

# the just word

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

*a project of the Funding Exchange*

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## Healing, Recovery, and Activism: The Children's Rehabilitation Center

*by Ramsay Liem*



Children's collective, photo courtesy of the Children's Rehabilitation Center

The Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in Metro-Manila, Philippines, has been the recipient of multiple grants from the Martín-Baró Fund since our

inception. Created by dedicated mental health professionals, human rights activists, and volunteers, the CRC was started during the worst years of counterinsurgency wars against popular movements in the Philippines under the U.S. supported dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. During its two and a half decades of operations, the Center's staff has developed a multi-pronged program to support child victims of torture, parent "salvaging" (disappearance), imprisonment, unrelenting poverty, and other human rights abuses. A centerpiece of this work is the Children's Collective, an initiative of children served by the CRC in the 1990s. It capitalizes on the energy and social consciousness of child survivors and supports their recuperation through advocacy work to denounce human rights violations and publicize the plight of child victims throughout the Philippines. This remarkable achievement embodies in the best sense Ignacio Martín-Baró's teaching that state-sponsored violence targets not only individuals but whole communities and even societies; as such, restoring mental health requires not only individual support but collective action to attack the structural roots of human rights abuses.

### **Brief Political Context**

Unfortunately, the political conditions necessitating the formation of the CRC in the mid-1980s have not improved. Over the years of the Martín-Baró Fund partnership with the CRC, children and their parents in the Philippines have been 1) caught between the military's counterinsurgency against national liberation movements and the independence struggle of Muslim Filipinos, 2) displaced by transnational mining and forestry companies, and 3) killed or made homeless by government neglect of the most impoverished areas like Payatas, a mountainous garbage dump in Manila that collapsed in July of 2000. Most recently, the CRC reports that the military is spreading rumors that children are being recruited as child soldiers for the national liberation struggle, creating a climate of intimidation in communities suspected of harboring independence fighters. Although few targeted children have been proven to be child soldiers, this campaign has terrorized and traumatized whole communities caught in the crossfire.

### **U.S. Involvement**

In 1991 the Philippines closed Clark Air Base and the Subic Bay naval base, homes to one of the largest concentrations of U.S. military forces in Asia. Post September 11, 2001 (9/11), however, the Joint Special Operations Task Force, Philippines, was negotiated to permit U.S.

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Workshop participants, photo courtesy of the Proyecto de Salud Mental Comunitaria y Acompañamiento Psicosocial

## PROJECT UPDATE: Proyecto de Salud Mental Comunitaria y Acompañamiento Psicosocial San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico

by Cynthia Kennedy

The Community Mental Health and Psychosocial Accompaniment Project (*Proyecto*), which arose out of a need to address the consequences of political violence experienced in the indigenous communities in Chiapas, has been supported by the Martín-Baró Fund since 2007. Indigenous communities in the state of Chiapas are extremely marginalized, and in 1994 formed the political group *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN)* [*Zapatista Army of National Liberation*] to address poverty and social oppression. Rather than respond to the political demands of the EZLN and other indigenous groups in Mexico through policy and legal reforms, the government has been engaging in low-intensity warfare primarily through paramilitary groups.

To address the consequences of this violence, the *Proyecto* has been training indigenous, community-based health promoters in community mental health, psychosocial support and accompaniment, and in strategies for addressing a range of human rights violations. The training model focuses on developing a group of promoters who will replicate or multiply the workshops in their own communities, incorporating the learning into their community-based health promotion work. Workshop themes have included low-intensity warfare, crisis intervention skills, alcoholism, and domestic violence, as well as strategies for responding to government attacks and resources for self-care. More specifically, community health promoters have studied the origins and principal objectives of low-intensity warfare in order to critically evaluate their lived experiences, as well as understand the effects this warfare is having on their communities, and to formulate a collective response to the ongoing repression. The health promoter programs address gender and domestic violence, recognizing that it is both a physical and mental health concern in the indigenous communities. Through these workshops they are raising awareness about how alcoholism im-

pacts the community as well as how it is utilized by wealthy landowners in the region as a means of political control.

Over a three year period, the project has produced didactic, popular education materials including a workbook that is used in workshops. The workbook describes the rationale for the community mental health workshops, describing them as a place where “we meet to construct new knowledge together with one another, a new way of thinking and confronting problems together.” It also highlights the value of the health promoters in strengthening the wider resistance movement.

This year the workshops have introduced a thematic focus on mental illness, exploring how it is viewed and manifested in local communities. During the first workshop focusing on the theme of mental illness, the group of promoters identified “*el buken*” as a generic name which is used to describe a person’s sadness, a situation in which his or her spirit, heart, and soul need to be uplifted. The promoters have begun to identify and analyze the most common range of symptoms and complaints related to mental health issues in their communities. Through a community diagnostic evaluation, they have recognized that suicide is one area of concern that requires more attention and more prevention efforts.

Each day the community health promoters confront difficult issues of poverty, violence, war, and the threat of extermination. However, inspired by the life and legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró, their community-based health promoters seek to deconstruct or de-ideologize the concept of mental illness and, one step at a time, develop a liberatory process in a context of regional organizing. Through these efforts they are creating a life with dignity wherein all may enjoy the right to health and to life in its fullest. 

## The Martín-Baró Fund's Continuing Legacy

by Ahjane Billingsley



As we celebrate our 20th anniversary of grant making, it has been great to hear more about how organizations that we funded in the past are doing today. As an example, the Balay Rehabilitation Center of Iligan City, Philippines, achieved scholastic note in a recent publication. Balay is a non-governmental organization that offers psychosocial and development programs to individuals and communities traumatized by displacement and armed conflict. The Martín-Baró Fund awarded

the Balay center \$5,280 in 1995 and \$7,000 in 2000. In 2007, the journal *Community, Work & Family* published an article highlighting the work of the Balay Rehabilitation Centre, including the center's capacity to adapt to changing needs. The article explores how Balay has transitioned from a curative to a holistic approach that better addresses the challenges of changing political conditions and humanitarian needs of survivors of war and structural violence in the Philippines. As the article's introduction puts it, "Balay became increasingly interested in assisting communities to become empowered to participate in their own healing and the frameworks of community research and participatory action research (PAR) are now being explored by Balay as valid methods of integrating research with rehabilitation activities on the community level" (Anasarias, Mikkelsen, Berliner & lanev 2007; see <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a781037045> for entire article). 

## New Partnership with the Boston College Center for Human Rights and International Justice

by Christine Glaser

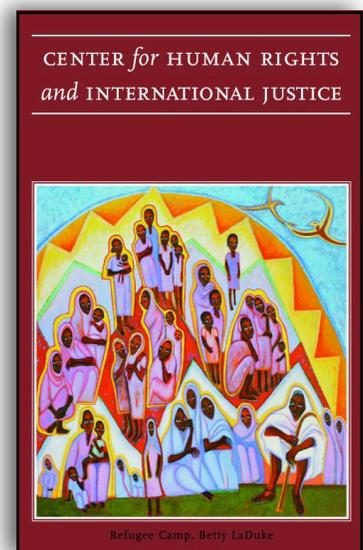
The Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Boston College Center for Human Rights and International Justice. Both the Martín-Baró Fund and the Center have compatible missions and aim to address similar human rights challenges. The commonalities between the two groups stem in part from the alignment of the Center's work with the Fund's goals to promote education and critical awareness about the consequences of social injustice on individuals and communities in order to pursue a more just and equitable world.

The Fund and the Center have worked closely in the past. Several committee members are or have been Associate Directors and affiliated faculty at the Center. A number of Boston College graduate students have also previously worked closely with the Martín-Baró Fund and will continue to do so in this new partnership. In addition, the Center has routinely played a role in the Fund's events, including, for example, the successful event we held in collaboration with the Center for Immigrant Families at Boston College on April 25, 2007. This year we are planning another event with the Center at Boston College commemorating the 20th anniversary of the martyrs in El Salvador, including Ignacio Martín-Baró.

This new partnership will bring many shared benefits to both the Martín-Baró Fund and the Center. The Center extends its applied or outreach mission through this new affiliation. As importantly, by moving educational programming to the Center, the Fund seeks to engage a new generation of students in the important work of Ignacio Martín-Baró while providing them with the hands-on-experience of partnering with small NGOs in the global south and developing educational resources and advocacy here in the U.S. The

Center will also manage the day-to-day operations of the Fund, including the website, production of this bi-annual newsletter and fundraising events like the annual Bow-lathon. In addition, the Center will serve as the central resource for receiving grant applications and announcing grant awards each year. The grantmaking committee will continue to make the grantmaking decisions and will now be joined by Boston College faculty, staff and students in the process. Despite these changes, the Fund will remain a project of the Funding Exchange which continues to serve as the fiscal sponsor of the Fund as well as serving as a resource for distributing and monitoring grants to grantees.

Boston College is also looking forward to the benefits of working with the Fund and the opportunity for student involvement with its projects. As a Jesuit university, many students have a lot of interest in human rights and this new partnership opens up the chance for these students to engage further in issues related to mental health and human rights. Possibilities include linking students' participation in service learning and immersion trips to visits with grantees in regions in which the Fund works and possibilities of sustaining ties once students return to the Boston area. 



Special Forces to train and support the Armed Forces of the Philippines for their counterinsurgency wars. The Bush administration declared the southern Philippines the second front on the war against terrorism. Although officially presented as a short-term, crisis response to 9/11, the Pentagon has recently declared that U.S. forces will stay on in the Philippines indefinitely. (See Thom Shankar, U. S. Counterinsurgency Unit to Stay in the Philippines, *NYTs*, 8/21/2009). During the seven year U.S. presence, the CRC says human rights abuses of children and their families caught in the middle of counterinsurgency fighting have increased.

### **Current CRC Programming Supported by the Martín-Baró Fund**

This year's Martín-Baró Fund grant will enable the CRC to expand its operations by opening an outreach program in the Ilocos Region, a target area for the government's counterinsurgency against the national liberation movement and suspected communist sympathizers. Responding to a request from the Ilocos Region Human Rights Advocates (IHRA), a local hu-



*Fact finding mission, photo courtesy of the Children's Rehabilitation Center*

man rights group, staff from the CRC will work with IHRA to locate and train community volunteers to replicate the program of services that the CRC has developed over its 23 years of experience. IHRA has documented numerous cases of summary execution, criminalization of political acts, forcible evacuations due to indiscriminate bombing, and harassment of human rights workers, in the past two years. In general they describe widespread fear created by the mere presence of the Philippines Armed Forces.

The year-long work to create this outreach program will include: 1) documenting the types and extent of human rights abuses affecting children in collaboration with the IHRA, 2) training local staff to understand the political, human rights, and psychosocial realities of children in the Ilocos Regions, 3) training local staff to provide direct services to children – psychosocial first aid, emotional release and problem assessment, and meaning construction and skills mastery; these interventions rely heavily on art, play, journal writing, and group activities during the process of recovery, and 4) working with local staff and the IHRA to conduct advocacy projects including participation of families and children in a local celebration of International Human Rights Day.

Because of its successful history developing and implementing a unique program of 'rehabilitation' services for children and its strong partnership with the IHRA, the Ilocos Region Outreach Program will be an effective and sustainable expansion of CRC services to children *and* families in great need of support.

The Martín-Baró Fund has admired and learned a great deal from the work of the CRC and is pleased to have played a small role in enabling the growth and success of this remarkable group. 🐦



*Children's activity in Kalinga fact finding mission, photo courtesy of the Children's Rehabilitation Center*

This event will be the first in our new partnership with the Center for Human Rights and International Justice (CHRIJ) at Boston College. Light refreshments will be served after the event. For more information, please visit the announcement on the CHRIJ website: <http://www.bc.edu/centers/humanrights/events.html#livinglegacies>

1 6 N O V E M B E R 1 9 8 9

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION  
*of* MARTYRS *of* EL SALVADOR

**LIVING LEGACIES**

*Wednesday 4 November 2009 at 7PM  
Gasson Hall, Boston College*

HOST: **Donald Monan SJ**

Chancellor of Boston College

INVITED SPEAKER: **Rodolfo Cardenal SJ**

Former Vice Rector of the University of Central America in San Salvador

RESPONDENTS: **Jim McGovern**

7th term Democrat from Massachusetts' 3rd District

& **Elizabeth Lira**

Psychologist and Professor of Psychology, Human Rights & Ethics at Universidad Alberto Hurtado in Santiago Chile

*And a 10-minute video "A NEW PERSON, A NEW SOCIETY: A human rights legacy of Ignacio Martín-Baró" featuring the projects of the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health & Human Rights, produced by Jenny Alexander, Northern Light Productions*

also **MEMORY & ITS STRENGTH: THE MARTYRS OF EL SALVADOR**

a discussion between Jon Sobrino SJ and Noam Chomsky, moderated by J. Donald Monan, SJ

*Monday 30 November 2009, 4.30PM, Robsham Theater*

both events co-sponsored by CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS & INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE,  
IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ FUND FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
and JESUIT INSTITUTE AT BOSTON COLLEGE

also co-sponsored by the following Boston College Schools, Departments and Centers:

Latin American Studies, Lynch School of Education, Owen M. Kupferschmid Holocaust/Human Rights Project, School of Theology and Ministry, Theology Department and University Mission and Ministry



Jenny Alexander of Northern Light Productions (NLP) (<http://www.nlprod.com/>) has joined the Martín-Baró Fund to produce a short film featuring some of the many legacies of Ignacio Martín-Baró, embodied through the work of the Fund. The film will be shown during events in Boston and beyond to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the assassinations at the University of Central America José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in San Salvador.

Northern Light Productions started in 1982 when independent filmmaker Bestor Cram made *How Far Home*, a documentary about the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. With a commitment to high-quality, nonfiction filmmaking, the company has grown to become one of New England's premier production organizations, creating a wide variety of work for museums, visitor centers, educational institutions, and television worldwide. NLP has been a generous collaborator in our effort to capture some of the work being done by the Fund's grantees.

In April, 2009, producer Gabriela Uzcatégui and NLP cinematographer Jesse Beecher traveled to Guatemala and El Salvador to follow local project coordinators and participants in their work to rethread social relations in the wake of decades of civil war in each country. Although they were not able to travel to the Philippines, the Children's Rehabilitation Center generously provided footage and still photos featuring their work. Each of these projects seeks to rethread social relations through, in the words of Ignacio, "constructing a new person, [and] a new society" while "trying to make a contribution toward changing those conditions that dehumanize the majority of the population, alienating their con-



photo by Gabriela Uzcatégui

sciousness and blocking the development of their historical identity."

Since their return, Northern Light's Brian DeBlasio has edited over thirteen hours of footage in four languages into a fifteen-minute film. A host of translators made significant contributions to the film, including Lorenzo Puente who helped with Tagalog; Michele Rudy, with the Spanish translation; and Ana Caba Mateo, Maria Natividad Caba and Marta Alvarez, with the Ixil translations. The film would not have been possible without the active participation of our grantees in Guatemala, El Salvador and the Philippines, whom we thank for their generous collaboration. 🍀

COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS: University Of Central America, José Simeón Cañas, San Salvador, El Salvador

by M. Brinton Lykes

<p><i>Felices los pacifistas porque resolverán la tierra en herencia.</i></p>  <p>Amado López Quintana, S.J. 6. II, 1936 - 16 XI, 1989</p>	<p><i>Felices los que tienen hambre y sed de justicia, porque serán saciados.</i></p>  <p>Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J. 9. XI, 1930 - 16 XI, 1989</p>	<p><i>Felices los compasivos, porque obtendrán misericordia.</i></p>  <p>Juan Ramón Moreno Pardo, S.J. 29. VIII, 1933 - 16 XI, 1989</p>
<p><i>Felices los de oración limpia, porque ellos venán a Dios.</i></p>  <p>Joaquín López y López, S.J. 16. VIII, 1918 - 16 XI, 1989</p>	<p><b>Recuerdo</b> de la misa de 30 días. San Salvador 16, diciembre, 1989</p>  <p>¿Qué significa hoy ser jesuita? "Comprometerse bajo el estandarte de la cruz en la lucha crucial de nuestro tiempo: la lucha por la fe y la lucha por la justicia que la misma fe exige."</p>	<p><i>Felices los que trabajan por la paz, porque serán reconocidos como hijos de Dios.</i></p>  <p>Ignacio Martín-Baró S.J. 7. XI, 1942 - 16 XI, 1989</p>
<p><i>Felices los perseguidos por causa del bien, porque de ellos es el Reino de los Cielos.</i></p>  <p>Segundo Montes Maza, S.J. 15. V, 1933 - 16 XI, 1989</p>	<p><i>Felices los que tienen espíritu de pobres, porque de ellos es el Reino de los Cielos.</i></p>  <p>Celina Mariet Ramos 27. II, 1973 - 16 XI, 1989</p>	<p><i>Felices los que lloran, porque sentirán consuelo.</i></p>  <p>Elsa Julia Ramos 5. III, 1947 - 16 XI, 1989</p>

Thirty Day Remembrance, December 16, 1989

Colleagues from the University of Central America José Simeón Cañas will be commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the 1989 Assassinations on their campus, from November 11-16, 2009. There will be a series of activities including a conference on the legal case initiated by Spain's National Court which opened an official investigation into 14 former military officers in El Salvador accused of killing the priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in November 1989. The event became one of the most notorious episodes of El Salvador's 12-year civil war, during which approximately 75,000 people died in the conflict which pitted leftist guerrillas against the U.S.-backed conservative government. Most of the slain Jesuits were born in Spain. They were killed at their residence at the UCA in San Salvador. Two military officers were convicted of murder in 1991 but were pardoned in 1993 under an amnesty law approved by the National Assembly. Other events include a public forum with invited speakers as well as a procession and mass commemorating the assassinations. 🍀

## Commemorative Issue Of Liberación



In 2005, *PsicLiberación* (<http://es.groups.yahoo.com/group/psicliberacion/>) launched a Spanish language web-based journal on liberation psychology and activist scholarship and interventions, *LIBERACIÓN* (<http://liber-accion.org/>). This is only one of the many outcomes of a series of international conferences on the social psychology of liberation, developed by those working to sustain and extend the legacy of the psychology of Ignacio Martín-Baró. The journal reflects one of many collaborative efforts of the more than 500 people networked through the *PsicLiberación* listserv, although several volunteers from Costa Rica, Mexico, and Uruguay are primarily responsible for sustaining this effort.

The journal has launched a call for a Special Issue in honor of the life and legacy Ignacio Martín-Baró on the 20th anniversary of his assassination. The editors hope to publish this on-line special issue in November, 2009. Contributions - including articles, reflections on experiences shared with Ignacio Martín-Baró, poetry, or critical analyses - based on your understanding of a psychology of liberation are cordially invited. Contributions should be sent to [uruguay@liber-accion.org](mailto:uruguay@liber-accion.org) or [costarica@liber-accion.org](mailto:costarica@liber-accion.org); the full call can be found at <http://liber-accion.org/eventos>. 



Ignacio Martín-Baró in San Francisco, CA, 1989

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

#### OUR MISSION

Through grant-making and education, the Martín-Baró Fund fosters psychological well-being, social consciousness, active resistance, and progressive social change in communities affected by institutional violence, repression, and social injustice.

#### OUR VALUES

- ▶ We believe that the scars of such experiences are deeply seated both in the individual and in society.
- ▶ We believe in the power of the community collectively to heal these wounds, to move forward, and to create change.
- ▶ We believe in the importance of developing education and critical awareness about the oppressive policies and practices of the United States and of multinational corporations.

#### OUR GOALS

- ▶ To support innovative grassroots projects that explore the power of the community to foster healing within individuals and communities that are trying to recover from experiences of institutional violence, repression, and social injustice.
- ▶ To promote education and critical awareness about the psychosocial consequences of structural violence, repression, and social injustice on individuals and communities, while educating ourselves and the wider community about the community-based responses of grantees in their pursuit of social reparation and a more just and equitable world.
- ▶ To build collaborative relationships among the Fund, its grantees, and its contributors for mutual education and social change.

*Editors:* Ahjané Billingsley, Anjani Datla, & M. Brinton Lykes. *Contributors:* Ahjané Billingsley, Christine Glaser, Cynthia Kennedy, Ramsay Liem, M. Brinton Lykes, & Patrick Macquoid. *Designer:* Zac Willette



**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK.** Letters, inquiries, contributions can be sent to [priority@martinbarofund.org](mailto:priority@martinbarofund.org) or Martín-Baró Fund, P.O. Box 302122, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. Checks payable to: Funding Exchange/ Martín-Baró Fund; tax deductible to the full extent permitted by the IRS code. *Thank you.*

## STAY TUNED FOR THE 2010 BOWLATHON

**Why knock each other down . . .  
when we can knock pins down together?**

*by Patrick Macquoid and Ahjane Billingsley*

The annual Bowlathon will be held in March 2010. The Bowlathon is not just the Martín-Baró Fund's largest and most successful fundraising event, it is also a great way to meet people and get involved in social justice work. Following a tradition that began last year, there will be a costume parade and competition, fun prizes for the winner of the latter – and for high and low scorers and high fundraisers – and a great way to spend an afternoon with your family and friends. You can make a difference and have a great time whatever your level of bowling skill. Last year, over 50 people participated, raising nearly \$22,000. This year's theme is yet to be announced, and we are looking to you for ideas. To suggest a theme, or for more information, email Ahjane at [ahjane.mbfund@gmail.com](mailto:ahjane.mbfund@gmail.com)



## STRIKE FOR JUSTICE

*Ten pins, ten frames, ten times the fun!*



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