

LAS NIÑAS
Y
LOS NIÑOS
SOMOS
GRANDES CREADORES
NO PEQUEÑOS GUERREROS



Latin America Working Group

Action at Home for Just Policies Abroad



ANNUAL REPORT 2007



Colombian peace activists from Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres at the LAWG office.

When you are struggling to make human rights matter in U.S. foreign policy, it's no surprise that often you are pushing a boulder up a hill. Or carrying water in a sieve.

Yet sometimes, miraculously, we feel we are making a difference. Lately, after many years of limited gains, we've felt we are having a real impact in U.S. policy towards Colombia. It's still hugely problematic – don't get me wrong – but our work is changing U.S. diplomacy and aid. Other issues face enormous obstacles, but how good it is to see some signs of hope.

As I thought about this, two lessons came to mind.

- 1 The value of persistence. Our message of human rights and social justice is the right message. We need to keep saying it. If it takes many years before anyone listens, keep on. Eventually our words will be heard.
- 2 The value of collaboration. Where we do break through, we do it together. When you are up against a tremendous array of monied interests, established viewpoints and entrenched bureaucracies, only a collective effort has a chance.

Win or lose, we just have to keep trying – together.

Lisa Haugard

Who We Are

The Latin America Working Group serves a coalition of nongovernmental, religious, grassroots and humanitarian agencies. We bring coalition partners together to create advocacy and public education campaigns to encourage U.S. policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean that favors human rights, justice, peace and sustainable development.

The Latin America Working Group (LAWG), a 501(c) 4 nonprofit, carries out advocacy and grassroots education. The Latin America Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF), a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, sponsors educational events and produces publications. In the list of this year's activities, lobbying activities were carried out by the LAWG, and educational activities by the LAWGEF.

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Colombia: Making Human Rights Matter

- Took part in an international mission to investigate killings of civilians by the Colombian army. With US Office on Colombia and the Washington Office on

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS*

AFL-CIO Solidarity Center
Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
Catholic Relief Services
Center for Global Education
Center for International Policy
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Church of the Brethren
Church Women United
Church World Service
Colombia Human Rights Committee
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Crispaz
Cuban American Alliance Education Fund
Disarm Education Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
National Office
Episcopal Church – Washington Office



Photographer Juan E. González López speaks in Congress at opening of LAWGEF's photo show on the travel ban's impact on Cuban-American families.

Latin America (WOLA), we then organized visits by Colombian human rights experts to the State Department and the major House and Senate committees. This resulted in \$55 million in military aid to Colombia remaining frozen over human rights concerns.

- Led a coalition effort to propose and advocate for changes in the Colombia aid package. This resulted in major changes to the aid package in both the House and the Senate, which increased aid to rural communities, including Afro-Colombian and indigenous areas; increased support to victims and for investigating and prosecuting human rights abuses; and cut and placed stronger conditions on military aid and the aerial spraying program.
- Organized with Catholic Relief Services and WOLA a delegation of Colombian church and nongovernmental leaders and the governor of Nariño province to raise attention to the crisis of Colombia's internally displaced people. We also organized support for a resolution regarding Colombia's displaced which was approved by the full House of Representatives.

Cuba: The Right to Travel

- Completed a 20-month national tour of a stunning photo and testimony exhibit, *Love, Loss, and Longing: The Impact of U.S. Travel Policy on Cuban-American Families*. The traveling artistic exhibit showed in over 20 venues across the country, with accompanying receptions and public advocacy events. It is now on permanent display at the Dayton International Peace Museum, Dayton, Ohio.
- Published, with WOLA, a coffee-table-quality photo book advocating an end to the ban on travel to Cuba: *Love, Loss, and Longing*. Based on the traveling exhibit, this book is available on amazon.com and through on-line and on-site bookstores, in addition to the LAWG website.
- Coordinated, with WOLA, Capitol Hill education days for prominent Cuban Americans to educate and advocate for the freedom to travel to Cuba.
- Presented on a panel about educational exchange with Cuba at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) meeting in Montreal, Canada. The 2007 LASA congress

Fellowship of Reconciliation/Task Force on Latin America and the Caribbean
Franciscan Mission Service
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
Global Exchange
Global Ministries/United Church of Christ – Disciples of Christ
Global Rights
Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA (GHRC)
Human Rights First
Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)
International Relations Center
International Labor Rights Fund
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Loretto Community – Latin American/Caribbean Community
Lutheran Office on Governmental Affairs
Lutheran World Relief – Office of Public Policy
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee



Barrier fence cutting through Nogales, a bi-national community on the U.S.-Mexico border.

was held in Canada as a response to the denial of U.S. visas to academics from Cuba to come to the United States to participate in the congress.

Violence Against Women

- Organized support for the Resolution to Condemn Violence Against Women in Guatemala, which was passed by full House of Representatives. Organized support for Senate resolution, which is still pending.
- Helped gather signators for a congressional dear colleague letter from Representative Hilda Solis to Mexican President Calderón encouraging him to make resolving these murders and prevention of violence against women a priority for his administration.
- Coordinated activities, with WOLA, for a delegation of Mexican activists and the mother of a murder victim to update Congress and the public on the lack of progress made by Mexican and Chihuahuan authorities and encourage further action on this issue.

Humane Borders

- Collaborated with immigrants' rights and our partners, the Border Network for Human Rights and the Border Action Network, to host a delegation of 300+ grassroots activists from border and interior communities. During visits to Congress, delegation participants highlighted the need for comprehensive immigration reform and policies and practices that protect the human rights of border community residents and migrants alike.
- Arranged with our border partners public events for two delegations of academics, faith leaders, law enforcement and elected officials from U.S. border communities. In congressional briefings and press events, delegation members outlined recommendations for stronger oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the civil and human rights of border communities and migrants are not harmed in the rush to ensure national security.
- Conducted on-the-ground research and met with Mexican NGOs to examine the human rights implications of Mexico's efforts to reproduce U.S.-style border

Mexico Solidarity Network
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Justice
and Peace Office
National Council of Churches
National Security Archive
NETWORK – A National Catholic Social
Justice Lobby
Network in Solidarity with the People of
Guatemala (NISGUA)
Nicaragua Network/Alliance for Global Justice
Nicaragua-U.S. Friendship Office
North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)
Oxfam America
Peace Brigades International, USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Project Counselling Service
Quixote Center/Quest for Peace
Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism
RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights
School of the Americas Watch (SOA Watch)



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Group of farmers at alternative development project funded by Jesuit organization, CINEP, in Colombia.

security and immigration enforcement efforts along its border with Guatemala and Belize.

Below the Radar: Monitoring Military Aid

- Published *Below the Radar*, a report analyzing the last decade of U.S. military aid trends to the Latin American region, with the Center for International Policy and WOLA. The report was widely reported on in Latin American, U.S. and international media. Presented the report at the University of Chicago and DePaul University and it was featured in a Chicago Public Radio show.
- Participated in a dialogue with the U.S. military's Southern Command, emphasizing our concerns with U.S. support for expansive roles for the Latin American militaries and ongoing human rights abuses by the Colombian military.
- Debunked the Bush Administration's claim that it had doubled aid to Latin America, through distribution of our analysis during President Bush's tour of the region,

resulting in substantial press coverage, including in the Washington Post and other major media outlets.

Guatemala

- Supported coalition efforts in favor of the Commission to Investigate Clandestine Groups (CICIG), which finally was established in 2007. Many hopes are pinned on CICIG to make progress in investigating the shadowy networks linked to corruption, drug trafficking and human rights abuses.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following foundations and organizations for their contributions to the LAWGEF's public education work: the Ford Foundation, the Foundation Open Society Institute (Zug), the Christopher Reynolds Foundation, the Moriah Fund, the General Service Foundation, the Arca Foundation, the Stewart Mott Charitable Trust, the Oblate Charitable Fund, Project Counselling Service, and Oxfam America. Many

SHARE Foundation
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Sister Parish
STITCH
United Church of Christ – Justice and
Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church
United Methodist Church Women's Division
US Jesuit Conference
US/Labor Education in the Americas (US/LEAP)
US Office on Colombia
Voices on the Border
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
Witness for Peace

*This list includes some of the groups participating. Participation does not imply endorsement of all LAWG/LAWGEF efforts. Decisions to endorse statements and campaigns are made on a case-by-case basis by each participating organization.



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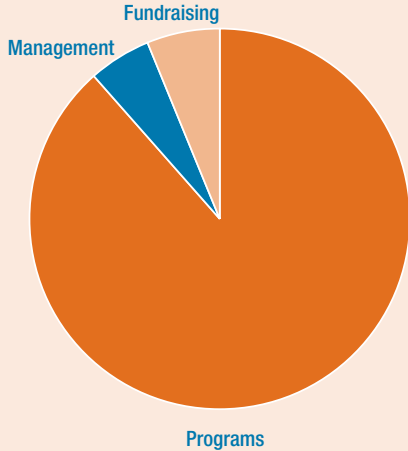
Finances

LAWGEF's income of \$554,792 in 2006 came primarily from foundations as well as from individual donors and nongovernmental organizations. Expenditures for 2006 were \$409,635. Contributions to the LAWGEF for education activities are tax-deductible.

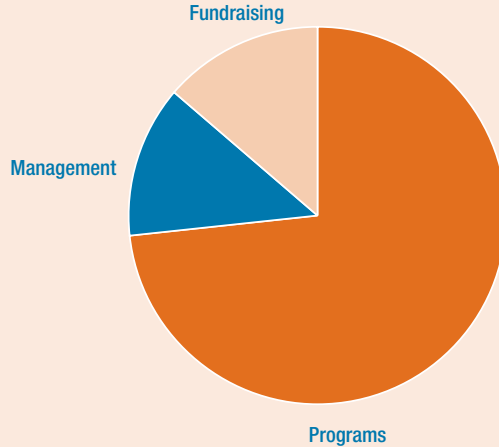
LAWG's income of \$86,036 in 2006 came primarily from contributions by coalition partners, including humanitarian agencies and nongovernmental and religious organizations. Expenditures for 2006 were \$60,700. Contributions to the LAWG are not tax-deductible.

Audited financial statements available upon request.

LAWGEF: Percent of 2006 Expenses Spent on Programs, Management & Fundraising



LAWG: Percent of 2006 Expenses Spent on Programs, Management & Fundraising



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See our website to:

- sign up for our newsletter, *The Advocate*;
- join our email listservs on Cuba, Colombia, and U.S./Mexico border issues, low-volume email alerts which let you know what you can do to call for improved U.S. policy;
- order or view on-line our special reports;
- make a contribution.

Action at Home for Just Policies Abroad

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