



Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus

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...to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and promote networking...

Narrative

Strengthening community management of water, a passion that inspires

Since 2006 I have been deeply involved in the work of Instituto Mayor Campesino (IMCA- founded in 1962, a Jesuit centre at the service of rural communities in Colombia) in Valle de Cauca Department in southwest Colombia. This work, focused on strengthening the community's management of water, has become my passion. Throughout the past six years of my involvement with this initiative, I believe I have contributed in many ways, particularly in the development of social organisations. In my experience managing water supplies, particularly of campesino populations, in rural areas at municipal and departmental levels, my colleagues and I have created a system which has become a point of reference for similar subsequent processes consolidated in other parts of the country.

The most significant part of this process has been learning from the knowledge and experiences of those who have worked tirelessly, struggled and committed themselves completely, so that thousands of people (children, adolescents, adults and older people) could gain access to water, at least enough to run their small farms and meet their personal needs.



Notwithstanding the importance of community management of water, instead of strengthening these local organisations, government agencies have for many years been setting a series of regulatory requirements. For the most part respecting these regulations is beyond the capacity of these community water groups and associations, unable to meet the many challenges which need to be resolved at the level of micro-watershed, infrastructure, and organizational and administrative capacity.

It is these and other challenges which have fostered my passion to work with rural water management community groups and associations. Therefore, I have become involved in the process of defending and strengthening community management of water. In this context, IMCA has allowed me to become involved in processes defending and strengthening of community management of water at local, municipal, regional, departmental and ultimately national level.

I believe this interest is not only due to the particularly circumstances at this moment in time. Since I was a child I have been fortunate enough to understand the process relating to the construction and management of water supply; for this reason my work and efforts are focused on the human right to water as proclaimed in by the United Nations; the right to water is and will continue to be the issue of survival and self-sufficiency which significantly affects the well-being of rural communities in my beloved country. Without doubt the challenges facing this process are enormous, but where there is the will, cooperation, empowerment and joint work, each of these challenges will be overcome.

Pedro Antonio Ojeda Pinta
Social Promoter, IMCA



In Fe y Alegría, Brazil we work in defence of the human rights of children and adolescents, an indispensable task in our time, one in which this group is victim of various forms of oppression and violence.

We have worked for many years to ensure the rights of children and adolescents - to quality education, healthcare, housing, and to a clean and safe environment - are fully protected by the law.

It is in seeking to promote the right to a clean and safe environment, we decided to participate in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20 Conference, organised in Río de Janeiro last June. Thirty educators and 160 young people from Fe y Alegría participated in the conference. It was a unique experience, in which thousands of people came together for 10 days to struggle for the right to a clean and safe environment and against the model of consumerism. We took to the streets, participated in heated debates and exchanged experiences. The vision of the poor, who suffer most from the effects of climate change, was clear. We could see a new world was indeed possible and urgent. The atmosphere was very special because we realised that we were not alone. We met people from other works of the Society: social centres from Latin America, universities, the social justice secretary, the Christian Life Community, friends from EcoJesuit We all shared the same prophetic struggle for life. The experience assured us that we are on the right path; that we are not alone and together we form a large network in favour of social justice.

Renato Costa Eliseo
Fe y Alegría - Brazil

Flashnews

Chile - Jesuit Mission among the Mapuche



On the 3rd of January night there was gunfire in Vilcún, in the Mapuche region, close to Temuco. Two old non Mapuche landowners were killed. The attack seems to have happened in the context of the actions claiming for territories during the 5th anniversary of the killing of the Mapuche university student Matías Catrileo. This action, fully condemnable, is leading to a very violent atmosphere against the Mapuche people in general. Extraordinary police and judicial measures for those who took part in the attack are being announced. The Chilean Jesuits who accompany the Mapuche indigenous people from Tirúa have released a declaration on the event. [Read the declaration...](#)

Spain - International migrants' day

The Social Apostolate in Spain published a document for the occasion of the international migrants day. Its title is "A welcoming land". The document offers a global perspective about migration, while reflecting about inclusiveness, social cohesion and citizenship. It is based on a broad involvement with migrants, including perspectives coming from Spain, Africa and



Dominican Republic. The institutions that sign the document defend that "every person has the right to look for better living conditions far from his place of origin, be it in his own country or when he crosses international borders". [Read the document...](#)

Latin America - International Migrants' day



The "Red Jesuita con Migrantes", a network that coordinates the works of the Jesuits with migrants in Latin America and Caribbean has also released a document on the International Migrants Day. It sends a message of hope and solidarity to the 214 million people that are international migrants living outside their countries of origin. Many of them face situations of vulnerability, lack of protection and human rights violations, though they offer their values and capacities to the receiving societies and to their own countries of origin. [Read the document...](#)

Boston - International Jesuit networking



In April 2012, encouraged by the call made by the 35th General Congregation to promote international networking, a group of Jesuits and lay partners from all over the world gathered at Boston College to reflect on International Jesuit networking. The group reviewed the concept and current experience of networking, its relationship to the universal mission of the Jesuits, its spiritual foundations and heritage, its organizational and governance mechanisms, and the challenges that it poses to the present structure and way of proceeding. This was an initiative to promote the reflection on the topic and foster international networking in the Society of Jesus. The [final document](#) has recently been published.

Chicago - International Jesuit Ecology Project



Loyola University Chicago has launched a three-year International Jesuit Ecology Project (IJEP) with a focus on creating an online Living Text that addresses select environmental challenges from an integrated scientific, moral, and spiritual perspective. *Healing Earth: A Living Text*, will be a curricular resource on environmental studies for teachers and students in Jesuit institutions of higher education and secondary schools worldwide. Collaborators on this project come from Jesuit institutions of higher education around the world. [Read more...](#)

Spain - Global map of non-education



To mark the International Human Rights Day, Entreculturas together with the students of the Menesiano School carried out a performance at Plaza de Las Ventas in Madrid to denounce that it is unfair that 61 million children all over the world don't have the right for education. Then, the General Secretary concerning International cooperation, Gonzalo Robles, received the 10.261 signatures collected in the RED CHAIR campaign. Despite the cold, the children gathered early in the morning at the Plaza de Las Ventas in Madrid to give life to the Global map of non education. The huge map was cheerfully painted on the floor and hosted the 61 red chairs carried by 61 people symbolizing the 61 million children all over the world that don't have the right for education. [Read more...](#)

Living Lent in an environment friendly way

Lent begins early this year. Some Congregations are preparing materials to live it in harmony with creation. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus propose using 'Spirituality of Soil: A Lenten Journey from Cosmic Dust to Easter Garden', a five-week program for groups or individuals. Grounded in Lenten themes, Scripture, and the Universe Story, participants will deepen their



appreciation of Mother Earth and the gift of soil. Each week contains a closing activity and suggestions for earth-care action. Users can adapt the material in any way that will deepen participants' consciousness of the interconnectedness of all lives and our part in co-creating a sustainable future. [This program is available free...](#)

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