of this session of the Commission on Social Development has been 'Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World,' that representatives from states and NGOs have been discussing all this week. Needing to 'rethink' implies that what has been done in the past has not worked, as many have pointed out, and that new means and methods of tackling the problems we face in the U.S. and around the world must be formulated. These two organizations, the First Popular Garífuna Hospital and Remote Area Medical are examples of organizations that comprise the *INVEST YOURSELF* volunteer opportunities catalogue: organizations that involve volunteers in meaningful ways to make an impact on their communities. There are over 200 organizations listed in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue from all across the country and internationally that have taken up the call to build solutions to these problems."

Speaking last, after hearing these presentations, Jordi Llopart, Chief of the NY Office of UNV said, "This is the power of volunteering. This is what we try to explain here at the UN. The experience of volunteering is helping people gain the full realization of their rights, and through volunteering people can, themselves, make a change. One of the two things we do at UNV is this: we try to bring these voices to the UN to the attention of member nations so they become fully aware that they have volunteer efforts going on in the national level, because sometimes they don't connect the dots within what is happening at the national level and the importance of reflecting this in international agreements or global agendas like the ones that we are now negotiating here in the United Nations, the next generation of international Millennium goals."

Llopart explained that there are misunderstandings, for instance, that volunteers are here to supplement government roles in basic service deliveries. He said, "These examples we have heard today at this table are precisely the exemplification

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CVSA Members Offer Organizing Expertise at UN

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Caryn Maxim, North American Coordinator for Grupo Cajolá; Linda Oalican, Coordinator of Damayan Migrant Workers Association; Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, founder of the First Popular Garífuna Hospital and Joy Cousminer, Founder of Bethex Federal Credit Union and We Care for Credit Unions participated in the panel presentation for the workshop.

This Annual DPI/NGO Conference brings together over 1,500 Non-Government Organization (NGO) representatives from around the globe and is specially designed for NGOs that do not have Consultative Status but are attached to the Department of Public Information as a forum to give them information about the UN's work and to function as a networking opportunity. The focus of this year's conference, with the title "2015 and Beyond: Our Action Agenda," was to provide information about the UN Sustainable Development Goals so that the NGOs can educate their constituencies and the general public about them and can also evaluate what role they will play in holding their governments accountable to the implementation of the goals. CVSA's workshop was one of 60 that were available during the three-day conference, and each workshop was limited to 90 minutes.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a list of 17 goals, starting with ending all poverty everywhere, that are to be achieved by 2030 worldwide. The final document, which will define these goals and how they are to be achieved, is still being debated by the member nations and UN agencies, and is scheduled to be finalized by the General Assembly in September 2015. CVSA has Special



Photo: Amanda Schwab

Audience responds to Joy Cousminer's anecdotes about the early days of the founding of Bethex Federal Credit Union in the Bronx by bringing together a group of poor women living on welfare who wanted to build a better life for their families and their community.

Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and offered to present this workshop in order to share the valuable experience of CVSA member organizations who work "on the ground" in the communities that need these goals to be achieved.

Each speaker explained how their organization was formed at the grassroots level, why it was necessary to organize and build their organization, what they have accomplished so far and what the obstacles were to achieving real sustainable solutions to the poverty, lack of access to health care, exploitation at the workplace and access to financial security — the areas of need that they each address.

CVSA Executive Director and the moderator of the workshop, Susan Angus, led a question and answer discussion session after the presentations, pointing out that these speakers are on the front lines of the devastation caused by

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Photo: Amanda Schwab

Joy Cousminer, founder of Bethex Federal Credit Union, speaks about the “gorilla in the corner — the U.S. government” in how its policy changes have been detrimental to the sustainability of low-income, community-based credit union movement.

the economic policies that currently dominate the world, and on the front lines of material hope for change — because they are building the alternatives from the ground up. The UN Sustainable Development Agenda is intended to solve these problems, but leaders from grassroots non-government organizations, such as the four speakers in CVSA’s workshop, play a very important role in striving for the goals.

In the Q & A period, Barbara Hogan, Director of International Volunteering with the Volunteer Service Organization (VSO) asked Angus “How do you see the role of volunteers being recognized as a key component of the post-2015 SDG’s?”

Angus responded, “There are different forms of volunteering. In the U.S. there are many volunteer agencies that coordinate schedules for local charities that ask people to put in a few hours here and there to help out, such as in soup

kitchens and other charitable services. There are also the international agencies that recruit, screen and place full-time volunteers with development projects abroad and the volunteers may act as liaisons between the people in the community and the financial institutions funding the development or are there as consultants or trainers, for a defined period of time and then leave.

“There is also a movement of people who are goal-oriented and working as full-time volunteers from the standpoint of organizing their community to tackle these problems of poverty, of lack of access to basic necessities such as health care, decent wages and income, clean water and such. They work to address the problems at their root, as systemic problems, and build organizations of the people affected by the problem, in order to attain real solutions that are systemically sustainable in the long run — as a voluntary effort. Sometimes they are able to do it with the support and aid of their government, and sometimes it is the policies of their government that they need to fight to change. That is what you see in the work of each person on this panel and their organization. They have made these full time commitments in order to hope to make societal changes that will offer a life of decency and dignity to the people.

“When people ask, what will help these volunteer organizations the most, I would say that in addition to most important resource — more people — what we need most is resources to reach more people to volunteer, resources to support more volunteers, resources to continue to build and educate and push for the real solutions. Volunteers need room and board, food, clothing, medical care, to be able to continue to volunteer full-time. These organizations need support that is from allies and friends of the struggle rather than from resources that come with strings attached that place controls

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Thank You *INVEST YOURSELF* Production Volunteers and Command Web Printing Company!

The 70th edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* was produced, as always, by volunteers who carried out the communication with all the organizations listed, gathered the updated information, did the editing, typing, formatting, proofreading, correcting, and reformatting and double-checking of all the text, photo captions and indexing that make *INVEST YOURSELF* the most comprehensive guide that it is to non-governmental volunteer service opportunities!


CVSA thanks Faith Waters and Ed Kimes for the many hours of proofreading and corrections, fixing the photos and proofing the indexing in the final stages, as well as Akira Yawata, Keith Lewis, Jasmine Kwan Ling and many others who worked on this project in all its various stages.

Everyone at CVSA extends a special thanks to Andrew Merson, President and CEO of Command Web, who donated the printing and binding of *INVEST YOURSELF* for this edition as he has for every edition since 1995. The catalogue was printed at the Bind-Rite plant in Robbinsville, New Jersey, one of Command Web's family of printing companies, under capable production management of Helder Gomes, plant manager. Gomes helped us meet our timeframe and get through the production smoothly. Merson's commitment to the printing of each edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* is a valued contribution to the continued growth of the independent

voluntary service and action movement, for which we are very grateful. This catalogue makes it possible for people who care and want to invest their time in productive endeavors to find the organizations that really need them. Thank you!

Thank you Gigi Polo, founder of Myellow Boots Studio and a professor at Parsons College at The New School and College of Staten Island, for volunteering her time and skills to once again design a beautiful cover for *INVEST YOURSELF*. Gigi has designed the previous two editions as well, and is now assisting with other literature and "branding" of our paraphernalia and publicity.

Many others, such as the businesses displayed below, contributed xeroxing, food and office supplies, making *INVEST YOURSELF* an example of what can be done by volunteers with a goal and with organization.

Now we ask that everyone help distribute it! We need to reach more colleges, schools, libraries, professional associations, churches and community centers in United States and around the world to put out the positive and powerful message that volunteers matter and are instrumental to building a better world — and here is where to find the organizations that need you. Call CVSA at (718) 482-8724 to learn how you can help distribute *INVEST YOURSELF*. 

CVSA thanks these businesses for their contributions to the *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign

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Spring 2015

Launch of 2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign Held at 53rd Session of Commission on Social Development at UN



Photo: Ana Quinones

Yael Alonso (right), CVSA Administrative Assistant of CVSA, speaking from the panel of CVSA's side-event to the UN's 53rd Session of the Commission on Social Development, with Jordi Llopart (left), Chief of New York Office of the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

CVSA Member Organizations Offer Their Organizing Expertise to NGOs at UN Conference

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) brought together four of its member organizations to present a workshop titled "Organizing Our Volunteer Power: Shared Experiences from Honduras, Guatemala, the Philippines, and the Bronx on Methods of Grassroots Empowerment to Reverse the Trends of Poverty" to twenty-eight representatives of thirteen non-government organizations (NGOs) affiliated with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of the UN at the 65th Annual DPI/NGO Conference held at the UN Headquarters in New York City August 27 to 29, 2014.

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Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) held a side-event to the 53rd Session of the Commission on Social Development at United Nations New York headquarters on February 12. Co-sponsored by the United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV) and titled "Strengthening Voluntary Service and Action for Social Development: Launch of 2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Campaign," the event was attended by 35 diplomatic and NGO representatives from 12 different countries and staff of UN agencies.

CVSA members Stan Brock of Remote Area Medical (RAM) based in Rockford, Tennessee, the largest volunteer-based medical aid operation of its type in the U.S., and Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, founder of First Popular Garífuna Hospital in Honduras which provides free care as a right and is run entirely by the community; along with Jordi Llopart, Chief of UNV's New York Office; and Yael Alonso, Administrative Assistant and Membership Coordinator of CVSA; provided moving insights to the power of community-based organizations that constitute a growing movement throughout the U.S. and internationally of goal-oriented, volunteer, grassroots leadership struggling to build a better world. CVSA Executive Director, Susan Angus was the moderator for the event.

Continued to page 3

Organizations featured in this issue:

Damayan Migrant Workers Association, New York, NY
Grupo Cajolá, Morristown, NJ
First Popular Garífuna Hospital, Ciriboya, Honduras
Remote Area Medical, Knoxville, TN
United Nations Volunteer Programme, New York, NY
Fortune Society, New York, NY

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Thank You INVEST YOURSELF Production Staff and Printer..pg 10
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CVSA's U.S.-China English Teaching Project:
English Conversation Teacherspg 23



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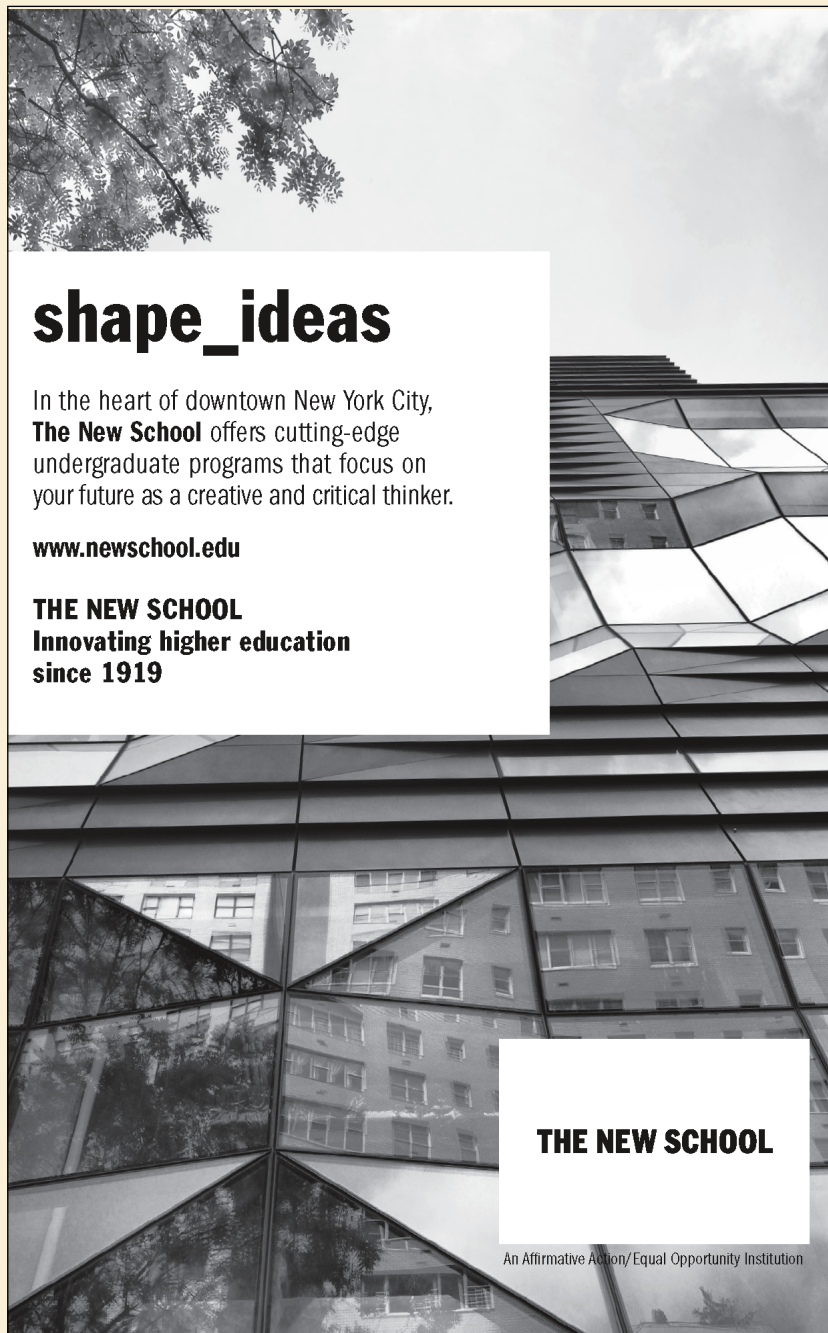




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TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD**

Annette Fisherman



CVSA Members Offer Organizing Expertise at UN

Continued from page 9

on the independence of such organizations and establish controls from outside the communities they are built to serve.”

Luther Castillo-Harry and Linda Oalican, from the panel, also added to Angus’ point on this question. Castillo spoke to the obstacles the Garífuna people face in Honduras in volunteering their time, working at the hospital they built as volunteers without pay. The goal motivation is there to work full-time serving the community, but they also have to feed their children and you can’t do that on a minimal subsistence stipend. Also, since starting the First Popular Garífuna Hospital, some of his fellow organizers have been assassinated by right wing paramilitary groups who are protected by the government. Despite these daunting obstacles, the Garífuna community is dedicated to the importance of their hospital, expanding it, defending it. Castillo explained, “We are constructing a foundation from which we can demand the government do its job. We have the human resources to run a health care system correctly, what we need is the government to provide the medicine and the equipment. We will control the direction and responsibilities because the people know they are a part of it, it is theirs. We can demand from the politicians what we need, because we know what we need. For us, this movement has been a platform to continue the struggle of building development in our community.”

Oalican spoke about difficulties Damayan Migrant Workers Association has faced in getting the Philippine government to deal with problems facing Philippine workers in the U.S. that her organization is trying to tackle. “We also found that we needed to work with other grass-roots organizations to form alliances and coalitions in this movement to protect all working people, to have more strength,” Oalican explained.

Here is a summary of highlights from each speaker’s presentation:

Caryn Maxim, North American Coordinator, Grupo Cajolá

Cajolá is the name of a town of 18,000 people of Maya Mam people in western Guatemala, and is a town of daunting poverty where 66% of our children suffer from chronic malnutrition. Nearly 40% of the community has migrated to the United States. Maxim explained, “Although they send back



Photo: Amanda Schwab

Caryn Maxim, North American Coordinator of Grupo Cajolá, talking about the economic conditions that cause poverty in Guatemala.

money from working in the US that we need for health, for food, for education, and for building houses, when you walk into the community in Cajolá you see that many of the houses are empty and that there’s been a dramatic social disintegration of the families of the communities that the entire Maya culture is based on. Grupo Cajolá was formed in Morristown, New Jersey by a group of young immigrant workers from Cajolá after one of the young men in the town had been hit by a car when he was riding on his bicycle, was critically injured and was sent back to Guatemala by the hospital and the Guatemalan Consulate where he then died within two days. The Guatemalans in Morristown organized themselves and vowed never to let this happen again. They started by helping out people from Cajolá if they were ill. I got involved with them around the year 2002 because of immigration advocacy work I was doing in Morristown.”

In 2005 some of the men started to return to their community in Cajolá, Guatemala to begin organizing there to develop their home town. Their dream is to develop the economy of their town so that nobody has to leave their family and community behind in order to travel to the north for work.

“The group is all volunteer and they manage to find time from their challenges for daily survival and family responsibilities to work on the various projects in Cajolá,” explained Maxim. “The priority of the group is education. They manage a scholarship program and many of the members of the group are active in the public school system. They began politically



Photo: Amanda Schwab

Representatives of NGOs from around the world listen to accounts of CVSA member organizations.

organizing the community in order to have a voice in the local government. They do work in recuperating their culture and identity which has been under strong repression for 500 years, and to fight the daily discrimination and racism that all the indigenous people face both in Guatemala and abroad. I originally started to work with women, and that work morphed into economic development. We started on a year long community needs analysis and women identified lack of money as their largest problem.”

“One group of women decided to start an egg farm and another group decided to start a weaving cooperative. The role of Grupo Cajolá in these businesses is to provide start-up funding and start-up training and then to accompany the group in that process to sustainability. After the two businesses got started by the women's' groups, then we started carpentry businesses for the men and last year we started a beekeeping business. Because we needed to think about the children of the women that were working in the businesses and because of the work the group does in the cultural recuperation, we started a pre-school which is now in its third year.”

“One of the first challenges was getting our people to make that transition from being workers to being owners as well as workers. More than half of our women have never attended school, so we’ve had to have literacy training classes since the beginning and we set passing third grade equivalency as the level they must reach before they can stop studying. I’m happy to report the egg business is a sustainable business, which is a big deal; the carpentry business is a sustainable business, and with the others businesses, we’re still getting there.”

Maxim also explained how the project challenges the culture of poverty which has become ingrained, but strengthens the deep Maya Mam cultural values of collaboration, of community, of harmony with nature. “The culture of surviving poverty, putting up with it — that is what is changing through this.”

Linda Oalican, Organizer, Damayan Migrant Workers Association

Linda Oalican came to New York City from the Philippines about 20 years ago and has been doing domestic work in many forms since that time, as a babysitter, nanny, housekeeper and caregiver. She co-founded Damayan (which means helping each other) to address the different problems of domestic workers like herself. Linda explained that the Philippines sends around 5000 workers everyday out of the country to find work. “The majority are women like me,” explained Oalican. “Most of us are college educated and some have advanced education.

However, the Philippine economy has been so compromised that it cannot provide livelihood for its people, many of its middle class, the workers also, and some children of the farmers go abroad to find livelihood to support their family.”

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CVSA Members Offer Organizing Expertise at UN

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As this is the opposite of a sustainable development plan, the vision of Damayan Migrant Association is “to have a society where the families do not have to be separated just to find livelihood, for parents to put food on the table and to send their children to college.”

“When we came here there were no jobs for foreign immigrant women workers other than jobs in the home; we did not have a choice and we became domestic workers. Of the many challenges in the industry, the first is the lack of respect. Ten years ago, before we organized Damayan, many of us didn’t really say openly that we are domestic workers because there is so much shame and fear. Many of those who work as domestic workers have overstayed their visas here and became undocumented. We face discrimination based on immigration and the color of our skin. It is very hard for domestic workers like me to survive in U.S. and to also support our families in the Philippines.”

Damayan developed two strategies. “Our first is to address the immediate problems of the community here. We are about 30,000 in Metro New York area. There are about 200,000 domestic workers in Metro NY and 15% of this number are Filipino. Damayan has organized over a 1000 workers, and we have a lot of organizing to do to reach more, and we are working very hard. The way we address our legal issues, we partner with progressive lawyers in the city who volunteer. We have recovered over \$650,000 stolen wages for about 50 workers. We also work with lawyers who support labor trafficking survivors. We have helped about three-dozen trafficking survivors and we helped 15 women bring their families over. Right now we have 5 families who have been successful in bringing their children over. So that’s a challenge for us — how to make the stories of these families to be success stories. We have won a cleaning contract with one of the non-profit organizations in the city to provide employment for the male members of these trafficking families because ... this is not traditionally work that is open to men. The fathers are very challenged in looking for work, and so we’re actively helping them. Also our members have health issues, especially when you work with children and the elderly; you get sick on the job. Many of us do not have health insurance so we work with Filipino doctors and nurses to donate their service and we organize health fairs so that our community can get free screenings and other health



Photo: Amanda Schwab

Linda Oalican, coordinator of Damayan Migrant Workers Association, speaks about the challenges in organizing the thousands of Philippine migrant workers in the New York metropolitan area.

services. Those are the immediate needs of our community that we address.”

Linda also introduced a member of Damayan, Lydia Epina, who is a domestic worker and a labor trafficking survivor and now a full time staff person at Damayan. Epina told of her experience of being trafficked and trapped in the situation for many years, until she met Damayan and is now a leader providing assistance to many other women and their families.

Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, Founder First Popular Garífuna Hospital

Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry introduced himself as a medical doctor who received his training at Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba and had just finished an MBA at Harvard University. “I’m from a small rural area, Mosquita area in Honduras, a village without electricity, without running water, no paved roads. I’m here today able to do what I do because when I was a child my mother woke me up at 2 o’clock every day, to go take a shower, put on the uniform, walk three hours to another village to attend school, starting classes at 7 AM and return back at 4 PM, then I read something for the night. That was the dynamic every day, to make us what we are now. The communities around those areas have a common denominator of exclusion and poverty, and condemning the people to be the poorest of the poor without essentials, the things they needed to live.

“I saw, since I was a child, that when people get sick, we had to put them in hammocks, walk for five or six hours to the nearest village, but without doctors some of them didn’t



Photo: Amanda Schwab

Dr. Luther Castillo-Harry, founder of the First Popular Garifuna Hospital, speaks about how he organized his community in Honduras to build the hospital, owned by the community itself, together.

reach the next village, and we had to bring back their bodies, dead. And the people just say ‘God does what he wants to do.’ I didn’t believe at that time that this was what God wanted, for people to have to die like that. Then in 1999, Hurricane Mitch destroyed many parts of Central America. The Cuban government gave an opportunity to our underserved areas, sending doctors to them and also opened the Latin American School of Medicine giving scholarships to many of the young people from these remote areas. That was an opportunity I took, to go to study medicine with seven of our companions from these villages.”

“In 1999, when I became a medical student, we created a small foundation that we call For The Health Of Our People, which wrote letters and contacted Garifuna organizations in many parts of the world to get scholarships for many of the children from these underserved areas. Since 1999 to now, we have about 187 young people from remote areas of Honduras studying in different countries and 70% of them are studying medicine; and some are returning back now to our communities to work in the process of development in this area.

“When I graduated from ELAM in 2005, I returned home and went village by village to work with the people to build this movement of health care. It was not easy at first, because we came from these communities, people know your parents, people know where you’re from and they don’t believe you can do it. But we developed this movement, village by village and women were the key in the work. We say in the Garifuna society that men have the last word in the house, and the last word is always, ‘yes, my love.’ Our



Photo: Amanda Schwab

In addition to providing valuable information and perspectives to the NGO representatives in the audience, each of the speakers also learned from each other.

grandmother has the power to call people to work, and we built this great movement in our community.

“We took a team of our new doctor professionals to go look for the funds, traveling to distant parts and we started this small building. Now since we started in 2005, brick by brick, each house donated 10 days of voluntary work and the community did it. A woman did a calendar keeping track of what days each house was going to donate the work. And we started this process.

“Now, we also opened a small nursing school in the area with single mothers. Doctors there are working hard, hand in hand with people. The infant mortality in that area was 32.2 [out of 1,000], but last year it was 0. The maternal mortality in the country is 48.2 [in 10,000], but in our area it’s 3.1.

“However, there are consequences to building successful programs for the poor! I was called by my colleagues in

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Joy Cousminer, Founder of Bethex Federal Credit Union, listens to a question from the audience about community-based credit unions.

the city, who complained we may be taking their clients away by giving health care for free as a right. They tried to get us declared illegal. But they do not ever treat our people, because our people do not have the money to pay them!

“We continue this struggle even with the people who were working inside the system. After the coup d’état happened in Honduras in 2009, we were persecuted, the hospital was closed by the coup government briefly. But we continued the struggle and in 2011 we took 5,000 people from all those villages to the city to demonstrate, to defend what we have now. In 2012 the government recognized our small hospital that we developed, as the best alternative model of health care. So far, it is just paper and verbal recognition, because they give us no money. We built a model and we are working to replicate this. We’re doing a project in El Salvador, and then we are doing another project in Haiti, working in some places in Colombia and in seven other countries. We are working to bring free health care to people.

Joy Cousminer, Founder of Bethex Federal Credit Union

Joy Cousminer spoke of her 42 years of experience in building up a community credit union run initially by volunteers in the South Bronx, New York. “Before Bethex was chartered, the welfare women who started it were keeping their money in sugar bowls and under mattresses. Fires and robberies, of course, caused many losses.” South Bronx is one of the most economically distressed urban areas in the country. “The membership of the credit union was initially welfare recipients and each member received a passbook, and



(Left to right) CVSA volunteer Gus Karakatsanis, Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant and INVEST YOURSELF Editor, who organized the logistics and publicity for CVSA’s workshop at the NGO Conference, with the assistance of Sabbir Mashar, CVSA volunteer.

pledged to deposit at least \$.50 or a dollar weekly. Most of the women lived in public housing and it was their role to talk their neighbors into joining the credit union. Part of joining was promising to volunteer.”

The office operated out of donated space, which changed frequently, and transactions were kept in manual books. In the 1990s Bethex began computerizing transactions and began paying employees. Their assets grew to \$31,000,000 and their membership to 20,000 people. “Bethex helped a lot of people and small community businesses get started and stay on their feet.” Cousminer explained.

Bethex, in the South Bronx, offered its membership lower loan rates, higher savings rates, and fewer service fees. A critical financial service allowing lower-income individuals, who would otherwise be denied by banks to develop credit.

“Then the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) moved in. NCUA is the equivalent for credit unions of what the FDIC is to banks. The NCUA found many faults in our office operations, ordered us to change many things, purchase the services of various consultants and specialists, and soon the membership began to shrink. So did our assets,” she recounted.

“As we speak, credit unions across the country are being over-regulated and liquidated... At this point in the life of our credit union movement, I am sad to say that, on average, only one new institution is being chartered annually to replace the 350 that are being closed every year. I do not know Bethex’s future, but perhaps more important to those of

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Screening of “Freedom Summer” on International Volunteer Day Launches Monthly Community Education Film Night

On December 5th, 2014 CVSA hosted a screening of the PBS American Experience documentary *Freedom Summer* to celebrate the third annual CVSA International Volunteer Day. The film showing was co-hosted by the Fortune Society, a CVSA member organization, at their office in Long Island City. Ben Solotaire, who heads up the society’s Volunteer Office, arranged for the presentation. CVSA volunteers, supporters and staff of other CVSA member organizations attended the screening to learn about the vital role full-time volunteers played in the historic 1964 Mississippi Summer campaign to fight for African-Americans’ right to vote in Mississippi.

Freedom Summer, by director and producer Stanley Nelson, tells the story of the 700 students who volunteered full-time for the summer to take part in the campaign led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to organize the African American population in the segregationist state of Mississippi to register to vote, in the face of the dangerous and violent reaction against them. *Freedom Summer* recounts the experience and the historical events of that summer through interviews with both local residents and the student volunteers who participated and includes striking archival footage of actual events. The student volunteers worked with SNCC organizers all across the state, organizing house meetings and doing door-to-door canvassing. Local residents and church leaders braved retaliation by segregationist forces to house the volunteers in their homes and



Photo Credit: CVSA

Ben Solotaire, Volunteer Coordinator at Fortune Society, welcomes CVSA volunteers and members to Fortune Society’s center as host of the film screening.

church facilities. The students also worked with residents to organize ad hoc ‘Freedom Schools’ for local children, teaching reading, writing and Black History in face of their underfunded, segregated system of second-class education.

During this campaign, three student-volunteers, James Earl Chaney of Meridian, Mississippi, and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner of New York City, were abducted and murdered by members of the Ku Klux Klan in collusion with town officials. The film shows how the students and SNCC organizers decided to carry on with the campaign with even more determination despite the danger. The film also shows how the people of Mississippi, inspired by the campaign,

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CVSA Members Offer Organizing Expertise at UN

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you who might consider a credit union as an answer to solving the issue of poverty — there is a gorilla in the corner — it is the government!” Currently, there are only 6,000 credit unions in the United States and the number is shrinking. “This is not good for sustainable development if we are seriously looking at reversing the trend of growing poverty in the U.S.,” Cousminer concluded.

To contact and learn more about each of these organizations and how you can assist them, see the new edition of *INVEST YOURSELF: Guide to Action*, or call CVSA at (718) 482-8724. To help organize workshops like this one, or invite a CVSA speaker to your school, college, place of worship or community event, please call CVSA and ask for Yael. 

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Film Night Launched on International Volunteer Day

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formed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and brought a large delegation of more than 800 delegates from 40 counties to the national Democratic Convention for the 1964 presidential campaign held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. At the convention they faced interference and obstruction from gaining recognition for their delegation directed by the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, himself.

A number of participants who attended the film screening commented that although they are familiar with the history of the civil rights movement, there were events and counter-strategies shown in this film that were new information to them. One viewer also pointed out that in light of the number of police killings of black people in the U.S. going on now, this film was directly relevant to concerns of today.


International Volunteer Day

December 5th was designated International Volunteer Day by the United Nations in 1985 to promote and recognize the efforts of volunteers across the world whose service has assisted the efforts of organizations struggling to end poverty and make sustainable development possible in every community and every country. This is the third year that CVSA has held an educational event about the power of volunteer service on International Volunteer Day.

Inspired by the enthusiastic response to this film screening, CVSA has launched a monthly Community Education Film Night to be held on the third Friday of every month for CVSA member organizations and their staff, as well as CVSA volunteers and supporters. The films will inform and call to action people in our communities that are seeking to better understand the problems we collectively face and how to work together to solve them.

On March 27, CVSA screened the 2012 documentary *The Big Fix* produced by Joshua Tickell which examines the catastrophic 2011 BP Deep Water Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico off the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida which has costly and deadly effects to this day on the health of the people who live on these coastlines, on the ecostructure of the whole region and on the local economies, while the oil company is allowed to continue its profitable drilling now in the same unregulated manner. In a discussion after the film, Akira Yawata, a member of CVSA's volunteer staff commented, "It seems that the government agencies and the corporations are working closely together and this is not right because the government is supposed to be protecting us, but it is not." Attendees agreed that everyone involved in volunteer service and who cares about peoples' health and the environment should see this movie.

On April 17, CVSA screened *Inside Job*, the 2011 documentary by Charles Ferguson about the 2008 collapse of the financial system that caused millions of people to lose their homes and their jobs.

On June 26, CVSA will screen *Gasland II*. If you are in the NYC area call CVSA about the June and July schedule of the film screenings and their locations. If you are outside the NYC area and would like more information on how to start an educational film series in your area, contact CVSA at (718) 482-8724. 



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2015 *INVEST YOURSELF* Launched at the UN

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of that. Yes, when government does not reach to those corners, volunteers need to take action. But they also teach how government should actually be doing what in theory the governments are meant to do. In a sense, by actually taking action, you are pushing the government in the right direction. And I think there are examples of governments that are making very good inroads in this.”

“I just want to highlight two sentences that strike me from the different presentations. Mr. Brock said something that really captured what I am trying to convey: ‘It should not be this way.’ Yes, it should not be that volunteer organizations need to take this role and deliver these services. These needs should not exist when the resources do actually exist. And Dr. Castillo said, ‘Ser medicos ciencia de conciencia’ (We are medical scientists with a conscience). You express that well. It encapsulates what volunteering is all about. It is a conscious effort to try to make a change. And actually be closer to the communities and try to do the right thing. And by doing that, helping your government to move in the right direction.”

Llopart continued, “And youth like you, Yael, studying to actually make change and taking action to make change happen. This is what the UN should be all about. You have the United Nations Volunteers at your side to support this initiative in getting your voices out there. We are working very close with governments and we want to inspire them into action. We want to highlight this commendable work you are doing. You are translating what we call here in the UN, ‘language’ that we use for [transforming] resolutions into action,

language that recognizes the values of volunteering, especially in the next generation of sustainable economic goals. I am looking forward to continuing to work with you.”

Alonso closed his remarks saying, “We are now facing a time when the need to eliminate poverty is at the forefront of the agenda — at least in talks — here in the United Nations. I ask everyone here to assist CVSA in distributing the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue, so the two organizations represented here and the over 200 other organizations we work with can get the volunteers they need to strengthen their efforts in building a more just world.”

To learn more about how your organization can join CVSA if you are not already a member, and how you can help distribute *INVEST YOURSELF*, call Yael at CVSA at (718) 482-8724.





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CVSA's U.S.-China English Teaching Project

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An Opportunity to Build International Friendship

Native English-speaking conversation teachers are needed in primary and middle schools and colleges in Jiangxi, Zhejiang and other provinces of the People's Republic of China. CVSA initiated a unique U.S.-China volunteer educational exchange project after CVSA Executive Director, Susan Angus, was invited to visit schools in Xinyu, Jiangxi Province in 2003 and local residents asked CVSA to help find teachers to come to their schools to instruct students in oral English and improve their skill. For over ten years CVSA has been sending teachers to both middle schools and to colleges. Most of the Chinese students have studied reading and writing English in school, but to gain skill in speaking the language they need native English-speaking instructors.

CVSA is now looking for more U.S. native English-speaking people who have respect for China, love for children and youth, experience in teaching and would like to live and work in China for a school year or a semester. This is an opportunity to continue to build the growing international friendship and understanding between the people of the U.S. and the people of China, learn about China today and experience the nation's rich culture.

China is developing rapidly, with a national focus on improving the education and economic conditions in rural and less developed areas of the country. They are providing leadership in the world in the elimination of poverty and building international relations based on peace and respect. The goal of this program is to be of assistance to that process, in accordance with China's chosen path toward development.

Most students in primary and middle schools in China study English with Chinese teachers, which includes both written and oral language skills, but native English speakers provide a special opportunity for students to learn and practice pronunciation and conversational skills. Students, parents and teachers welcome foreign teachers who care and will treat this assignment with respect, hard work, attention to each student and goal-orientation. Teachers receive a monthly living stipend from the school or college, as well as housing and meals. Native English-speaking people with a college degree who can devote five months for one semester, or ten months for a school year are welcome to apply. CVSA has an




Photo: Wang Sheng Chao

Daniel H. Fiske taught conversational English to students in the freshman class at Shangyu College of Shaoxing University, in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province in 2014.

application process and an orientation program for volunteers who respect China, love working with children and youth. This is not an experience to pursue just for the purpose of building an interesting resume nor is it an opportunity for a vacation. This is a chance to help advance international friendship, learn more about Chinese culture and help students improve their spoken English skills. Applicant must be age 25 or older and in good physical health.

The school year is from September to early July, with a midyear winter break for travel. The fall term is from September to mid-January. For a full school year commitment, the host school will reimburse your round trip airfare.

A college degree and some experience in teaching or working with people as a leader or instructor are required. ESL experience and ability to develop class material and give attention to every student to increase their oral English skills are beneficial to your application.

For more information about this program and how to apply, contact Susan Angus at CVSA at (718) 482-8724. Please share this information with friends, family, colleagues and staff members who may be interested. 



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RECYCLE by PASSING IT ON!

When you finish reading this issue of *ITEMS*, **don't** toss it in the recycle bin! Recycle this newsletter by sharing it with friends and colleagues. Or bring it to your local library, place of worship, school or college! That's a great way to build the movement while still saving the environment!

Organizing Our Volunteer Power to Build a Better World!

Volunteer with CVSA to strengthen the voluntary service & action movement

CVSA needs volunteers for these areas of work:

Membership Organization Communications, Consultations and Training

Volunteers can participate in our site visits, consultations and training workshops with member organizations of CVSA, help maintain and build more arenas of communication with member organizations around the country and collect news for the newsletter.

***INVEST YOURSELF* Publications Production**

On-the-job training is provided in publication work sessions every Wednesday night, Saturday afternoon and all day Fridays. If you have skills in writing, editing, proofreading, desktop publishing or photoshop — you can become one of the trainers!

***INVEST YOURSELF* Distribution and Circulation**

Volunteers maintain ongoing contact with public libraries, colleges, universities, faith-based organizations, schools and professional organizations through phoning, mailings and meetings all year round to expand the distribution and use of *INVEST YOURSELF* to increase the flow of volunteers to vital projects.

Volunteer Outreach Phoning

Volunteers phone people who give their contact information and express an interest in the current volunteer needs and activities of CVSA; a vital part of keeping the movement growing. We do volunteer phone training on Monday and Wednesday evenings, as well as weekdays.

Volunteer Organizer Training & Education

All CVSA volunteers and staff of member organizations are welcome to participate in our organizer training programs which include on-the-job practical training as well as classes in history, strategy and methods of organizing and current world affairs.

Volunteer Community Outreach Events

Volunteers help schedule and participate in information tables and speaking engagements throughout the New York metropolitan area. This is CVSA's most valuable means of connecting with people from all walks of life looking for meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities.

Call CVSA at (718) 482-8724 to schedule an orientation or time to volunteer.