

Action for Justice

Human Rights

Read and reflect upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

www.un.org/Overview/rights.html Think of how this declaration reflects your own principles and those of the faith that guides you.

Read CREA's short seminal purchasing power study *In Whose Interest?* conducted in Haiti and published in 1996. You can find it on CREA's website www.crea-inc.org (Click on "Publications and Resources.")

The final discussions on pages 19-25 of *In Whose Interest?* raise questions on development, minimum wage and community tax base that continue to be relevant to communities everywhere.

Read Tracy Kidder's book about Dr. Paul Farmer, [Mountains Beyond Mountains](#). Kidder's exceptional writing skills capture the spirit that inspires Paul and the Partners in Health organization.

Visit the website of Partners in Health: www.pih.org

Katrina Relief Keep abreast of the allocation of government funding for the Katrina Flood relief and the rebuilding of the flooded communities. Recently, FEMA announced plans to evict 150,000 hurricane victims from hotels, without also announcing plans to assist them to find housing.

Who is receiving the bulk of the relief money? Why? Communicate our concerns to our congressional delegation keeps this issue alive in their consciousness and lets them know people are monitoring what is happening to the victims.

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CREA is a faith-based, independent 501(c)3 organization.



*Believing that
the earth is home to all,
CREA facilitates analysis of
human, social and
economic policies from
the perspective of their
effects on human lives,
beginning with the lives
of those who are poor.*

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*With and on behalf of persons
whose human rights have been
violated or disregarded,
CREA offers opportunities
to develop ideas,
economic constructs and tools
to assist in the restoration and
the enhancement of those rights.
Our perspective is "bottom up"
rather than "trickle down",
envisioning sustainable communities
where all ordinary human beings
live and work in dignity
as the source and foundation
of global security.*

CREA Mission Statement



CREA

STARTING POINTS

Center for Reflection, Education and Action, Inc.
Hartford, Connecticut

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CREA 10th Anniversary Issue

BOSTON GATHERING CELEBRATES CREA'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Over 150 colleagues, supporters and friends gathered at Boston College on October 6, 2005 to celebrate CREA's 10th anniversary. Dr. Paul Farmer, co-founder of Partners in Health (PIH) and friend of CREA's director Sister Ruth Rosenbaum, was the keynote speaker at the celebration.

To mark the 10th anniversary, CREA initiated a Karen Spicer Award for Systemic Change, and awarded it to the Partners in Health. Karen, who led Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas for many years, died during the past year. She was, in her own words, "born for social justice," and she expanded services to the most vulnerable members of the Fort Worth community.

In accepting the award for systemic change on behalf of PIH members, Paul saw the challenge for PIH and for all of us to move in the framework of our thinking and acting from charity to human rights, especially social and economic rights. While acts of charity are essential and must continue, we must operate out of awareness that all people have these human rights. People have a right not to go hungry or to be abused. They have a right to a decent wage for their work. "Not to honor hard labor," he said, "is a major form of structural violence."

"For CREA," Paul continued, "this is a first principle." It is in this awareness and in operating out of this human rights framework that PIH and CREA are about the same thing.

Paul told the group of a project involving PIH and Fonkoze, which he called "the bank of the organized poor." To provide credit for the super-poor, the destitute sick, PIH has sought and received funding to build Fonkoze banks in Haiti. Paul proposed extending this project to include CREA, by utilizing the Purchasing Power Index as a tool to measure the impact of this effort on poor people's lives. The gathering responded with enthusiastic applause.

Paul sees all of these combined efforts as part of a global movement for justice and human rights. "Some people, like Ruth and myself, are blessed to be working full-time in this movement. But everyone here," he told the gathering, "no matter what your everyday life may be, you are called to be a part of this movement for social justice."

CREA's director and co-founder, Sister Ruth Rosenbaum, thanked all present for making the mission of CREA possible. Attending the event were many of CREA's present and former Board members, benefactors, volunteers, and colleagues. "CREA is all of us," she said. "But it is not about us. It is about the people whose lives we touch."

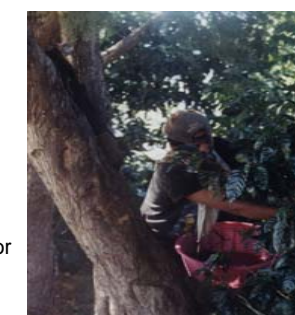
"CREA is all of us. But it is not about us. It is about the people whose lives we touch."



Mexico



Immokalee
Florida



El Salvador



Kenya



Vietnam



Haiti



Guatemala



China

CREA's DIRECTOR BRINGS CONCERNS OF WORKERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GROUPS

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Sister Ruth traveled from Guatemala to Amsterdam in early November for a meeting of the GRI Stakeholder Council. Sister Ruth keeps before the Council the importance of the sustainability of local communities and of measuring the effects of corporations' policies, practices and procedures on the sustainability of those communities. She is also a member of the GRI's Apparel and Footwear Working Group.

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)

Sister Ruth joined the Project Kaleidoscope members in addressing the BSR annual meeting. They described the project, which was initiated by the Walt Disney Company and McDonald's Corporation. It is a collaborative effort of the companies, investor groups and Chinese colleagues to develop a system in supplier factories to bring about sustained compliance with the companies' codes of conduct.

Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Sister Ruth spoke before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China about Project Kaleidoscope. She also described CREA's Purchasing Power Index methodology and standards for determining a Sustainable Living Wage/Income.

ANNIVERSARY REFLECTIONS
Ruth Rosenbaum, CREA's Executive Director



Sister Ruth addresses the tenth anniversary gathering at Boston College. Note the plant in the bucket, and the photo holder on the lower left. Sister Ruth referred to these objects in her talk.

When I addressed the gathering at CREA's October celebration I used three ordinary objects as symbols of CREA and the work we do. The three objects were on each table.

The first was a photo-holder with six photos from our work. The set of photos on each table was different.

All the photos were from our projects, our travels, our encounters with workers in

many countries. The faces in the photos, the persons at work, the families were chosen as signs of the persons and communities around the world on whose behalf we do our work.

The second object was a plant. We chose plants, rather than flowers, as a sign of continuity and moving into the future. Taken home by our guests, they will serve as a reminder of our individual and collective call to be signs and instruments of life-giving.

The third object was a small tin pail or bucket. This bucket was chosen as a symbol of the reality of CREA. We are a small organization, a "drop in the bucket" so to speak. Yet small as we are, we are known internationally for our work. I believe that this is because we recognize that it is okay to be this drop in the bucket, because there are so many other "drops" that the bucket can be filled.

Just as we recognize that we do not work *for* ourselves, we also recognize that we do not work *by* ourselves. There are so many others with whom we work and so many others who make the work possible. If I had had the chance to ask people to wave their hand if they have been on our past or present Board, if they have worked on the reconstruction of CREA House, if they have been part of our corporate responsibility work, if they have been a prayer partner or a volunteer, if they have bought or sold our Fair Trade products, if they had been a donor, etc., almost every hand would have been waving.

We thank all our colleagues in the work for social and economic justice, those in religious communities, the not-for-profit world and those in the business world. The task is large; everyone is necessary. May we each fulfill our part, knowing that "It is not required that we complete the task but neither are we free to abandon it." (Pirkei avot)



Left: Bob Ludwig, tireless CREA Board member, supporter and volunteer, was master of ceremonies for the celebration.



Right: Dr. Paul Farmer (third from right) and members of Partners in Health who attended the celebration.

CREA TEAM COMPLETES GUATEMALA COFFEE SECTOR FIELD WORK FOR THE SUSTAINABLE LIVING WAGE/INCOME STUDY.

CRAFT SECTOR BEGUN IN NOVEMBER

July and August of 2005 found CREA executive director Sr. Ruth Rosenbaum, project team member Aida Montalvo riding up and down the Guatemala hillsides to conduct the field work in the coffee sector. The beauty of the countryside was matched by the beauty of the people, who opened their lives to respond to interviews for CREA's sustainable living wage/income study.



Guatemala project team member Aida Montalvo (seated left) interviews a family. Photo R. Rosenbaum © 2005 CREA Inc.

In November, Sister Ruth, Aida and Tom Hocker of Tree of Life Imports visited villages of crafts workers for pricing and interviews. Aida will complete the data in-put, which will be processed by CREA staff and converted to the Purchasing Power Index (PPI.) The PPI and CREA's standards for housing, clothing, nutrition, education make possible the objective calculation of an income that is "sustainable" and appropriate to human dignity.

As with the El Salvador study, the completed English Guatemala report will be translated into Spanish. Workers, advocates, investors, educators, and corporate managers will then have transparent, objective and replicable data on which to base their dialogues about wages, income and prices. The study is funded by the generosity of CREA donors.

It is our hope that the Guatemala study will help to bring about positive change in the lives of the workers in the three economic sectors. We are encouraged by the testimony of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, who wrote that CREA's 2000 Mexico study was a "tremendous tool, opening dialogues with the corporations and raising the voices of workers."

ANNIVERSARY GREETING FROM THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING GROUP OF EL SALVADOR

It is great and positive news that CREA is celebrating its 10th anniversary. We are talking about a decade of work to have a more humane globalization, more responsible companies, and better living conditions for workers of the poorest countries.

We established our first contact with CREA almost ten years ago, in the aftermath of the Mandarin case. Mandarin was a garment factory that produced for Gap, Eddie Bauer, JC Penney and other brands. The factory fired hundreds of workers when they tried to form a union to fight for better working conditions. Domestically, the conflict was very difficult to resolve: the factory refused to roll back its decision and the Salvadoran government did not guarantee workers' rights.

It was mandatory to appeal to foreign allies and organizations to achieve the return of all workers to their jobs. Workers were finally able to form their union and defend their rights. One of these sister organizations was CREA, whose support was invaluable for the cause of the workers fired by Mandarin.

This struggle marked a milestone in El Salvador. It was the first case in which workers fired for demanding respect for their rights were able to return to the same factory and continue their struggle for better working conditions. Moreover, the case set the first experience of independent monitoring in the world.

Our organization, GMIES, had the honor to be the first to walk this path and to push other sister organizations in Central America to join the effort. All this took place with the resolute support of CREA. Almost ten year after, CREA is still a sister organization and an irreplaceable ally in the crusade toward better living conditions for poor workers, besides being a valuable counsellor for GMIES.

Carolina Quinteros,
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