Community Empowerment Collective Society

Newsletter 4th edition May, 2008

THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COLLECTIVE – AN OVERVIEW FROM A NEW VOLUNTEER
By Susan Nicholls

Check it out!:
http://www.unv.org/news-resources/resources/photo-gallery/ov-awards-2007/page/4.html

Every year the United Nations Volunteers Online Volunteering service selects ten teams for its "Online Volunteering Team of the Year Award". The stated purpose of this award is "to recognize the contributions of online volunteers to human development, to demonstrate how development organizations can strengthen their activities through effective online collaboration with volunteers, and to showcase the diversity in which online volunteers can support development organizations".   We know that the Community Empowerment Collective Society (CECS) won this award for the year 2007. I have found it difficult to find better words to describe the work of this amazing organization.

CECS is at once the offspring of the Community Management Programme (CMP) in Uganda and the brainchild of Dr. Phil Bartle who worked with the CMP from 1994 to 1998. When the UN Centre for Human Settlements and Danida, cosponsors of the CMP, ended their participation in the programme, Dr. Bartle (Phil to all of us who are fortunate to work with and know him) sought a way to carry on its work. Realizing the training materials could find use throughout the developing world, he found a sponsor for the website in the Seattle Community Network (see the story in this issue about Al Boss). From Phil's initial struggles to learn to create web pages, the CECS has grown to the award-winning organization it is today.

http://www.scn.org/cmp/collect.htm

CECS exists in cyberspace, embodied by its website and volunteers. The fledgling website has grown to a comprehensive program of instructional modules designed to "train the trainer" in communities seeking to empower themselves to develop and prosper. There are five introductory modules comprising an initial workshop on mobilization. The 17 intermediate modules work to move the community forward from mobilization to action. Additional modules aim to broaden the community's knowledge, answer questions it may not have yet asked, and round out knowledge of sociology, the science behind the notion of empowerment.

Modules are translated into 18 languages, and are available in 3 formats, all available for download and use in whatever way best suits the individual community. The work of translation has brought together volunteers from all over the world who communicate via the internet, getting to know each other and the CECS in cyberspace.

This remarkable body of work is not static, but rather a growing, developing "community" of knowledge in its own right, facilitated by the ongoing work of Phil and his legion of volunteers. Wouldn't our grandparents be astonished at where we have come in an effort to assist our world

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LEARNING ABOUT THE AKAN
By Phil Bartle

The more we can learn about other languages and cultures, the greater depth of understanding of humanity, of culture, and of ourselves we get. One of the important weaknesses of culture in North America and a few other places is monolinguistic perception – the tendency to interpret everything through the perceptions associated with a single language. In the Community Empowerment Collective, we encourage members to make friends with other volunteers, especially those who work in different languages.

In my experience, I have learned a few words in over a dozen languages, but learned Akan (Twi) in sufficient depth that it has become my second language. This was one of the reasons why I chose an Akan group to study for my PhD. Now I would like to share some of what I learned, and so have linked the CEC site to my Akan Studies site. I encourage all members to look at it. Although it is based on my PhD studies, it is full of photos, and many light, easy to read descriptions.

The Akan are a collection of political states (*aman*) located mainly in southern Ghana and Eastern Cote d'Ivoire. Descent, inheritance and succession are all matrilineal, that is, through the mother's line. While they are not matriarchal, historically women there have had much more freedom, wealth and independence as compared to patrilineal or bilateral
 societies. They are, for example, responsible for taking the wild oil palm tree and, by selective breeding, turning it into the oil palm tree which supplies us with our detergents and margarine. They are major produces of cocoa (chocolate). Take a look at the web site (http://www.scn.org/rdi/index.htm) where all these are explained in easy-to-read languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese).

CHINESE LUNAR CALENDAR
By Miao Jiejun

The Chinese Lunar calendar is an old traditional Chinese calendar. Its origin can be traced back to the Xia Dynasty. Because it can precisely distinguish the changing of seasons, guide farming and determine festivals,
Chinese communities around the world use this calendar in addition to the Gregorian (solar) calendar.
There are twenty-four "months" in the lunar calendar representing the change of seasons, different temperatures, and weather phenomena. For example, "spring begins" means the beginning day of spring, "rain water" means it is likely to rain that day, and "grain fill" means the grain is going to mature and it is time to take measures to prevent plant diseases and pests.
The Chinese Lunar Calendar names each of the twelve years after an animal. According to tradition, Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he departed from earth. Only twelve came to bid him farewell, and as a reward he named a year after each one in the order they arrived. These twelve animals are Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar. The Chinese believe the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality, saying: "This is the animal that hides in your heart."
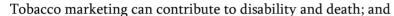
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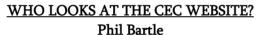## WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY – May 31

By Mirinha Bicalho

The World Health Organization (WHO) created *World No Tobacco Day* in 1987, directing global attention to the tobacco epidemic and to the preventable death and disease it causes. This yearly celebration informs the public on the dangers of using tobacco, the business practices of tobacco companies, what WHO is doing to fight the tobacco epidemic, and what people around the world can do to claim their right to health and healthy living and to protect future generations. *World No Tobacco Day* is celebrated around the world every year on May 31. Each year the WHO sets a theme, and many countries organize events meant to spotlight the fight against smoking. In 2007 the theme was SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS. This year the *World No Tobacco Day* theme is TOBACCO FREE-YOUTH. It highlights two critical messages:

Tobacco marketing can contribute to disability and death; and

Complete bans on advertising, sponsorship and promotion are highly effective measures for tobacco control as they reduce experimentation and initiation in tobacco use.

In the next edition of our newsletter, we will see how the world celebrated 2008 *World No Tobacco Day*.

WHO LOOKS AT THE CEC WEBSITE?

Phil Bartle

We are in the process of installing Google Analysis on the CEC web site. When it is complete, we will be able to learn about our readership: number of individual readers, number of page hits, what countries are represented, what languages they are using, and what documents on the site they are viewing. The process involves adding several lines of coding to the more than two thousand documents on the site, a time-consuming process!

The following numbers are incomplete because not all documents have had coding for the full month, but from 6 March to 7 April, at least the following have been recorded:

- On 3,168 pages encoded, we had 67,238 separate visits, which saw 307,089 page views.
- Visitors used 74 different languages, the most common being Spanish, then English, French, and Portuguese.
- Visitors were in 203 different countries and territories, the most common being, in order, the USA, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Columbia, Peru and India (including 20 visits from Saudi Arabia and 388 from China).
- The page most frequently viewed is the Reporting (Spanish) hub page, followed by the Modules page (English), then "What is Community" in Spanish. Other popular pages include Participatory Management (Spanish), Monitoring, Poverty, Reporting, Resource Acquisition, and Training methods, most frequently in Spanish followed by English.

Members of CEC can get access to the Google Analysis pages for CEC by writing to Phil Bartle to request access and a required password.
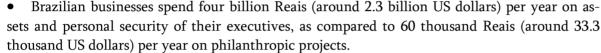

VOLUNTEERING
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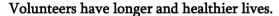
Volunteering in Brazil

In Brazil, major beneficiaries are very small, and they do not have volunteer programs.
Most Brazilian volunteers want to help resolve part of the social problems in Brazil, to feel useful and validated, and to do something different in their day-to-day lives.

Some statistics from this sector can illustrate this situation:

- Fifty-four per cent of Brazilian juveniles want to be volunteers, but they don't know how to begin.
- Only seven per cent of Brazilian juveniles are volunteers, while in the USA, 62 per cent of adolescents volunteer.
- Brazilian businesses spend four billion Reais (around 2.3 billion US dollars) per year on assets and personal security of their executives, as compared to 60 thousand Reais (around 33.3 thousand US dollars) per year on philanthropic projects.

According to Brazil's Ministry of Finance, the average of donations and contributions is around 23 Reais (12 dollars) per year, in a group of five million Brazilians who pay income tax.

Volunteers have longer and healthier lives.

Allan Luks, in his book: The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others (New York/USA, 2001) found that people who help others are considerably healthier. Eight in ten of individuals interviewed affirmed that benefits for health appeared when they remembered their good actions in years before. A study held by the University of Michigan (USA), verified that men who did less volunteer work were more likely to die.

How can we be good Volunteers?

Any person can be a volunteer, independent of education or age; the important thing is to have good will and a sense of responsibility.

Be humble! The fact that you are helping others doesn't mean that you will be flattered and that your work cannot be criticized. Volunteer work requires the same level of professionalism that a for-profit company requires, and perhaps more.

There are rules to follow. Do not be discouraged if only a few people feel happy for you and applaud your work.

NEW CSS FORMAT

Some of you might have noticed that the first modules in English have completely changed their look. The new layout corresponds to a different concept in their structure: those new pages are based on a CSS format. CSS means "Cascade Style Sheets", and is basically a method to write web pages in which the style commands (backgrounds, colours, fonts, etc.) are in a separate file. This separate file has ".css" as an extension. The layout of the page changes depending on the CSS file the page uses. This means that converting an English page into a Chinese page will be as easy as changing a line in the page's code – well, more or less!

CSS allows us to substantially reduce the page's size, which is a good thing all by itself. But most importantly, it greatly simplifies the web code of a page, making it easier to deal with "htm" files

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(hyper text markup, the most commonly used language for determining the structure, lay out and/or format of web pages). Even if a CSS-based page is not downloaded properly, modifying it will be quite simple.

As English is the original language and the one we all use to translate, it is also the first which will be in the new CSS format. Conversion to CSS has to be done carefully page by page; it is kind of a handicraft, and so it is a slow process. We have already started two new languages in the CSS format, Chinese and Romanian.

Of course, the CSS format is in development, so if you find any bugs or you have any suggestions to improve the design or performance, please contact Lules at trlsada-001@yahoo.es.

CSS means … "Cascade Style Sheets",... style commands are in a separate file

MEET THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

Andrea Bosi sends greetings from her home in Brasilia, Brazil, where she has worked in the Brazilian Ministry of Health for 11 years. She graduated in Hospital Administration with a specialty in Public Health. Her great passion is "Health Social Determinants", a Commission conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO). She has been involved with English since 1989. As a CEC Volunteer, she has been working on the May edition of the newsletter.

Sue Ann Nelson - My name is Sue Ann Nelson, I'm 24 and currently live in New York. I have a Bachelor's Degree in English and currently work in medical publishing. Hopefully the skills and experience that I learned while working in publishing and in school would be an asset to the Community Empowerment Collective!

Susan Nicholls – Howdy! I am a U.S. citizen, 58 years old, and retired from a wonderful, varied career in nursing. I am a resident of British Columbia, but spend my time wandering North America in a motor home with my British-born Canadian husband. Through the years, I've managed to acquire Bachelors Degrees in English literature and nursing, and a Masters in Nursing. I'm very excited about the opportunity to use my skills to contribute to the work of the Community Empowerment Collective, and to work with such a great and diverse group of people. It's a dream come true for me.

James Tardy – Hello everyone! I am joining (the team) to edit together, together, this newsletter. I live in North Alabama, U.S., where I am part of the local chapter of the American Red Cross. I am happy to be here and looking forward to getting to know you all better as time goes by.

Andrea Zinck – Hello all! I am from Nova Scotia, Canada and I have a psychology degree from Mount Saint Vincent University. I am just a new volunteer to the CEC, but I am most excited to help out with the upcoming newsletters and to work with such a diverse group of people from all around the world. Cheers!

FOCUS ON AL BOSS: A PERSONAL TALE

By Phil Bartle

Al Boss was the first web master of the CEC site. It started in 1995, when I was the Chief Technical Adviser to the Community Management Programme in Uganda, executed by UNCHS (UN-Habitat) and funded by Danida (Danish Aid). At that time we did not have Internet access. There was a very rickety email system at the University that phoned an NGO (non-governmental organization) in London and dumped mail there and collected it from the rest of the world. About 800 users in Uganda would then have their computers phone in to send and receive emails. Sometimes it took up to six days for an email to get to Canada.

A friend told me about a listserv (something like our Yahoo discussion group of today) called CD4URBAN (Community Development with an urban concentration). Al Boss in Seattle was the moderator, which he did on behalf of the Community Development Society (CDS). Meanwhile, I was producing the core training material of CEC for our project. One of the outputs was to make the handbooks produced for distribution within Uganda available outside the country. Al suggested that I put it onto the Internet as a way to get worldwide distribution. He was one of the founders of the Seattle Community Network (SCN), a non-profit organization in the basement of the Seattle library. SCN provides a venue for community groups in the Seattle area who want to put web sites on the internet. It also allowed CDS to put its web site up on the SCN site. I sent the training material as text files to Al, and he uploaded them.

I was alone in Uganda, as my wife and daughters wanted to stay in Canada for school and social reasons. I did not want to engage in a popular pastime of expatriate singles, Rwandese Roulette (hitting the local bars). So I taught myself how to write web pages by hand. A year later, Uganda got Internet access, so Al showed me how to upload from Uganda. UN-Habitat allowed me to keep the copyright on the material. When I left Uganda in 1998, I continued to maintain the site as a hobby. Al and CDS both left SCN, but there is a good understanding between us all on this. Al did not leave CEC, however, and continues to be a mentor for the site, giving advice and guidance from time to time. He is currently assisting Lules in working out a routine for the new CSS format.

We are grateful, from the origin of the CED to present, for his help and altruistic contributions to our collective. Thanks, Al!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The celebration of birthdays began hundreds of years ago with a belief that your birthday changed you, and with the change came the opportunity for evil spirits to overwhelm good spirits and harm you. The evil spirits could, it was thought, be held at bay by surrounding yourself with the good wishes of friends and family. Today, birthdays are celebrated throughout the world by people of all ages and cultures, rich and poor alike. We would like to join our volunteers who have a birthday during the first five "solar" months of the year in recognizing their birthdays, and wish them the best in the year to come.

COORDINATORS REPORT

Over the last quarter, the coordinating council has been actively looking for additional coordinators. Following is an accounting of coordinators and their active volunteers.

- Amanda is coordinating Thai and Somali.
- Janita has taken on Kiswahili and Kikuyu, as well as Tagalog and Fijian.
- Godfrey Kafuko (Uganda) and Gerald Mwangi (Kenya) translate into Kiswahili.
- Va Lutu translates into Fijian.
- Tagalog translation is progressing well. Des You, Jasmin Canton, Sheila Mendoza, Pamela Marvilla, Lenay Ensenado, Rommel de Guzman, Joyce Zaide, Victoria De Jesus, John Balolong, Doray Saguing, Maureen Genetiano, Melinda Bandalaria, Eduardo Almajao Sr., Andrea Cuyos, and May Virola form one of the most active translation teams on the site.
- Brennie is looking for translators into any of the other African languages.
- Najlaa has offered to help out with the Arabic translations.
- Iulia coordinates Bulgarian and Polish.
- David joined us recently to coordinate Malay, Korean and Japanese.
- Nanang has made steady progress with Indonesian.
- Jiejun reports that Chinese translation is going well; Carman, Matthew and Vincent are working hard on the Introductory Modules.
- Hassan and Mirinha are coordinating Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi and Farsi.
- Silke coordinates French and German. She reports that Pierre-Antoin Mangin has been working hard translating multiple pages.
- Ravi Badri is coordinating Tamil and Telugu.
- Lules coordinates Spanish and Portuguese, and has taken on Romanian since Diana Ignat had to leave. Iulia Bulibasa, Lredana Tirziu, Oana Bajka and Ovi Netedu form a very promising Romanian team.
- Sonia Naveed and Michael Adrid are working hard as official "Links Checkers". They systematically go through all two thousand web pages on the site, testing each hyper link, and reporting any that are broken or missing, so they can be fixed.
- All readers and members are invited to join in and report any broken or missing hyper links, as these can result in confusion or disappointment by readers.In addition to posting ads on various virtual volunteering sites, several of our coordinators are exploring other venues, e.g. posting flyers on bulletin boards and e-mailing university language departments and other possibly interested individuals.
- Facebook has helped us get to know each other a little bit. Any volunteers not yet on Facebook are invited to sign up, become members of the CEC group, and make friends.

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INDONESIAN CUISINE
By Betha Apriana and Nanang E. S.

Rendang is a popular Indonesian dish originating from the Minangkabau ethnic group in the province of West Sumatera. It is served by the Minang people at ceremonial occasions and to honor guests. Nanang tells us that years ago rendang was taken to Malaysia by the Minang people, and has become so popular there Malaysia has claimed it as its own, naming it their national dish. As in Indonesia, Malays prepare rendang for festive occasions. Muslims traditionally prepare rendang for the celebration of Eid al-Adha, a religious festival commemorating Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son, and Eid ul-Fitr, the breaking of the fast of Ramadan.

Rendang is typically made from beef or water buffalo. It is slowly cooked in coconut milk and a variety of spices for several hours until almost all the liquid is gone and a spicy mixture of meat and condiments remains. Chicken, goat, lamb, eel, duck or vegetables like potatoes, jackfruit or cassava may be substituted for the beef. Non-Muslims may use pork. (Editor's note: There are hundreds of variations on this popular dish. You might do an internet search for a recipe that is more suited to the ingredients available in your area. You can also check your local Asian market for ingredients not easily found.)

Photo courtesy of David Snyder ©2006-2008

A special Beef Rendang recipe

Ingredients:

1 ¼ liters coconut milk from 2 old coconuts
1 turmeric leaf, torn and knotted
5 kaffir lime leaves (Editor's note: You may substitute the zest of one lime.)
1 stalk lemon grass, bruised

(cont.)

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1-2 pieces asam Gelugur (Editor's note: a sour fluted fruit, the size of a large apple with glossy skin,

> yellow to orange in colour, used to give a subtle sour taste to various foods. You may substitute 1-2 teaspoons Tamarind paste, but you will sacrifice the fruity flavour of gelugur.)

10 red chilies, finely sliced
1 kg rump roast or other stewing beef, fat and sinew removed, cut into 3 cm cubes

Grind together:
3 tablespoons chopped galangal (laos)
½ tablespoon chopped turmeric
½ tablespoon chopped ginger
200 grams red chilies
4 shallots
Salt to taste

Simmer the coconut milk with the turmeric leaf, kaffir lime leaves, lemon grass, asam gelugur, sliced chilies, and ground spices until the milk thickens and becomes oily. Reduce heat; add beef and cook over low heat until tender. Stir occasionally until the spices dry and turn brown.

The rendang can be combined with 300 grams of small potatoes. Soak the potatoes in water for 15 minutes, then scrub with a soft brush to clean the potato skin. Add to the gravy and beef. Alternately, rendang can be combined with 150 grams dried red peanuts (kacang jogo) which have been soaked for half an hour and combined with the beef. Other options include rice or Malaysian ketupat (compressed rice cake) or lemang (glutinous rice barbecued in bamboo tubes).

A final note from Betha – "It's really yummy. If you ever happen to encounter an Indonesian restaurant, try to come in and ask whether they have rendang. If they don't you can always enjoy other Indonesian dishes, which are also really tasty!!!"

What is the Empowerment Methodology?

Several people have asked about the methodology which gives its name to our web site and now our NGO. It is built on several core principles:

1. While assistance can be offered, it should not be charity assistance which promotes dependency and weakness, but partnership, assistance, and training that promotes self reliance and increased capacity (ability, power and strength).
2. Recipient organisations or communities should not be controlled or forced into change. Rather, professionals trained as activists or mobilisers should intervene with stimulation, information, and guidance.
3. Organisms become stronger by exercising, struggling, and facing adversity. Empowerment methodology incorporates this principle for social organizations.

1. Hands-on participation by the recipients, especially in decision-making, is essential for their increase in capacity.

5. From the beginning, our goals should include the participants taking full control, exercising full decision-making, and accepting full responsibility for the actions which will lead to their increased strength.
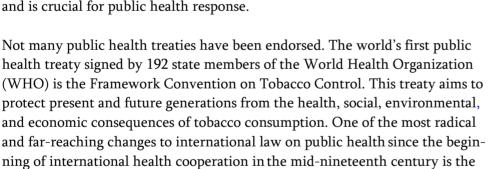
LAW AND PUBLIC HEALTH
By Mirinha Bicalho

In a globalized world, with millions of people traveling around the world week by week and with the increase of international trade, consideration of public health protection and public health law cannot be limited by national, state, and municipal boundaries.

As I work in the Brazilian Health Ministry and a year ago I finished my post-graduate course in Public Health law, I will demonstrate in a few words how law and public health are connected.

Law is a traditional public health tool for disease prevention and health promotion. For many traditional public health problems, the role of law has been crucial in attaining public health goals.

Public health law is quickly becoming globalized and can make a difference in peoples' lives, as nations and international organizations agree to standardize regulations, rules and legal practices in an effort to prevent disease dissemination and to promote health worldwide. As countries cannot deal unilaterally with the problems created by globalization, international cooperation is needed. The international treaty is the mechanism for worldwide cooperation, and is crucial for public health response.

Not many public health treaties have been endorsed. The world's first public health treaty signed by 192 state members of the World Health Organization (WHO) is the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This treaty aims to protect present and future generations from the health, social, environmental, and economic consequences of tobacco consumption. One of the most radical and far-reaching changes to international law on public health since the beginning of international health cooperation in the mid-nineteenth century is the International Health Regulations (IHR). The IHR are international laws that aim to prevent, protect against, control, and respond to the international spread of disease while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

> The...treaty is the mechanism for worldwide cooperation, and is crucial for public health response.

JUST JOKING...

Language Barrier:

Two highway workers were busy working at a construction site when a big car with diplomatic license plates pulled up.

"Parlez-vous français?" the driver asks them. The two workers just stared.

"Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" the two continued to stare at him.

"Fala Português?" neither worker said anything.

"Parlate Italiano?" Still no response.

Finally, the man drove off in disgust.

One worker turned to the other and said, "Gee, maybe we should learn a foreign language…"

"What for? That guy knew four of them and what good did it do him?"