



ITEMS FOR ACTION

COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

CVSA Kicks off “Invest Your Summer Campaign” Promotes SDGs to Build Systemic Change for Planet and People



Caryn Maxim (center), CVSA East Coast Membership Coordinator, explaining CVSA's Campaign for the 2030 SDGs to students on the West Los Angeles Community College campus during the “Committed to Creating Climate Resilient Communities” Earth Day event on April 22.

Photo: CVSA

by Jennifer Perez, CVSA Volunteer Coordinator

Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) volunteers took part in Earth Week 2023 activities throughout the greater Los Angeles area this April, marking the start of a summer campaign to enlist full- and part-time volunteer organizers for CVSA and for CVSA membership groups listed in *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*, CVSA's catalogue that collectively offer thousands of volunteer opportunities nationwide and internationally.

Volunteers contacted dozens of CVSA member organizations this spring to engage each in actively promulgating implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their respective communities and via their local and state governments.

This engagement is key to creating a base from which we can call upon the U.S. government to comply with the commitment it made when it endorsed the 2030 SDGs in 2015, along with the other 192 member countries of the United Nations.

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See the 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS on page 6-7.

University Professors and Students Apply Studies to Benefit Whole of Society: Cuba's Example

by Eduardo Jimenez, Founder and Director of Grupo Cajolá



I participated in the III International Conference of Science and Conscience towards Sustainable Development held at the Universidad de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba from April 11 to 14, 2023 as part of a delegation of six from Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA). I experienced a stark difference in the role universities fill in Cuba where the institutions are active members of their community and participate in solving the problems the community is facing, alongside community leaders and residents – as opposed to the universities in Guatemala that only relate to the community where they are located to create learning

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Eduardo Jimenez (right) brings greetings of solidarity from his community in Cajolá, Guatemala to brothers and sisters in Santiago de Cuba at a community cultural festival in the town of El Frances.

Photo: CVSA

Organizations in this Issue

Grupo Cajolá, Cajolá, Guatemala
Huerta del Valle, Ontario, California
Remote Area Medical-USA, Rockford, Tennessee

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Editorial:

Promises We Demand They Keep: Implement the 2030 Goals NOW!

A small window of opportunity is fast closing for world governments, industries and populations to take the concerted action needed to contain the rise in global temperatures by no more than 1.5° C over pre-industrial levels. We must achieve this to prevent global warming's worst impacts, and to secure climate justice and well-being.

The U.S. government's military-industrial complex and other large industries have historically created the largest percentage of fossil fuel emissions around the globe. The people of the U.S. must demand government accountability to both our communities and to other countries severely impacted by the effects of global warming and the economic devastation it brings. Qualitative, measurable policy change is needed *now*.

Carbon dioxide levels have risen to a level unseen in two million years. Politicians' campaign promises have failed to put an end to this deadly trend. At the current slow rate of transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, our cleaner energy sources will remain a mere fraction of energy supplies in 2030. Some 660 million people in the world will still be without electricity. Close to two billion will have no alternative to continued reliance on polluting fuels and technologies for meal preparation.

At today's pace, it could take another 25 years to halt deforestation and the extinction of vast numbers of species worldwide. Our lives and health depend on correcting this assault on nature.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development posits that this generation has the chance to succeed in ending poverty and we are likely to be the last to have a chance to save the planet. These objectives remain within our grasp, but require leadership and organization from the grassroots up.

In the U.S., average life expectancy has declined two years in a row. But those in poor communities and those doing essential work such as picking our food and caring for our sick – mostly people of color – die at even younger ages.

Over the past three decades, the most affluent people in the U.S. have become 300% richer, while the least affluent have accumulated more debt, exceeding the value of their assets.

This is not a sustainable way to run a country or world. Developing nations are looking to the U.S. less and less as any kind of positive model to follow.

The UN Secretary General recently said that to achieve the 2030 SDGs now requires "...an unprecedented effort by



ITEMS FOR ACTION is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**. CVSA's mission is to promote, interpret, coordinate and extend the field of independent voluntary service and action programs serving people and communities in need of systemic solutions to economic, social and environmental problems.

CVSA is a consultative and coordinating body of nongovernmental, voluntary service organizations based primarily in North America as well as around the world. **CVSA** publishes **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**; works to expand the ability of individuals to donate their time and services to people in need through organizations and free of government restraint; and promotes full-time volunteer service as a vocational choice toward achieving social change.

CVSA holds Special NGO Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, thus provides a voice for independent, nongovernmental voluntary service and action organizations and the constituencies they serve, bringing local needs into global context and global context to local efforts. **CVSA** affirms the tenets of the UN Charter and is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the U.S. and around the world. **CVSA** mobilizes involvement of U.S.-based volunteer organizations and their allies for the achievement of the universal, transformative and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S., in order to end all poverty in all its forms everywhere.

ITEMS FOR ACTION is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members. **ITEMS FOR ACTION** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

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

ITEMS FOR ACTION is free to **CVSA** members. Subscription rate for U.S. residents is \$20/year. Canadians and those abroad please add \$20 for additional mailing costs. Send your order and submissions of articles for publication to **CVSA**.

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individual governments, a renewed sense of common purpose across the international community and a global alliance for SDG action across business, civil society, science, young people, local authorities and more.”

We cannot continue with more of the same and expect a different result. We must work together on this. Join Commission on Voluntary Service & Action and our nationwide campaign for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S. – now! (See pages 6-7)

Invest Your Summer to Build Systemic Change

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CVSA ran an exhibit table April 18 at the 16th Annual California State University-Dominguez Hills Earth Day Festival, hosted by the school's Office of Sustainability. The well-attended event was open to students, professors and community members, many of whom expressed interest in CVSA displays. Volunteers made 2030 Sustainable Development Goals posters available to put up in their homes, businesses or places of worship. Others asked to purchase copies of *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogues.

As we talked about how fighting for the full implementation of the Goals is needed to bring about systemic change in the U.S., many stopped because they were interested but had never heard of the SDGs and wanted to know more.

We met Linda Kahn, Curriculum Committee Volunteer for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), at this event. Kahn explained that many retirees are looking for places to devote their time and years of valuable experience, and to learn new skills to make a difference in their communities. Kahn subsequently met with CVSA staff about how we can collaborate with her institute's educational program in September.



Joana Flor Tavares (left), the Program Director for the California Center for Climate Change Education, and Susan Angus (right), CVSA's Executive Director, meet at the West Los Angeles College greenhouse to discuss implementation of the 2030 SDGs.



Jennifer Perez, CVSA Volunteers Coordinator (right), speaks with a student at the 16th Annual Earth Day Festival at California State University-Dominguez Hills on April 18 about CVSA's grassroots campaign for the 2030 SDGs to be implemented in the U.S.

CVSA ran a booth at an Earth Day Celebration entitled, "Committed to Creating Climate-Resilient Communities," held at West Los Angeles College (WLAC) on April 22, coordinated by the Greener Way Associates, this event promoted the opening of the new California Center for Climate Change Education that will be housed on this campus.

We heard Joana Flor Tavares, the newly hired Program Director of the Center, introduce the goals of the Center. She talked about the need for academic curricula to include sustainability as a whole, bringing together social, economic and environmental factors. She extended an invitation to students and community organizations to get involved in the Center and build collaborations that keep the center responsive to the real needs of the community.

Following up on our common concerns, CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus and I arranged to meet with Tavares on campus about how she could integrate the 2030 SDGs into the center's program. We underscored our view that the center's purpose could only be fulfilled through implementation of the 2030 SDGs.

Tavares agreed it makes perfect sense to place the center's entire program within the SDG framework. She requested CVSA's guidance in providing materials for an educational

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Thank you for keeping CVSA's car in good shape!

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Invest Your Summer to Build Systemic Change

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campaign about the SDGs on the WLAC campus. Tavares added she would like to arrange ways she could involve her students in CVSA's campaign for the implementation of the 2030 SDGs in the U.S. in a manner that provides them with on-the-job training in organizing skills. CVSA is looking forward to this collaboration to be in full swing this fall, and will start with a presentation on campus to faculty in the summer.

Also on April 22, Angus, together with Caryn Maxim, CVSA East Coast Membership Coordinator, visiting for the week from New Jersey, headed to Irvine, Orange County for a "Youth Service Learning & Leadership Forum." This event was hosted by All Earth Citizens Foundation, a nonprofit education and mentoring organization with a mission to help teenagers and young adults grow into responsible global citizens and leaders.

Dr. Ronald Wilder, Chief Academic Officer of Perceiver Education, Inc., an academic admissions counseling agency that co-hosted the event, had requested Angus as the keynote speaker to address a group of about 40 high school students about CVSA's campaign for the 2030 SDGs. Angus gave a presentation on the urgent necessity to organize for the 2030 SDGs now; and how they, as students, could volunteer, build partnerships with schools and community groups and bring the need for the 2030 SDGs to the attention of local government officials.

Students asked thoughtful questions about how to get companies to stop carbon emissions, whether carbon capture could really make a difference quickly enough, and about how to transform the food industry so that people can afford to eat healthy, fresh, unprocessed food and less meat. Many signed up for more information about how to volunteer once they finished school this summer.

Sharing Skills and Methodology with Member Organizations

CVSA is offering consultative sessions and training workshops to organizations that incorporate volunteers in running their programs. Topics include successful processes, tactics and strategies for increasing the number of volunteers and methodologies for advancing them to leadership roles, thereby expanding the overall strength of each organization and extending its roots in the community.

Many organizations in *INVEST YOURSELF* suffered significant losses of volunteer involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic but are now revitalizing their approach so as to rebuild the ranks of volunteers to allow for the growth of their programs and campaigns. This is a critical time, when organizing action is needed to bring about all aspects of the 17 SDGs. The slump in volunteer involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic must be overcome. CVSA can help.



Photo: CVSA

Susan Angus and Jennie Perez (not in photo) lead training session at the CVSA office with staff of Huerta del Valle Miguel Cruz, Projects Coordinator (bottom left), Javier Gomez, Marketing Director, (center top) and Xochitl Alejo, Office Manager (far right) along with CVSA volunteer Indulekha Tharun (foreground right).



Photo: CVSA

Huerta de Valle Office Administrator, Xochitl Alejo (left), and CVSA volunteer, Indulekha Tharun (right), share ideas on volunteer involvement strategies during the volunteer workshop at the CVSA office.

Huerta del Valle is a nonprofit grassroots organization based in Ontario, California, serving the Inland Empire region of Southern California with a network of urban farms and community gardens. They are dedicated to working for an equitable food system to provide healthy organic produce for all. Staff members have begun training with CVSA and are in the process of developing their own strategy for increasing the number of people from their community who regularly volunteer with their programs.

Maria Alonso, founder and director of Huerta del Valle, signed the organization up as a member of CVSA in January 2023. Alonso explained some of their operational challenges to CVSA organizers, as well as their desire to involve more volunteers from their community. Alonso assigned Miguel Cruz, Projects Director, to attend the first training session, which involved a visit with CVSA to Western Service Workers Association, based in Santa Ana, California, for a full day of activities. Cruz then attended a class in April at CVSA on organizing methodologies. He subsequently brought Xochitl Alejo,

Huerta del Valle's bookkeeper and office administrator, and Javier Gomez, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, into organizer training programs with CVSA.

On May 16, Cruz, Alejo and Gomez spent several hours with CVSA organizers in a workshop to make an analysis of Huerta del Valle's current approach to recruiting volunteers and the roles volunteers now play. They discussed the organization's strengths and weaknesses in providing skills training and education to volunteers. They then outlined a plan of action for installing a Volunteer Recruitment System based on their analysis.

Just as an organization is stronger than any one individual, the collective experience of many organizations with common interests is also more powerful than that of any single individual

or organization. CVSA can draw from the lessons and experiences of many organizations to teach others in pursuit of similar goals.

Please contact CVSA today about how your organization can benefit from membership in CVSA. Call us for more information about CVSA's training programs for individuals as full-time volunteer organizers capable of leading the fight for full implementation of the 2030 SDGs.

As CVSA grows in strength, we in turn can assist more grassroots organizations working to build a sustainable world to ensure all people live free of poverty, in dignity and in a safe, healthy environment. We all have a great deal of work to do — we can do it better together! Contact CVSA today at (323) 933-2872.



Universities Benefit Whole of Society: Cuba's Example

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experiences for students solely to meet the university's prescribed curriculum needs.

My job as Coordinator of Grupo Cajolá is to promote the development of the Cajolá community through education, environmental, health and economic development projects. Cajolá is a town and municipality in the Quetzaltenango department of Guatemala.

I was interested in the section of this conference that focused on educational innovation for human development and sustainability because of the weaknesses I see in the educational model that we have in Guatemala, and the success Grupo Cajolá has had in building our own educational programs and a preschool in Cajolá that teaches our indigenous Mam language.

In Guatemala, I attended primary school in the late eighties and the goal of education starting with primary school was "Hispanicization", or, eliminating our indigeneity from us. This is a very real term; over 43% of Guatemala's people are Maya, but in order to attend school, you have to speak Spanish even though in most of the indigenous communities, we speak our mother tongues. The majority of Guatemala's population is indigenous. I am of the Maya ethnicity and speak Mam, which is one of 22 indigenous languages still spoken in Guatemala. There are two other indigenous languages spoken in Guatemala, in addition to Spanish. We would be punished for speaking our mother tongue in school.

In 1996 when I was in my second year of middle school, I decided to emigrate to the United States. I worked in the U.S. for almost 10 years. That was a kind of university for me in the concept of getting to know a totally different world, people from different countries, cultures and languages and a different model of living. For a long time I outwardly identified myself as Mexican, due to the discrimination against the indigenous Guatemalans



Photo: CVSA

(Left to right) Dr. C. Hector Damian Exposito Montoya, Electrical Engineering Professor, Universidad de Oriente; David Chissola from Angola, with Eduardo Jimenez, Director of Grupo Cajolá at the closing reception of the III Science and Conscience Conference in Santiago de Cuba.

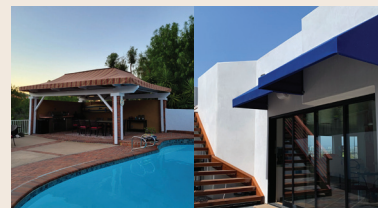
even in the U.S. But I stopped that once I began to learn about my historical reality and why I had been forced to migrate.

To defend myself against U.S. employers who didn't want to pay me for my work, I studied English as a second language — but actually, for me it was my third language. All these often-painful experiences were my training so that I would be able to contribute to making a better world. This trip to Cuba, a revolutionary country that I have long greatly admired, gave

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Transform Our World: The 2030

What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

On September 25, 2015, all 193 member nations of the UN, including the United States, voted unanimously to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and strive to achieve these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 in every country — developing and developed — as national domestic and international policy priority.

Each country, including the U.S., signed on, stating: “... *We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet.*”

Who wrote it?

Millions of people were involved. The Rio+20 Summit held in 2012 (20 years after the first Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro) was attended by 172 governments and over 2,400 representatives of NonGovernment Organizations (NGOs), indigenous groups and other stakeholders from all continents. A major outcome was the establishment of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development to launch the process to write the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals (SDGs) that would address the systemic transformations needed to both end poverty and save the planet.

Through this framework, the UN coordinated the largest, most inclusive and transparent international consultation program in its history over a three-year period. Input was received from thousands of local and regional consultations and surveys held in communities of all sizes in most countries around the world.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with the 17 interrelated Goals and 169 Targets is a voluntary, nonbinding agreement that each nation pledged to carry out, and requires the participation of the people of each country to ensure it is achieved. It says:

“It is ‘we the peoples’ who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community — and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people — and this, we believe, will ensure its success.”

CVSA’s Call for the Implementation of the SDGs in the U.S.:

CVSA calls on the U.S. government to carry out its pledge to implement the 2030 SDGs in the U.S. and form a national SDG Coordinating Council. State and local councils should also be set up to oversee data collection, draw up implementation plans, coordinate policies and monitor the progress or implementation in their state and submit those to the national coordinating body. Make the process public and open.

Members on the councils at all levels should include representatives from nongovernment volunteer organizations, faith-based service organizations, social service administrators, educators, labor leaders, scientists, low-income people’s representatives, family farm leaders, health advocates, legal justice specialists, environmental specialists, religious leaders, credit unions and community banks, small business representatives and other stakeholders.

In the absence of U.S. governmental action to date towards this promise, we call on CVSA member organizations and all other stakeholders to “take ownership” of the SDGs in your work and seek partnerships with others on the local level for the 2030 SDGs. CVSA can provide consultation, coordination and tools to:

- Promote the SDGs in your community through the work your organization is already doing, bring more stakeholders into this discussion and build alliances.
- Raise the demand for the 2030 SDGs to your local government, demanding involvement and accountability.
- Contribute information to include in CVSA’s annual People’s Reports on the SDGs in the U.S. to the the Economic and Social Council of the UN, based on your organization’s direct experience.
- Join CVSA in building this movement to increase our collective strength and transform our world while insuring no one is left behind.

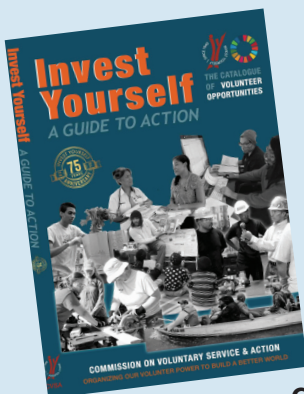
Sustainable Development Goals

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere |  | Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries |
|  | Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture |  | Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |
|  | Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages |  | Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns |
|  | Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all |  | Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* |
|  | Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls |  | Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development |
|  | Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all |  | Goal 15. Protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss |
|  | Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all |  | Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels |
|  | Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all |  | Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for sustainable development |
|  | Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | | |

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Read the whole 35-page document: *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, in the Appendix of *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*, or at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

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CVSA Delegation Participates in III International Convention on Science and Conscience at Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba



Photo: CVSA

Jennifer Perez, CVSA Volunteers Coordinator (center), and Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director (right), presenting their paper during the Symposium on "Universities and Local Inclusive Development." Professor Alberto Enrique Acedo Bravo from the Foreign Languages Department provided the interpretation service for the presentation.

A Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) delegation of six participated in the III International Convention on Science and Conscience, held April 10 through 14, organized by Universidad de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba. The aim of the conference was to boost innovation in sustainable development and improve methods of social and scientific exchange and cooperation to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the socialization of research. Universidad de Oriente is the second oldest university in Cuba with a 75-year history and relations with universities in 39 countries.

The CVSA delegation included Jennifer Perez, CVSA Volunteers Coordinator; Joe Perez, Co-Founder of SAVE – Sustainability in Audio Visual, a member organization of

CVSA; Eduardo Jimenez, Director of Grupo Cajolá in Guatemala, a member organization of CVSA; Renee Larios, Polytechnic School teacher in Pasadena, California and CVSA Advisory Board member; Alia Cornell, CVSA volunteer and pre-med student and Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director.

In the opening assembly, University Rector and President of the Conference Organizing Committee Dr. C. Diana Sedal Yanes discussed the pressing need to channel academic achievements into national priorities. She urged everyone to work hard to develop the integration of legal, social and economic sciences into field-specific solutions in our communities in each of our countries. She called on us to engage our populations in ongoing transformations as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The event brought together, both in-person and virtually, professionals from social and humanistic, medical, educational, economic and business, legal, technical and agricultural sciences from throughout Cuba, Latin America, Europe and North America, each committed to sustainable development and care for the environment.

In order to provide a space for the exchange of knowledge and coordination of projects between universities, institutions and companies committed to sustainable development at local, regional and international levels, the University is committed to hosting this conference every two years.


The CVSA leadership team, Angus and Perez, presented their paper "Bridging the Gap in the U.S.



Photo: CVSA

Dr. C. Milsania Fumero Lopez, Dean of the Foreign Language Department at the Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba (third from left), with CVSA's Jennifer Perez, Susan Angus and Renee Larios; Joe Perez of SAVE (center, kneeling); Alia Cornell of CVSA (far right, second row) and 29 English language students after a morning of lively discussion about the conference with the CVSA delegation. (Not shown from CVSA: Eduardo Jimenez of Grupo Cajolá)

between University Discourse on the 2030 SDGs and the Realities of the Poor Communities Most in Need of Their Actual Implementation.” Their presentation was based on CVSA’s experience with involving college students in CVSA’s work of strengthening grassroots organizations that are actively addressing social, economic and environmental problems in low-income communities.

Joe Perez, Co-founder of SAVE, gave a talk on the global problem of e-waste, its solutions and how SAVE is organizing for change in the audio-video industry. 

Universities Benefit Whole of Society: Cuba’s Example

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me the chance to experience and learn the reality of Cuba, because we know that theory and practice are often different.

Outcome of the III Conference of Science and Consciousness

Cuba, a country totally punished by the imperialist blockade and with all its ongoing struggle for survival, is an exemplary country for humanity. It prioritizes the inalienable rights of its people. Home, health and education are visible rights.


In the week that I was in the country, I saw the commitment of the government and the universities – in this case specifically, the Universidad de Oriente de Santiago de Cuba – to the well-being of the people and development of the communities, which is indisputable; the scientific research that the members of the faculty carry out to contribute to the economic, social and environmental development of the local municipalities is admirable. I had the opportunity to meet and talk to people who had achieved a high level of studies who demonstrated professionalism and treated me as a colleague, without any arrogance.

Thinking now about education in my beautiful Guatemala, it is a country with a national curriculum very well written in theory, but absent in practice. The 36-year civil war was ended in 1996 with the signing of “Firm and Lasting Peace Accords.” An important part of these was the Accord on Indigenous Identity and Rights. With regards to education, this agreement provided for bilingual education respecting indigenous cultural norms. As a result, a series of “ENBI’s” (Escuela Normales Bilingüe Interculturales) were created, one for each ethnic and indigenous group in Guatemala. These were to be secondary schools for teacher preparation promoting Mayan (and other indigenous) language and culture. But in reality, everything remains in theory with little impact on actual change in the teaching in the primary schools. That is true for the National Curriculum as well, as it talks of the need for including indigenous culture – but the public education does not reflect that in practice. Despite the Accords, western-style education is still

being practiced in all the public schools, incorporating culture from the North based on individualism, exclusion and racism.

The experience with people from Universidad de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba and the other community leaders who participated in this conference recharged my commitment to work for the good of my community, an excluded community. This experience also made me see new avenues for carrying out my work – to work for gaining the involvement of the universities in the betterment of our communities on our terms. Currently the universities send the students out to the communities to get practical experience that they pre-define, or to gather data for their own benefit and then leave. I would like to try to turn that on its head and have the universities come and ask us what we need, and then identify student practical work and collaborations that would help us reach the goals we have set for improved lives.

In Cajolá, 40 percent of the community lives in the U.S. due to lack of employment in Cajolá, and 94 percent of those living in Cajolá live below the poverty line. Grupo Cajolá has several excellent economic development cooperative businesses going now, and we have two excellent academic projects. The preschool we have developed practices the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education, which is based on the image of a child with strong potentialities for development and a subject with rights, who learns through the hundred languages belonging to all human beings, and grows in relations with others. Our after school Learning Center has adopted some of that philosophy along with a much broader interpretation of education than can be found in the public school system.

Everything we are trying to develop for the community to be able to raise everyone out of poverty could benefit from the involvement of university people with their resources and skills, but on equal terms, respecting our experience and knowledge, and our rights of self determination towards building solutions. At the same time, the universities could learn from our concrete experiences and help us share what we have accomplished with other communities. I look forward to being able to report on my success in forging this kind of relationship between the community and the university in the future. 

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Remote Area Medical-USA Seeks Expansion of Clinics West of the Mississippi

by Roshan Hargen and Jack Fang



Remote Area Medical (RAM)-USA, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, has been a member of CVSA since 2010. When we learned in December 2022 that they were going to be holding one of their mobile clinics in Glendale, California, not far from CVSA headquarters, we scheduled a visit to the operation. Jeff Eastman, the CEO of RAM-USA, greeted Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, and volunteers Roshan Hargens, Abishek Devarajan and Jack Fang at the entrance, and gave us a tour of all sections of the mobile clinic that was in progress: the dental section, the optometry section, the general medical section and the hearing test section — all staffed by volunteer medical professionals and non-medical staff.

Over 30 million people lack health insurance in the United States, and millions more find many of their health needs are not covered by their insurance. Eastman explained that the mission of RAM-USA is to provide free healthcare to Americans who are underserved and isolated. They hold very well equipped mobile pop-up clinics all around the country. In 2021, RAM held 30 pop-up clinics in 11 states which supplied free medical, dental and vision services. Patients come to these clinics from all over the country, some traveling hundreds of miles to be cared for.

Though a majority of the pop-up clinics have been in the Appalachian region of the U.S., RAM has treated people from all 50 states since 1985. This is made possible by the involvement of over 9,000 RAM volunteers each year — medical professionals and technicians who donate their time, as well as non-medical volunteers who do all the administrative and operational tasks. At each pop-up clinic, a handful of full-time RAM staff members organize and lead these volunteers with their dedication and skill.

At the end of the tour Jack Fang, a dental student at University of California School of Dentistry, explained to



RAM Staff: John Volpe, Chief Development Officer (far left), and Jeff Eastman, CEO of RAM (center, in gray shirt), meet with CVSA organizers and volunteers (left to right), Roshan Hargen, Susan Angus, Jack Fang, and Abishek Devarajan at RAM's clinic in Glendale, California. In the background, are isolation cubicles connected to HVAC to accommodate COVID-19 regulations.

Photo: Chris Cannon, RAM-USA

Eastman, “While free, RAM’s clinics need more volunteers of all types, including those who provide direct care. There are many dental students, like me, who are looking for opportunities to apply the skills we have learned to help our communities.” Fang learned from the RAM staff what was needed to establish a connection between RAM and the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) chapter of the American Academy of Public Health Dentistry, and has now set the relationship in place to the facility matching UCLA dental students and faculty with RAM’s clinic whenever they come to California so that the advanced students with the training will be able to provide cleanings, fillings and other oral healthcare services to RAM-USA patients, supervised by faculty.

RAM Did Not Shut Down During the COVID-19 Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many government-funded community clinics around the country shut down. RAM’s leadership remained committed to keeping the clinics

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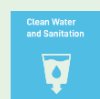
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going, and ensuring the safety of patients, volunteers and staff members at these clinics. RAM leadership implemented new sanitation processes, installed innovative technology to control air quality and ventilation inside clinics and organized patient flow so that all involved would stay safe in accordance with CDC recommendations. They devised new sanitation processes with isolation cubicles for dental care, each with its own HVAC system to remove aerosols and contaminants. Not only does this keep everyone on the outside safe, but it also minimizes the risk to the provider inside the cubicle with the patient. RAM was able to keep the clinics going because of the initiative investment they made in developing a process to keep everyone safe.

Community Hosts Needed for RAM's Clinics In the Western Regions

RAM's mobile clinics continue to make significant impacts in communities across the United States. However, these clinics take several months of careful planning and preparation to make happen. In addition, in order for these clinics to be possible, RAM requires a partnership with a community group to host RAM in their area.

RAM is constantly looking for community members, leaders and local nonprofits to volunteer time and effort to help promote, mobilize and organize a clinic in their area. RAM will provide all of the necessary equipment, units, organization and logistics, but they need a host group in order to successfully plan and execute a clinic. Though RAM partners with host groups around the country, they are especially seeking more hosts west of the Mississippi. Please contact the CVSA office at 323-933-2872 to learn more.



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Photo: SM Y Service Club

Front row, left to right: Kathy Naylor, Santa Monica Y Men's Service Club secretary, with Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, and Jennifer Perez, CVSA Volunteers Coordinator. Back row, left to right: Club members Victor Newlove, Carol Newlove, Jim Casalar and Kingsley Fife.



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An AEC student in discussion on how the 2030 SDGs should be carried out in the U.S.



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Volunteer with CVSA

Organizing Our Volunteer Power to Build a Better World!

Organizer Training & Education

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

INVEST YOURSELF Publications Production

On-the-job training is provided in publications work sessions. If you have skills in writing, editing, proofreading, desktop publishing or Photoshop, you can become one of the trainers!

Community Outreach Events and *INVEST YOURSELF* Distribution

Volunteers participate in information tables and speaking engagements. This is CVSA's most valuable means of connecting with people from all walks of life looking for meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities.

Membership Organization Communications, Consultations and Training

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

Nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

Volunteers learn to give presentations to community groups, coordinate the collection of reports to be submitted to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the UN, do research and develop tools for CVSA member organizations, mobilize community groups, businesses and faith-based groups to build a groundswell of involvement for implementation of the 2030 SDGs in the U.S. On-the-job training provided.

Volunteers are needed at CVSA's headquarters in Los Angeles. You can also volunteer from wherever you are by being an *INVEST YOURSELF* representative, or taking on other special projects and roles. Call us at (323) 933-2872 for more information or to schedule a time to come in or to take an assignment from wherever you are.