

THE JUST WORD



THE IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ FUND FOR MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights was created to foster psychological well-being, social consciousness and active resistance in communities affected by institutional violence, repression, and social injustice. We believe that the scars of such experiences are deeply seated in both the individual and society and, therefore, seek to support projects that explore the power of community to collectively heal these wounds and move forward.

Through grants, networking, and technical support, the Fund seeks to encourage the development of innovative, grassroots community projects that promote progressive social change and community mental health. In pursuit of this mission, the Fund's goals are:

- ◆ To develop a holistic perspective for understanding the connections between state and institutional violence and repression, and the mental health of communities and individuals;
- ◆ To support innovative projects that explore the power of community to foster healing within individuals and communities trying to recover from experiences of institutional violence, repression, and social injustice;
- ◆ To build collaborative relationships among the Fund, its grantees, and its contributors for mutual education and empowerment; and
- ◆ To develop social consciousness within the United States regarding the psychological consequences of structural violence, repression, and social injustice.

FILIPINO CHILDREN BRAVING THE STORM

By Cristina Purificacion, Executive Director, Children's Rehabilitation Center



Editor's Note – In its grant making, the Fund often struggles to grasp the political, economic, and military conditions which create the challenges to mental health to which our partners are responding. This article from the Children's Rehabilitation Center in Quezon City, Philippines, helps us begin to better understand the human rights dimensions of their work (see "GRANTEES – 2001", this issue). We hope to do the same for other grantees in future issues of The Just Word as part of our mission to educate ourselves and readers about the structural violence that undermines people's mental health.

It was the 10th of July 2000 and the place, Lupang Pangako or Land of Promise, in Payatas, Quezon City. The rains which lasted for a week had just stopped. Families are busy with the regular morning

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COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES: LAURA WALD AND GRACE ROSALES

In our spring newsletter, we introduced two graduate students working with the Fund enrolled in the Clinical Psychology Program at UMass Boston. In this issue, we feature committee members Laura Wald and Grace Rosales, also from the same program.

by Ann Brian Murphy

Laura Wald grew up in San Francisco and attended Brown University. During college she took a leave of absence and volunteered on an adolescent unit at a local hospital, and was active in advocating changes in university policy on sexual assault and rape. After college she moved to



Seattle to work as a research assistant in the University of Washington Psychiatry Department. In 1997 she was accepted at UMass Boston, where she has been studying trauma and religious coping with Joan Liem (also on the Board of the Martín-Baró Fund). Before moving to Boston for graduate school, Laura took a three-month trip to Kenya, Thailand, and Vietnam. This adventure hooked her on travel and created an interest in transcultural psychology. Between her third and fourth years of graduate school, Laura took a leave of absence and lived in Hanoi, Vietnam, where she learned Vietnamese, taught psychology, engaged in a research study with a Vietnamese collaborator, and did mental health work. She is currently teaching Abnormal Psychology at UMass Boston, working on her dissertation, and continuing her four years of involvement with the Fund.

Grace Rosales grew up in East Los Angeles, the daughter of Mexican immigrants.

She is the only member of her family who was born in the United States, so



the notion of immigration and the legacy of her Mexican identity are very salient for her. Growing up, Grace felt a sensitivity to difference and to injustice, even before she developed the language to understand them. From early on, she was involved in different forms of social activism, from work with the homeless to mentoring minority youths. After coming out as a lesbian, however, Grace transferred some of that passionate engagement to her work in the gay and lesbian community. She also became aware of the challenges faced by multiple minorities, and often felt that she did not quite fit, either in the Latino progressive community or in the gay and lesbian community. Grace is committed to the movement addressing the complexities of multiple minorities, and encouraging Latina lesbians to work with gay Latino men, and both to interact with other gay and lesbian people of color.

In 1987 Grace attended an international lesbian conference in Mexico City which helped propel her growing awareness of broader social justice movements. She came to recognize that identity politics, while important, can also be limiting, and to believe that a social justice perspective includes awareness of economic as well as political and social oppression.

Why did you decide to join the Martín Baró Fund?

Laura: I have always been involved in some sort of community activism, especially in college, and I wanted to find ways to combine my interests in psychology and social justice. Joan Liem, my Advisor at UMass, suggested that I join the group as a way to link these interests. I have enjoyed working with the Fund because the organizations that we fund inspire me and because the board itself is a great community of like-minded people for me.

My work with the Fund has also provided me with the opportunity to work closely with groups who are doing grassroots mental health work under extremely difficult circumstances. While I was in Vietnam last year, I was able to visit one of the groups we have funded, in Cambodia. This visit gave me a very real sense of the work they were doing and the daily challenges they faced. It also gave us in the Fund a chance to deepen our partnership with that group. I could assist them in obtaining information and in spreading the word about their work, while they generously hosted me and invited me to meet some of the people they serve.

Grace: While I was in Los Angeles I became involved with the Liberty Hill Foundation, which funds groups to do grassroots organizing and social justice work. This work led me to a position on the Funding Exchange Board, where I saw references to the Martín Baró Fund. So even before I moved to Boston, I had heard about the Fund and was very impressed by its goals and methods.

Then in 1998 I made a major decision to pursue my life-long dream of getting a Ph.D. in Psychology. I

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Ignacio Martín-Baró

Editor's Note: One purpose of the newsletter is to inform readers about ideas and actions that challenge our thinking about mental health. Who better to turn to for critical reflection than our Fund's namesake, Ignacio Martín-Baró. The following is taken from A. Aron & S. Corne (Eds.), Writings for a Liberation Psychology. "War and Mental Health", Ch. 6. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1994. Nacho's words are particularly relevant in light of the terrible events of September 11 and the precarious aftermath.

...I believe that mental health must be understood in broader, more positive terms...The problem is rooted in a limited conception of human beings that reduces them to individual organisms whose functioning can be understood in terms of their individual characteristics and features. Such a conception denies their existence as historical beings whose lives are developed and fulfilled in a complex web of social relations. If the uniqueness of human beings consists less in their being endowed with life (that is, in their organic existence), and more in the kind of life they construct historically, then mental health ceases to be a secondary problem and becomes a fundamental one. It is not a matter of the individual's satisfactory functioning; rather, it is a matter of the basic character of human relations, for this is what defines the possibilities for humanization that open up for the members of each society and group. To put it more plainly, mental health is a dimension of the relations between persons and groups more than an individual state, even though this dimension may take root differently in the body of each of the individuals in these relations, thereby producing a diversity of manifestations ("symptoms") and states ("syndromes")....

It is important to emphasize that we are not trying to simplify a problem as complex as mental health by denying its personal roots or, in trying to avoid individual reductionism, replacing it with social reductionism. But we want to emphasize how enlightening it is to change the lens and see mental



health or illness not from the inside out but from the outside in; not as the result of an individual's internal functioning but as the manifestation, in a person or group, of the humanizing or alienating character of a framework of historical relationships....

This perspective allows us to appreciate to its fullest the impact that events which substantially affect human relations have on the mental health of the people – events like natural catastrophes, socioeconomic crises, and war. Of these three kinds of events, there is no doubt that war has the most profound effects, because as well as involving socioeconomic crisis and human, if not natural, catastrophe, it also engenders irrationality and dehumanization....

...war implies social polarization, the displacement of groups toward

opposite extremes. A critical split is produced in the framework of coexistence, leading to a radical differentiation between "them" and "us," where "they" are from the outset the "bad guys," and "we" are the "good guys." The rivals contemplate each other in an ethical mirror that inverts characteristics and values, to the point that what is reproached in "them" as a defect is praised in "us" as a virtue. This polarization exacerbates differing social interests and, in the end, implicates the whole scope of existence. People, actions, and things are no longer valued in and of themselves, but rather on the basis of whether they are "ours" or "theirs," and in terms of what they have to offer either for or against our side in the conflict. Thus the basis for daily interaction disappears. No frame of reference can be taken for granted as valid for everyone; values no longer have any collective validity, and even the possibility of appealing to "common sense" is lost, because the assumptions of coexistence themselves are being put on trial....

Without doubt, of all the deleterious effects of the war on the mental health of the Salvadoran people, the undermining of social relations is the worst, for our social relations are the scaffolding we rely on to construct ourselves historically, both as individuals and as a human community. Whether or not it manifests in individual disorders, the deterioration of social interaction is in and of itself a serious social disturbance, an erosion of our collective capacity to work and love, to assert our unique identity, to tell our personal and communal story in the history of peoples...For this reason, the challenge is not limited to addressing the destruction and disorders cause by the war. The challenge is to construct a new person in a new society. ♦

MARTÍN-BARÓ FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS SEND CONDOLENCES FOR ATTACKS IN U.S.

As we mourn together the tragic loss of so many innocent lives in the attacks on New York City and Washington D.C., it has become clear to committee members of the Martín-Baró Fund that we can make no better statement than to recommit ourselves to the purpose and goals already articulated in our Mission Statement. Institutional repression, violence and injustice breed yet further repression, violence and injustice. We commit ourselves to supporting grassroots projects that explore the power of community to heal these wounds and build peace with justice. And we affirm the value of all human life in joining others who oppose indiscriminate acts of retaliation as a means of bringing the perpetrators of these attacks to justice.

We have also been very touched by the expressions of sympathy and solidarity sent by Martín-Baró Fund grant recipients from around the world:

Dear Friends at Martín-Baró Fund,

On behalf of the Cambodian people we would like to share our condolences with the American people who were attacked by a terrorist group at New York and Washington, D.C, on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. This is a tragedy for the American people. We oppose absolutely the inhumane group who did these acts. We wish the situation there improves soon for the American people.

Yours sincerely,
Dy Ratha, President
INDRADEVI ASSOCIATION,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

To the Martín-Baró Fund

The women of Amusameco write to you to express to the Martín-Baró Fund and to the entire people of the United States our solidarity, affection, and support in the face of the recent attacks of September 11.

We, the people of El Salvador, who are still suffering and have experienced in our own flesh the consequences of terrorist attacks denounce these deeds and add our voice to the multitude crying out: "BASTA - LET THERE BE AN END TO INJUSTICE AND TO THE DEATHS OF SO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE!"

We put our hope in God that the decisions about to be made by the governments involved be the most prudent for the well-being of the United States and the rest of the world.

We wish you well and send you our blessings, that you may soon heal and recover from this situation.

Best wishes,
The Women of Amusameco
San Salvador, El Salvador

Dear MBF Friends,

Greetings! I hope you are all fine. We would like to express our condolences for the loss of the lives of the innocent people because of the terrorist attack at the WTC and Pentagon. The Filipinos who have relatives working there are still waiting news of the conditions of their love ones. Justice should be delivered to the victims. We just hope that seeking justice will not be a military retaliation that will also impede the rights of innocent civilians of other nations.

Take the best care!
Cristy (Cristina Purificacion)
Children's Rehabilitation Center,
Quezon City, Philippines

Dear Friends,

The Crisis Psychological Center for Women and Family, "Sezim", expresses its deepest condolence in accordance with inhumane terrorists acts, the victims of which were thousands of innocent people. We are with you in this difficult moment for your nation.

Ryskulova Bubusara.
The Crisis Psychological Center for Women
and Family, "Sezim"
Bishkek, Kyrgyztan



**Together with our partners,
we condemn all acts of
terrorism and reject violence
as a path to peace.
MBF Committee**

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made the move to Boston thinking that my commitment to graduate school would mean temporarily ending most of my social justice work. However, the director of my program is Joan Liem, so my move to Boston led directly to renewed contact with the social justice movement and the Martín Baró Fund.

Most psychology programs take an individual therapeutic approach to mental health. How has the work of the Fund affected you and your understanding of the social context of mental health?

Laura: My work with the Martín Baró Fund has renewed my confidence in the possibility of bringing a social conscience to bear in mental health work. This perspective is often neglected, and I feel more and more strongly that it is essential for effective practice and long-term change, at both the individual and community level. My work with the Fund is one way that I learn more about these issues, while offering me an opportunity to connect with people who are similarly invested in attending to the social context of mental health.

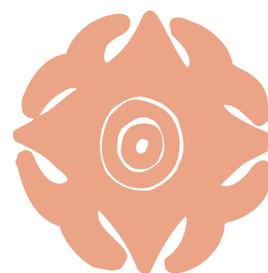
Grace: My work with the Martín Baró Fund offers me the opportunity to bring together the two passions in my life -- social justice work and the academic study of psychology. I have long been aware of the role of social oppression in people's individual psychology. Interestingly, my work with the Fund has exposed me to the different ways people in other countries use individual psychology

and integrate it into a community response to terrorism, war trauma, poverty and oppression. It has also helped me address what I have long regarded as a gap in our social justice and political activities in this country: most groups that fund socially progressive organizing work don't fund direct service, and most organizations that fund direct service don't support political work. The Martín Baró Fund serves an important role in filling this gap.

An important goal of the Fund is to develop social consciousness about the psychological consequences of structural violence and injustice. How do you see your future work in light of this goal? And how can graduate training of mental health professionals contribute to achieving this goal?

Laura: The time I spent doing mental health work and teaching in Vietnam has very much affected my vision of my future work, and given me a clearer sense of the challenges and possibilities of such work. In the future, I would like to continue working transculturally, with populations that are coping with oppression and violence, in the States and abroad. In terms of graduate training, helping graduate students find work with disenfranchised cultural groups or even overseas is a great way to help build such an understanding, as is incorporating community volunteer work into coursework. Encouraging students and professionals to learn another language and subsidizing this process would be another way to develop a greater consciousness of social and cultural factors especially if combined with cultural and historical education, and cross-cultural contact.

Grace: My current work in psychology is leading me to work with people with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and major affective disorders. However, whereas traditional psychology perceives race, ethnicity, poverty, trauma, etc. as variables to control in order to understand the impact of these illnesses on people's lives, I would argue that one cannot begin to understand these disorders without taking into account how those factors influence the construction and manifestation of illnesses. In my work with people with major mental illness, I am interested in understanding how their experiences inform the course of their illness. At the same time, I am very interested in improving our understanding of major mental illness as it is informed by the experiences of others from non-western cultures. ♦



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This year's grantees were selected from proposals submitted by past recipients of MBF awards (see *The Just Word, Fall, 2000*). Visit our website to learn about our grantmaking for next year, www.martinbarofund.org

CHAJUL, GUATEMALA – ADMI



The Association of Maya Ixil Women - New Dawn (ADMI) is a non-governmental organization in Chajul, Guatemala. Since its inception, more than 100 women have organized six community-based educational, economic development and psychosocial projects for women and children of their community. The Martín-Baró Fund supported one of their first projects, a corn mill that has been described in previous newsletters. Recently, the group produced a photo-essay book, *Voices and images: Mayan Ixil women of Chajul*, that is distributed by epicabooks@igc.org (see *The Just Word, Fall, 2000*). It describes the community's experiences of more than three decades of war and state-sponsored violence and efforts to build toward the future.

The current grant will be used to multiply the psychosocial work with women living in four villages near Chajul, whom ADMI members met during the PhotoVoice project. ADMI will establish five centers where workshops will be conducted to enable women and children to 1) discuss the origins of the war, 2) understand the impact of the war on mental health, 3) analyze the condition of women in Guatemala, and 4) develop ideas to meet their mental health needs. Some of the funds will also be used to produce informational pamphlets about mental health in light of the after effects of the war and current economic and social conditions.

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES – CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION CENTER

The fierce military campaign of the government of former President Joseph Estrada against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mindanao has displaced nearly 300,000 people and intensified both rural and urban poverty in the region. Hundreds of houses and shacks of relocated families had sprung up around the Payatas garbage dump near Quezon City when the enormous pile of garbage collapsed after heavy rains in June 2000. More than 500 houses were destroyed and 300 people perished in the avalanche of trash. The need for economic, political and social reform in the Philippines continues under the presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who replaced Estrada in January 2001 through the efforts of People Power II.

The Center's project, Children Braving the Storm, aims to address the psychological trauma of children who have witnessed the violence of militarization and

suffered the loss of family and friends in Payatas. The project also aims to teach the children advocacy skills while building a network of public support for meeting their needs. The Martín-Baró Fund is supporting a follow-up rehabilitation program for 20 priority children directly affected by the Payatas tragedy, and an initial outreach to 50 others. The program includes individual and group therapy, visual arts, public speaking workshops, and theater arts workshops. The children will create a presentation for the celebration of Human Rights Day in December and then tour in schools and communities to raise awareness and gain support for children in this area.

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS, CHIAPAS, MÉXICO – FOMMA



FOMMA – Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya, works with Mayan women who have come to the city to support themselves and their children. Since the Colonial era, the indigenous communities of Chiapas have suffered from marginalization, land seizure, slavery, racial discrimination, lack of education, poor health and hygiene. Protesters have often been persecuted, disappeared, or assassinated giving rise to popular movements such as the Zapatistas. The extreme challenges faced by the indigenous communities have also led to depression, personal crisis and alcoholism, which in turn have contributed to high incidents of rape and conjugal violence against women. Women suffer disproportionately under these conditions and many are forced to come to cities such as San Cristóbal to try to support themselves as servants or street vendors. Their children may live on the street and sell goods for a pittance, with no access to public assistance or education. They are often trapped in a vicious circle of alcoholism, drug addiction and poverty.

FOMMA was founded by Mayan women to help these women and children. The organization promotes the rights and mental health of these people by providing food, education, basic skills building, literature and native-language entertainment, to help the women find better jobs and adapt to city life. They are also organizing creative workshops for participants' preschool children and feeding them. The Martín-Baró Fund grant will support the production of theater performances through which the women and children share their concerns with their communities, make connections between their problems and wide-spread human rights violations, and explore creative means for addressing their needs.

HUANCAVELICA, PERÚ – INAPRO

The rural towns within the Andes of Perú were

greatly affected by sociopolitical turmoil and violence during the 1980s. Entire towns were destroyed, caught in the political battles between the leftist "Sendero Luminoso" (Shining Path) and forces of the state. Many fled, men disappeared, and women, children, and the elderly were often abandoned in their villages. Today, these communities are struggling to rebuild and recover their cultural identities in the face of the war's devastations, including poverty, psychosocial trauma, and fragmented families and communities.

Instituto Acción Para El Progreso (INAPRO) focuses on the psychosocial development of women, children, families, and the community. The work supported by this year's grant includes workshops and "pláticas" or talks that aim at building self-esteem, promoting resiliency, learning about human rights, and healing the community. With children, the overarching goal is to foster the development of cultural identity through activities such as the construction of traditional costumes and artwork, learning traditional dances, indigenous stories, and history. A second component of the work is an agricultural project where members of the community will learn together how to restore and work the land in order to supplement their diets, provide for malnourished children, and generate income from the sale of surplus produce. The project is both practical and viewed as a means of collective empowerment.

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS, CHIAPAS, MÉXICO – K'INAL ANTZETIK



K'inal Antzetik (Land of Women) is a grassroots organization located in one of the poorest states in Mexico, despite being one of the richest in natural resources. The indigenous people living in Chiapas suffer political abandonment, poverty, and military abuse. The uprising in 1994 of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation was a response to centuries of oppression. The federal government's militarization of Chiapas aims to undermine indigenous organizing and has created great psychological distress for the people. Government tactics have included threats to the population, selective disappearances, arbitrary detentions, massacres, encirclement and isolation of communities in conflict zones, sponsorship of paramilitary groups, and the exchange of basic resources and services for political subservience.

K'inal Antzetik has been working with the indigenous populations for about 10 years, promoting human rights and economic justice. Since 1998, they have incorporated a mental health component in their work in response to the damaging effects of the low intensity warfare. The grant from the Martín-Baró Fund will help K'inal Antzetik train 325 indigenous mental health and education promoters who will reach

approximately 10,000 people from the Altamirano-Ocosingo-Comitán region of Chiapas. Specifically, the award will help support one community psychologist, 6 training workshops in different regions of Chiapas, and the production of training materials including pamphlets and videos. The workshops enable participants to share experiences, acquire basic support skills, and begin to form networks among communities that ease the isolation created by the state as part of its psychological warfare campaign.

SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR – AMUSAMECO



Smaller than the state of Massachusetts with a population of about 6,000,000 people, El Salvador lost 70 to 75,000 people, mostly poor, during its "civil war." Early this year the country was devastated twice in one month by earthquakes that killed and injured thousands and left many more homeless. Most of the country's wealth continues to be concentrated in the hands of a few families, and right-wing forces still dominate politically. Poor communities continue to struggle to overcome these hardships and to cope with the failure of the peace accords to measurably improve their lives. As the primary caretakers of their families, women carry additional burdens. They experience discrimination in the labor market, and are sometimes the victims of family violence fueled by the frustrations of poverty and a deep-seated tradition of machismo.

AMUSAMECO (Women's Association for Community Mental Health) has designed a project of ongoing weekly meetings with groups of women in several poor and marginalized communities around San Salvador. Trained mental health workers will facilitate the meetings where women will learn relaxation techniques and discuss their experiences of loss. Meetings will also address their basic rights to healthcare, education, employment, and housing, and women's issues such as gender equality, self-esteem, and the right to protection against violence. Parallel meetings will be held with the children. The program aims to empower participants to become protagonists acting to improve their lives.

FIZI TERRITORY, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – SOFIBEF



Solidarity of Fizi Women for Family Well-being (SOFIBEF), is an NGO based in Tanzania, but working in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since 1998, the DRC has been torn by civil conflict

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exacerbated by alliances among warring groups and factions in neighboring counties. In 1998, forces from Rwanda and Uganda supported rebels opposed to then President Laurent Kabila while the government received aid from Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Current estimates are that as many as 3,000,000 people died in the conflict, which has no end in sight although the new president, Joseph Kabila, has responded to overtures for a UN peace-keeping force. Women have been especially vulnerable to the violence suffering arbitrary exposure to torture, rape, enslavement, and displacement.

The Martín-Baró Fund is supporting an ongoing program called "Women's Human Rights and Mental Health of Survivors in Fizi Territory, Eastern

DRC/Africa." Over 30 women's rights and mental health volunteer advocates have been trained to work with affected women living in Fizi Territory where rape, torture, sexual harassment and domestic violence have been especially common. Women are supported through education about and advocacy for human rights, and programs including art therapy, hospital visits, counseling, management of post traumatic stress disorder, and training in basic survival skills. Work with family members to understand and support female relatives is strongly emphasized. Participants also publish a newsletter featuring prominent women in history who have experienced mental health problems. The ultimate goal of the project is recuperation from assaults on women's mental health and the development of skills essential to greater self-reliance. ♦



FILIPINO CHILDREN BRAVING THE STORM continued from page 1

routine when they notice that the mountain of garbage nearby is about to collapse. Most of the residents have just started to evacuate when the mountain of garbage begins to cave in. More than 500 houses and 300 individuals are buried alive. Only 229 bodies are recovered. Katherine, 13 years old, is one of the children-victims of the Payatas tragedy. In one of our visits, she shared her sentiments about their life after the tragedy.

I still feel sad whenever I remember our house and my childhood friend Jorge buried under the garbage in Payatas. But unlike before, when it was so difficult and very painful whenever I recalled it, now I have learned to accept what happened.

Life is much harder now that we are relocated from Payatas to Kasiglahan Village 1 in San Jose Plains, Rodriguez Rizal. I only had a few friends in Payatas before, but I was happier compared to here in Kasiglahan Village, even if there are a lot of new acquaintances coming from different places that were demolished. My father used to work

in a construction site but after the Payatas tragedy, he lost his job and now he is scavenging at the Payatas dump site. He has to spend money



for transportation going to the dump site unlike before when it was just walking distance. Here in Kasiglahan, we don't have water and electricity. I'm trying to accept the tragedy and that we have been relocated, but with all the difficulties

we are facing now, I regret the change.

Filipino families are squatters here in our own country. Here in Metro Manila alone, about four million people live under the bridges and alongside creeks, sewerage canals and rail roads. Others fit their families in push carts and spend their life in the streets. There are around 77,000 individuals who are homeless and live in the streets. There are 641,824 families that live in squatter areas; 87,144 live in danger zones; 281,705 are being dislocated by government infrastructure projects; 127,172 squat in vacant private properties; 101,834 in public land and 53,909 in an area for priority development (Abante Kadamay).

The poverty in the countryside brought by landlessness and militarization of the peasant families has driven them to urban centers in search of livelihood and peace. Unfortunately, the urban centers do not offer a better life; they offer joblessness, poor wages for those employed, and inhumane living

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conditions. More than 181 workers lost their jobs every day last year. Unemployment increased due to the incapacity of the economy to absorb new entrants into the labor force, displacement of workers due to business closures or layoffs, and the decline in agricultural employment. The Philippines is primarily an agricultural country - the largest labor sector is farm workers, but continuous agricultural trade liberalization since the 1990s has created a major economic crisis (IBON Facts & Figures, 15 May 2001). Furthermore, the ongoing privatization of government-owned and -controlled corporations is sowing massive displacement of workers. Business establishments are also practicing contractual labor (wherein a worker is only employed for five months and is not entitled to any benefits) and subcontracting. Because of domestic job scarcity, more and more Filipino workers go abroad so their families can survive.

Amid the difficulties besetting the Filipino families, social services like education, health and housing as well as basic utilities like water and electricity are no longer accessible. Even social services are being privatized or are operated like businesses.

Demolition has been the primary response of the government to the housing problem. And for those relocated to low cost housing projects like the Kasiglahan (Bliss!) Village, families pay a monthly minimum amortization of P300-500 for 25 years which is not affordable for a jobless urban poor family that earns a living by scavenging, vending, or

subcontracting. Relocation sites displace families from a source of living and also lack facilities like electricity, water, health and schools. According to the children-victims of the Payatas tragedy, in one small classroom at Kasiglahan Village 1, there are 130 school children. The village is also located on a major fault line.



It is also a reality that the relocation areas do not guarantee long-term homes for the demolished families. Take for instance, Lupang Pangako (Promised Land) in Payatas, itself a relocation area. The relocation site is the home of 31,000 households that had been deprived of the opportunity to develop. It later became a dump site which posed danger and led to the tragedy. Of course, the community in order to survive took to living out of the garbage. Instead of removing the danger from the residents, the families were again relocated because

of a development plan targeted for the area.

The Filipino children continue to suffer the brunt of the crisis brought about by the economic policies of the Philippine government in its adherence to globalization. In her state of the nation address, flanked by three children-victims of the Payatas tragedy, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo promised jobs, justice, shelter, and food. She promised a better future for the children. But a lot of children can't see the future—those in the streets, the homeless, those orphaned, killed or maimed by the continuing militarization in the countryside, those abused, those who are deprived of development and are pushed to hard work. These Filipino children only know of today.

Katherine further shared that:
the children's activities helped me accept the loss of our home but it also taught me to assert for justice for the tragedy that met us. I also understood the situation of poor Filipino children from the peasant and worker's family. Joining advocacy activities like theater plays and mobilizations helped me because I was able to share with other people our situation.

The trauma to children brought about by the worsening Philippine situation challenges our psychosocial work. Thus, our efforts seek not only to provide relief and rehabilitation for children with individual trauma but also to strengthen their ability to speak out for their human rights (see "GRANTEES - 2001", this issue). ♦

As the Fund works to develop closer, ongoing relationships with our grantees, we are beginning to receive more periodic updates from our partners. We are pleased to pass on some of what we have been learning in the following summaries of recent messages from three groups.

INDRADEVI ASSOCIATION, PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

The Indradevi Association of Cambodia received a grant from the MBF in 2000 (see feature article in *The Just Word*, Spring 2001) to develop community support to people facing multiple personal and social traumas. They write us that a recent gasoline fire in the squatter district where their office and clinic were located has destroyed the premises, along with a number of homes and factories that supplied hundreds of people with work. The group has relocated to a small house received as a gift from one of the people with AIDS with whom they had been working, who recently died. But due to the loss of property and a lack of funds, Indradevi has had to stop offering stress management workshops in the community. However, they report that they have recently trained 15 more volunteers in addition to their first group of 15, to work in the community as peer counselors, another example of the remarkable resilience of this severely under-resourced group.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MAYA IXIL WOMEN – NEW DAWN (ADMI), CHAJUL, GUATEMALA

New Dawn (ADMI, see "Grantees – 2001", this issue) is delighted to be able to extend its mental health work with women through

its recent grant from the Martin-Baro Fund. In addition to its program for children, several economic development projects, and its action research project, PhotoVoice, it has initiated work with women in the villages surrounding the rural altiplano town of Chajul. Some of these women were photographed and interviewed as part of the PhotoVoice project and requested collaboration from ADMI in establishing women's groups in their villages and support groups where they could explore the effects of the war as well as institutionalized rural poverty on their lives as women. Despite the increase in death threats and in violence against human rights workers that characterizes Guatemala in recent months, ADMI is continuing its work. The leadership was particularly shocked and saddened by the death of Sister Barbara Ford, a U.S. citizen who had lived and worked in the Quiche region for many years and with whom some of



ADMI's leadership had collaborated in the development of their current mental health work.

In addition to these projects ADMI has launched a fundraising campaign in order to build a center. They have long dreamed of having "a room of their own" as their programs are currently housed in three separate, rented spaces in Chajul. They have found a piece of land but are currently looking for sources of funds to contribute to the building fund. Any suggestions can be forwarded to the Martín-Baró Fund who will pass them on.

SOFIBEF, KICOMA, TANZANIA

Solidarite des Femmes de Fizi pour le Bien Etre Familial, (SOFIBEF, see "Grantees – 2001", this issue) recently circulated a report entitled "No Peace without Disarmament in the D. R. Congo" about the military conflict in the DRC as of June, 2001. While it seems impossible to understand the details on a micro level, it is clear that this is a regional struggle involving military intervention by Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, with additional intervention by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the response of the international community to the problem of armed groups has been disastrously negligent. While the armed groups are not the root cause of all of the Congo's problems, their continued presence is the primary cause at this time of the war and much of the worst violence. This continued war and violence is what SOFIBEF is responding to and what the Fund is supporting.

The report concludes that lasting peace in Central Africa is largely dependent on a successful strategy of Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration or Resettlement (DDRR) of these armed groups. The ultimate success of this DDRR strategy is intimately linked to the development of political institutions that can resist the re-emergence of armed groups, both foreign and domestic.

We have also learned more about our project contact person at SOFIBEF, Chantal. She writes that she is 35 years old and lives with and intends to share the rest of her life with the disadvantaged women in the villages of Fizi, in eastern DRC. She has been involved in human rights activities since 1994 when she protested the militarization of the villages under the Mobutu regime where women were subject to exploitation and intimidation by armed units. This situation continues today to a lesser degree. While working as a teacher she also is a single mom and, despite juggling these two roles, has participated in trauma counseling. Currently she is director of the women's movement and founder and chair of the local SOFIBEF chapter. In that capacity she visits victims of human rights abuses and those with mental illness. This includes the Uvira region where there are 45 women housed in a trauma center

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Updates from the Front Lines *continued from page 10*

and Bukavu region where 52 women are housed who are psychologically injured as a result of human rights violations during the war. Her group also supports families and friends of female prisoners and she often visits the prisons to document conditions. Chantal is currently working on a book entitled "Outsiders Looking In: How to keep from being stressed when someone you love goes to jail." In addition she has become a paralegal and works with lawyers on cases of mental health malpractice because of the terrible crisis regarding lack of mental health care. She often goes to trials to monitor them and tries to help in small ways when requested with death penalty appeals.

We are grateful to Chantal for helping the Fund begin to understand better the condition of human rights and mental health in the DRC. ♦

U.S. CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MCGOVERN TO ADDRESS ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE EVENT



by Joan H. Liem

Each year we mark the anniversary of the assassination of Ignacio Martín-Baró, his brothers, and their housekeeper and her daughter by inviting a speaker whose work embodies Nacho's spirit and commitment to human rights and social justice. This year the Fund is extremely pleased

that U.S. Representative James P. McGovern will address the gathering at our annual event. Serving Massachusetts's 3rd Congressional District and now in his third term, James McGovern has been an outspoken advocate for human rights. In 1989 while a senior aide to U.S. Representative Joseph Moakley, he was asked to lead a Congressional investigation into the murders of the six Jesuit Priests and two lay women in El Salvador. There is

little doubt that this initiative played a key role in finally bringing to an end the millions of dollars of aid our government gave to the Salvadoran oligarchy in support of its counterinsurgency war against its people. The Fund is honored that Representative McGovern has agreed to be our speaker this year.

The commemorative event will take place on **Sunday, December 2, 2001 at 7:00pm at Washburn Hall, Episcopal Divinity School, 99 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA.** In addition to hearing from Congressman McGovern, there will be an opportunity to learn more about the Fund and some of the international groups we are supporting. This will be a wonderful evening so mark your calendars now.

We also urge you to support the Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights and honor the work of Congressman McGovern by sending your tax-deductible contribution to: Funding Exchange/Martin-Baro Fund at P.O. Box 2122, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. If you wish to be included in the program as a **Sponsor** of the event, please check the appropriate box below, **PRINT** your name clearly as you would like it to appear in the event program, and be sure your contribution reaches us by November 19, 2001. ♦

✂

\$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ Other _____

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Address _____

_____ List me/us as a **Program Sponsor/s**.

For more information about the event, email us at events@martinbarofund.org

FUND ANNOUNCES NEW WEBSITE

by Ben Achtenberg

Visit www.martinbarofund.org, the fund's new website, and suggest your friends check it out too. In addition to information about the Martín-Baró Fund's history and mission (and about Ignacio Martín-Baró himself), there's news about recent and upcoming events, details on our new application procedures and funding guidelines, and descriptions and photos from all the projects we've funded over the years. Also available are downloadable versions of the most recent issues of *The Just Word* -- forward copies to your friends and colleagues. This is a new venture for us, and there may be a few glitches in this first version of the site. If you find any broken links or other problems, let us know by e-mailing contact@martinbarofund.org -- and please pass on any suggestions you have about features we should add in the future.



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