



**EDUCACIÓN POPULAR EN SALUD**  
POPULAR EDUCATION FOR HEALTH

# EMERGENCY APPEAL

## EARTHQUAKE 2010: EPES RESPONDS

## REBUILDING PENCO

### EPES STEADFAST ON SHAKING GROUND

When the ground began to shake in southern Chile on February 27, one of the strongest earthquake ever recorded, EPES was already steady on the ground. With nearly 30 years' experience mobilizing local communities to defend the rights of the poor to health and dignity, EPES was immediately on hand to respond with humanitarian aid and community organization.

The EPES Center in Concepción, built in 2005, withstood the quake with only minor damage. Surrounded by collapsed structures on all sides, it quickly became the hub of help and hope.

From day one, EPES could rely on strong, long-standing relations with local individuals, families, organizations and public services in order to get to work. Within 24 hours, the EPES Center had obtained an emergency generator and was pumping water from the building's underground well for some 300 families.

Within days, it had mobilized its network of community health promoters to identify priority needs in neighborhoods still lacking power and water, barricaded against outbreaks of looting and shut down by 18-hour curfews.

The earthquake and its aftermaths have shattered many illusions that Chileans, and the world, hold about this class-divided society fragmented along social, as well as geographical, fault lines.

EPES' response to the catastrophe and its aftershocks exemplifies the assessment of the Chilean Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ACCION) that community efforts are the key to providing "urgent, rapid and creative responses to the social crisis that millions of families are experiencing."

The ground is still shaking, both literally and figuratively, and geologists predict that the aftershocks will continue for months to come. EPES, however, is steadfast in its historic work of building from the ground up, fostering and regenerating spaces for participation and collective action and recovery.

### REBUILDING PENCO, HAND-TO-HAND

Like many coastal towns, the city of Penco – located about 10 km from the EPES Concepción Center – was most vulnerable to the disaster but least prepared for it.

Most families in Penco draw their sustenance from the sea. Even before the catastrophe, one-in-five residents were living in poverty, by government estimate.



*Washed-up fishing boat holds tsunami debris.*



*Health promoter Monica Maldonado shares EPES survey materials with local health clinic.*



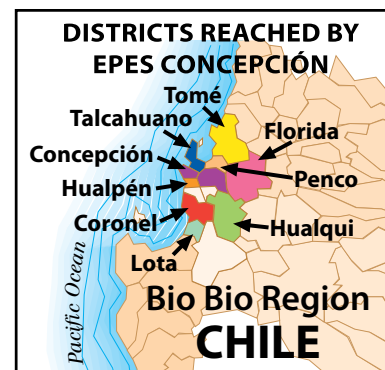
*Karen Anderson and Dr. Lautauró López, director of EPES Concepción, organize emergency relief packets for distribution.*



The earthquake and tsunami washed away their livelihoods, wrecking houses, boats and nets, docks and warehouses, shops and restaurants. Nearly one-third of the workforce now finds itself unemployed.

One thousand houses were flattened or flooded in this city of 50,000 residents. Some of the homeless are living in tents next to the piles of debris on their plots. Others are being housed in temporary shelters. As the cold and rains of the winter in the Southern Hemisphere approach, the need for permanent housing grows more urgent by the day.

Permanent housing for families in Penco is one of the priorities that EPES will focus on over coming months. (The other is to alleviate post-traumatic stress among children by training a network of community health counselors. See EPES' "Helping Children Heal" emergency appeal fact sheet.)





*Destruction and survival in Penco (Photos clockwise, from top left): A home destroyed; This 103-year-old woman survived the tsunami; Sign over the City Hall: "Penco Pulls Itself Up"; Damaged restaurant closed for business*

Reconstruction has already begun on 40 houses and two community centers.

EPES is working with families to repair structures that can be salvaged and to build as many new homes as funding will allow. Community members supply the labor for their own houses and for the houses of those – like the elderly and mothers with small children – who need a helping hand.

To assist the community take stock of its possibilities and its needs, the EPES health team conducted a door-to-door survey of the affected areas.

EPES' previous work in Penco helped to overcome obstacles of fear and distrust, opening doors to help and hope.

It is almost impossible to not be overwhelmed by the scale of the destruction in these poor communities. The EPES vision of community participation and empowerment converts short-term emergency aid and charity into long-term assistance, accompaniment and transformation. Your contribution will help EPES help these communities to rebuild themselves.

Below are the budget details of this emergency initiative and how you can help EPES to bring it to the people who need it now.



### SUMMARY OF FUNDS NEEDED (in US\$)

Repairing 40 Homes .....	\$40,000
Rebuilding Two Community Centers .....	\$12,000
Salaries EPES professional team (4 months) .....	\$14,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>

## YOU CAN HELP! AHA

For more information about EPES' response to the earthquake see:  
[www.epes.cl](http://www.epes.cl) or <http://www.mercycorps.org/karenanderson/blog>

To support this work checks can be made out to AHA and mailed to EPES' US tax exempt counterpart:

Action for Health in the Americas (AHA)  
 c/o Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
 4 Northcrest Drive  
 Clifton Park, NY 12065-2744  
 USA