

WINGS IN THE FIELD

Last summer, WINGS was asked by two organizations, Fundación Rozas Botrán (the philanthropic arm of Botrán Rum) and USAID|Alianzas, to partner with them in a new HIV detection and prevention project targeting male sugar cane plantation workers. As migrant workers, these men are more likely to contract HIV due to their propensity to engage in high-risk sexual behavior during extended periods of geographic separation from their families.

Fundación Rozas Botrán and USAID|Alianzas, with the assistance of several public health organizations, agreed to manage the medical aspects of the screenings, but

requested WINGS' collaboration because of our expertise in providing sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention education through our WINGS for Men Program.

Capitalizing on the opportunity to reach large numbers of men who regularly engage in high-risk behavior, WINGS prepared a series of educational modules and offered assistance with clinic supervision at the

targeted plantations. Beginning in September 2011, WINGS began visiting the plantations to administer three-part modules designed to educate the workers about safe sex and HIV prevention.

This project pairs educational outreach with the rapid HIV testing method, which allows pre-test counseling, testing, post-test counseling, and any related referrals to be completed

within 30 minutes. The rapid test, which is free for any plantation worker who chooses to participate, utilizes simple technology to quickly deliver results, making it less likely for workers to opt out of testing due to time constraints. In the event of a positive result, the patient is re-tested to confirm (as false positives can occur in a small percentage of tests administered), provided with post-screening counseling, and given a referral for treatment. WINGS' supplemental educational courses, attended before the free screenings at each plantation, help introduce the topic of HIV so that workers are not only comfortable with being screened, but also encouraged to take greater control over their reproductive health.

While the HIV-infection rate in Guatemala is only 0.8%, the number is thought to be significantly higher in areas with large concentrations of migrant workers. Although the government has promised to provide sexual health education



and universal access to condoms, very little has actually been done to prevent the spread of HIV. In addition, public HIV testing services offered through the Ministry of Health are accompanied by little to no post-screening counseling and treatment is often mismanaged, inconsistently available, and expensive due to the government's refusal to permit the import and use of low-cost

generic drugs. Because of this, WINGS' work on the sugar cane HIV prevention project is vital to the health and well-being of a highly vulnerable community.

TO READ ABOUT EDUARDO, A SUGAR CANE PLANTATION WORKER WHO RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROJECT, VISIT WINGS' BLOG (WWW.WINGSGUATE.BLOGSPOT.COM).

WINGS provides subsidies for family planning methods, reproductive health education to women, men and teens, and cervical cancer prevention, advocacy for better health care provision, and capacity building for other organizations.

INSPIRATION OVERSEAS

In March, WINGS Youth Educator, José “Pepé” Molina, received a huge surprise when he learned that WINGS was sending him, along with Technical Director, Emma Sunderland, to Istanbul, Turkey to participate in the 12th International Forum on Women’s Rights in Development organized by the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID). One of largest meetings of its kind in the world, it brought together more than 2,000 representatives from 140 countries including NGO leaders and grassroots activists. WINGS was invited to attend as a guest of the Foundation for a Just Society, a group who generously supports our Youth WINGS program.



Pepé arrives at AWID 2012.

For Pepé, the trip was not only his first time traveling outside of Guatemala, but also a chance to learn firsthand about the global struggle for women’s rights. First serving as a volunteer Youth Peer Educator and now in his current position as full-time Youth WINGS Educator, Pepé has developed into a competent leader with a passion for sexual and reproductive health rights. In Turkey, Pepé had the opportunity to share his knowledge and experience in the field and learn from women’s rights advocates working around the world. Recently, we talked with him about his time at AWID:

What did you learn at AWID that made the most lasting impression on you?

I think that being in the middle of it all, and realizing just how many women and organizations are completely dedicated to the advancement and wellbeing of women around the world had a profound effect on me. I would have never thought that such camaraderie and passion existed between people who have never met one another.

How can you use the information you learned at the conference in your own position as WINGS Youth Educator?

I want to share with the kids I work with that men and women are equal. We all have the same rights as human beings. I want to teach them more about women’s rights – the girls so that they know their own rights, and the boys so that they learn to not violate them.

Did you meet anyone at the conference that inspired you?

I met several people who inspired me for different reasons. There was a woman named Audrey, who had autism, but she had started her own organization and is currently serving as the Director. What perseverance she had! I am not sure that could happen right now in Guatemala. There was also a woman from India who was very much involved in the empowerment and development of women. She spoke on the topic, “Activists and Academics Share Experiences - Historical Motivators, Leadership and Strategy”. She presented a history of women’s advancements over the years that blew me away.

I also inspired someone myself. Because I was one of only 20 men at the conference (there were over 2,000 women), a woman from Peru asked me why I was interested in women’s rights, and what made me become a male feminist. She was very surprised to see a young man involved in the discussions. I told her that I hadn’t really thought of myself as a feminist, just as a person who respects the rights of all people. I respect women because my mom is a woman, my grandmother is a woman, my aunts are women, and when I get married, I will be married to a woman, and if she has a daughter, I will be a father to a woman.

Was there a specific topic that you felt was missing from AWID 2012? If you could present something at the next conference, what would you like to teach attendees from your own knowledge and expertise?

I would have liked to hear more about sexual responsibility and reproductive health education, because it is such an important issue for us here in Guatemala.

If I could present at the next AWID Conference, I would teach that gender equality without discrimination involves working with men and boys too, like WINGS does. It is only through discussion with both sexes that can you truly help people understand and support women’s rights and gender equality.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

This experience has been unforgettable. I learned so much, and am excited to put it all into practice with my work at WINGS. I’m very proud to belong to the WINGS family, working for the equality of women, men and youth – something no other organization I encountered at AWID does. I hope I represented us well.



Using a headset, Pepé is able to hear all of the sessions translated into Spanish.



Pepé shares his ideas and learns from women all over the world.

SUSTAINER SPOTLIGHT

One of the most powerful ways to support WINGS is to join our Sustainer Monthly Giving Program. By committing to monthly donations, you are helping to build a stronger financial foundation for our work delivering family planning services and reproductive health education to Guatemalans. To become a WINGS Sustainer, e-mail info@wingsguate.org for more information.

To show our appreciation for our WINGS Sustainers, we are spotlighting George Cresswell, an Australian national with a long history of supporting WINGS.

How did you first hear about WINGS?

I was told about WINGS by its founder, Sue Patterson, shortly after the organization was created. Sue and I had met in Central America in 1980.

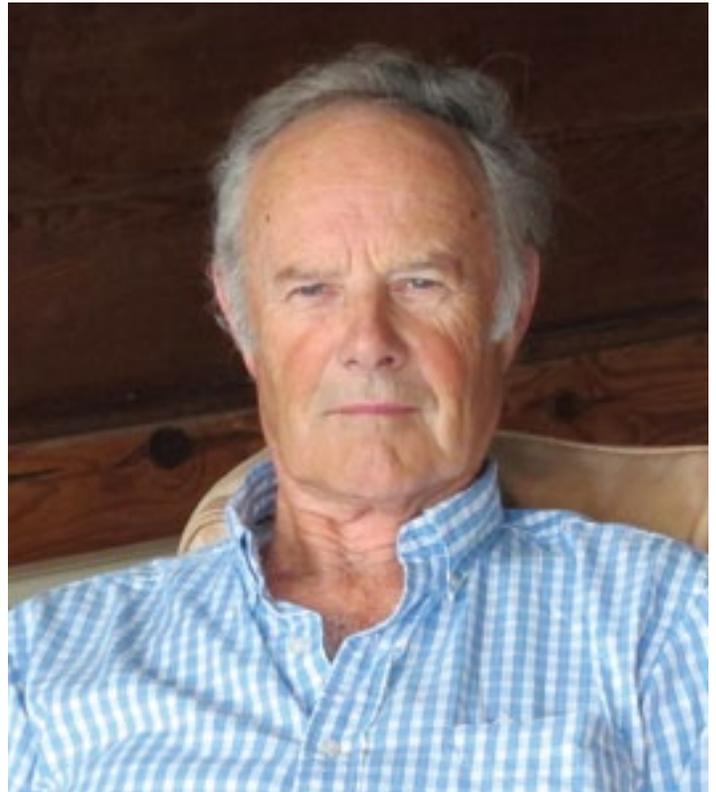
What inspired you to become a WINGS Sustainer?

I visited Antigua, Guatemala for several weeks in 2007 and, during my visit, I had the opportunity to learn more about WINGS. I participated in a WINGS clinic being run in the mountains by a volunteer. She was a remarkable lady, I must say, giving several months of her time each year at her expense.

The treatment of women's health is often wanting in so-called first world countries; the need for adequate women's health care in developing countries is, stated simply, extreme.

Would you like to say anything to other supporters of WINGS that are thinking of becoming Sustainers?

A monthly donation can be a very small fraction of the money that you (and I) spend on what are probably frivolous things – a cup of overpriced coffee, tickets to a movie, or a dinner out on the town – but make a BIG difference to people who benefit from WINGS' programs. The people at WINGS, employees and volunteers, will make sure that your donations go to help Guatemalans in need.



Mr. Cresswell helps to provide WINGS with a strong financial foundation by being a WINGS Sustainer.

DONATE NOW

Your generosity allows WINGS to provide Guatemalan women, men and adolescents with access to sexual and reproductive health education and family planning services.

Help WINGS continue this important work by donating online at www.wingsguate.org or send a check made out to WINGS to our U.S. office at:

793 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.

HAVE A USED CAMERA?

WINGS is in need of digital cameras and memory cards in order to equip our field staff as they document their work across Guatemala. If you have a gently used digital camera and/or memory card available, please contact info@wingsguate.org about making an in-kind donation today. Remember, your donation is tax-deductible and WINGS will provide you with a tax-deductible receipt.

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