

PBI-USA Takes New Direction

◆ By Alex Hildebrand, PBI-USA National Coordinating Committee Member (NCC) and Chair of Personnel Committee

There are exciting new faces, a new strategic plan, and new energy at PBI-USA! In April 2008, after major evaluation and study, PBI-USA's National Coordinating Committee (NCC) decided to reorganize the Country Group staff and structure at PBI-USA. Our aim is to significantly improve our performance as a Country Group (1 of 16 internationally) and to offer even higher levels of support for the critical non-violent activism of Peace Brigades International Field Projects—currently in Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Nepal and Indonesia.



Hughes-Fraitekh

After undertaking an extensive national search, we hired **Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh** to take over the position of Executive Director of PBI-USA. Katherine has 20+ years experience working in the fields of non-profit management, human rights, international and humanitarian affairs, fundraising and development, media, and political advocacy. She earned a Master's Degree in International Affairs from American University in Washington, D.C., with specializations in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at AU and Middle Eastern Studies at Georgetown University. Although new to PBI-USA, she

has worked with a number of groups modeled on PBI's philosophy of non-violent third party intervention and peace education. We are so happy to have her on board!

Katherine will work out of an office in Albuquerque, New Mexico, while continuing to run the office in Washington, D.C. This will allow better nationwide coverage, as there are plans for increased travel, recruitment, organization and education throughout the U.S. Katherine recently visited PBI-Mexico to conduct an informational tour of our Field Project there and to experience directly the work of PBI on the ground. Since joining PBI-USA in June, Katherine has already begun a number of new initiatives, including recruiting and hiring two highly qualified Program Associates (with the help of NCC members) to staff the Washington, D.C. office.



Sullivan

Claire Sullivan earned a Master's degree in International Affairs from Kean University in New Jersey, has worked with Human Rights First and traveled to Costa Rica. She will start work with PBI-USA on September 1, focusing on support in the areas of finance, development and fundraising, and political networking.

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Speaking Tours to Highlight PBI's work in the Field

As part of PBI-USA's goal to increase the visibility and awareness of the work of Peace Brigades International in the United States, as well as increasing volunteer recruits and supporters, PBI-USA is planning a series of major Speaking Tours over the next year. PBI-USA plans to highlight all Field Project countries, as well as cover the U.S. geographically.

With these Speaking Tours, PBI-USA plans to raise funds, as well as awareness. All funds raised will be divided between the Field Project featured and PBI-USA. **For each tour, PBI-USA will be forming local organizing committees consisting of PBI supporters, as well as academic, community, faith-based and business partners. We hope you'll be willing to serve on one of these local organizing committees!** Committees will be supported by our Speaking Tour Coordinator, Suzanne Morrell, as well as Program Associate Theresa Mutter.

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Peace Brigades International (PBI)
is a non-governmental organization
which protects human rights and pro-
motes the nonviolent transformation of
conflicts. When invited, we send teams
of volunteers into areas of repression
and conflict.

Field volunteers accompany human
rights defenders, their organizations and
others threatened by political violence.
Perpetrators of human rights abuses
usually do not want the world to witness
their actions. The presence of volun-
teers backed by a political support
network helps to deter violence.

We create space for local activists to
work for social justice and human rights.
PBI's volunteers are currently working in
Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Nepal,
and Indonesia.

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◆ Speaking Tours to Highlight PBI's work in the Field, continued from page 1

The 2008-2009 Speaking Tour series will kick off with a mini-tour **on September 23, hosted by the University of Maryland**, with university and community co-sponsors, **celebrating International Peace Day** and feature Jamie Wick, PBI-Mexico In-Country Coordinator.



PBI-Indonesia members taking a rest break during strategic accompaniment with client outside of Jayapura—Indonesia. Photo Courtesy of Tiffany Easthom.

The West Coast PBI-Indonesia Tour features PBI-Indonesia Director Tiffany Easthom as keynote speaker. The schedule for this tour is: Seattle, WA, on September 30; Portland, OR, on October 1; Los Angeles, CA, on October 2; Santa Cruz, CA, on October 3; and San Francisco, CA, on October 4. Tiffany will present in university and high school classrooms, as well as hold evening speaking events in each city. These events will include food, art and/or music and a presentation focused on the ongoing work and human rights issues in Indonesia, with a specific focus on Papua.

The Latin America Human Rights Defenders Impunity Tour will visit the East Coast in **early March 2009** and will feature human rights defenders from among the organizations we accompany in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia. The delegation is planned to include a representative from the Colombian organization ASFADDES (the Association of the Family Members of the Detained and Disappeared), two individuals from the Guatemalan organization OASIS (Organization to Support an Integrated Sexuality to Confront AIDS), and a representative from the Mexican organization AFADEM (the

Association of the Family Members of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Violations in Mexico). The delegation will be speaking on the issues of impunity, militarization and other human rights issues facing their respective countries. The tour will be hosted by various academic and community partners in the United States and Canada.

In late March, Nepal will be in the spotlight, as recently returned field volunteer, Krystal Mason, speaks about the amazing “restructuring” that Nepal is undergoing. Its citizens decided to replace its traditional monarchy and move toward a parliamentary system earlier this year. Krystal will also



PBI Volunteer Krystal Mason during a protective accompaniment in Nepalgunj, Banke District—Photo Courtesy of Krystal Mason.

discuss the ongoing human rights challenges and PBI's role in Nepal, as well as the work of the organizations PBI protects. The schedule for this tour has not yet been finalized, but will probably include cities in

the Midwest such as Chicago, Indianapolis and St. Louis, as well as North-eastern cities such as Philadelphia, Boston and upstate New York.

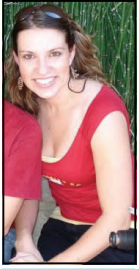
Late spring or early summer 2009, PBI-USA plans to feature a **tour that will head across the Southwest and Southern U.S.**

By Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh

Support the Speaking Tours

We need your support to make the 2008-2009 Speaking Tour series a success! The Tours will raise funds for PBI's Field Projects and the peace education, volunteer recruitment, and advocacy work of PBI-USA. Most importantly, the Speaking Tours will allow human rights defenders and staff on the ground to share their stories about their work face to face with American audiences.

If you'd like to help, please contact us at: (202) 232-0142 or mail your contribution back to us in the attached envelope denoting *Speaking Tours* in the memo line.



Mutter

Theresa Mutter earned a Master's degree in Public Diplomacy from the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Communication. She speaks fluent German, French and Spanish and previously volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Guatemala. She

began work with PBI-USA on August 1 and is supporting our work in the areas of volunteer recruitment and services, alumni support, major donor development, outreach, and media communications. All three staff will attend the PBI General Assembly in Hamburg, Germany, in November.

This skilled, motivated and visionary team will implement PBI-USA's new five-year strategic plan which prioritizes capacity-building of PBI-USA regarding development and fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and support and organization of a volunteer alumni group. This will be accomplished through a significant increase in PBI-USA's outreach activities and a concerted communication plan to raise visibility and awareness of PBI's work and mission. PBI-USA will continue to maintain its high-level political support network and grassroots Emergency Response Network (ERN), which is critical to the Field Projects during times of intense conflict and danger for the human rights defenders we accompany. The new executive director, in collaboration with the NCC, has developed specific goals and outcomes for the upcoming year, including tripling the number of volunteers recruited and deployed to Field Projects, doubling the number of PBI supporters in the United States, and doubling the overall organizational budget, allowing significant more funds to go to Field Projects to expand the capacity of our field staff. We are planning a number of exciting new initiatives in the coming year and we'll be asking you—the heart of PBI—to get involved, wherever you can, to help us achieve success!

Greetings from the New Executive Director

I just want to take a minute to say hello and send warm greetings to all our PBI-USA supporters. My first two months with PBI-USA have been incredibly busy and rewarding. I've already met a number of you, in person or over email or the phone. I've gotten lots of heart-felt support, wisdom, and feedback regarding your hopes and dreams for Peace Brigades International and I want you to know I will take this input seriously as we work to make PBI-USA a leader among the 16 PBI Country Groups. This will allow us to substantially increase support to our Field Projects and expand our unique work, which I was able to experience first-hand during my recent trip to PBI-Mexico. To a person, the PBI Human Rights Defenders that we accompany spoke passionately about how PBI has literally kept them alive, while empowering them and giving their work critical support and credibility through our international presence and networks.

I'm looking forward to working with them, as well as getting to know and work with many of you, on our common goals and objectives over the coming months and years. I'm finding an incredibly strong commitment from Peace Brigades International supporters to the values of peace and justice—accomplished through creative non-violent strategies. I'm also excited about the high quality of our new staff. I look forward to sharing many joyful and fun times with all of you in this inspirational and important work. What an amazing and exciting path forward—working as a dedicated team to transform the world into a more peaceful place. I truly believe in Margaret Mead's saying *"Never Doubt That a Small Group of Thoughtful, Committed Citizens Can Change the World. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."* Let's do it together!

Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh

PBI-USA would like to thank you for your continuous support:
The Herb Block Foundation
Overbrook Foundation

PBI volunteer, Juan Carlos La Puente, accompanies a family in the humanitarian zone Nueva Vida, Cacarica—Colombia. Photo Courtesy of PBI.



Field Projects Updates

Colombia

PBI has had a team of volunteers in Colombia since 1994, operating in the four regions of Bogota, Barrancabermeja, Medellin and Uraba. PBI-Colombia provides protective accompaniment to peace communities and human rights defenders working for justice and peace.

Story from the Field

PBI Colombia continues to express its concern for human rights defenders' physical integrity and their ability to work in Barrancabermeja, the main city in the Magdalena Medio region, after evidence of repeated threats. On June 18, 2008 the following organizations again received a death threat, branding them "collaborators with the guerrillas:" the OFP, CREDHOS, the Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley, ADECO4, the Workers' Trade Union and the Association of Displaced People Resident in the Barrancabermeja Municipality. The message, signed by the "United Black Eagles of Colombia," declared these organizations its "enemies" and "military targets". These threats and attacks caused the displacement of OFP and CREDHOS leaders, a direct attack on their ability to work. Recently, on July 21, 2008, a new leaflet aimed at the same organizations was distributed by hooded men who travelled by motorbike around various neighborhoods of Barrancabermeja. This leaflet, signed by "Don Mario—Commander of the Heroes of Castaño" announced that this group "has decided to take Barrancabermeja by fire and sword to pacify it," stating that this operation "takes effect on 1 July this year" and declaring "the guerrilla movement and the left-wing human rights organizations military targets."

From: Focos de interés, July 2008, PBI-Colombia.



Guatemala

PBI began its first protective accompaniment in Guatemala in 1983. The current team is made up of 11 members from around the world, operating out of Guatemala City. The team currently accompanies nine different groups and continues to hold meetings with Guatemalan authorities, the diplomatic corps and civil society organizations.

Story from the Field

PBI-Guatemala accompanies the Movement of Campesino Workers (MTC), an entity of the Social Pastoral Office of the Diocese of San Marcos, and its founder, Julio Archila. The MTC is made up of associations of campesino communities working to defend their labor rights. In July, PBI Guatemala accompanied Julio Archila and his son, Antonio, to the High Criminal Labor Court of Malacatan, San Marcos, where the official dismissal of the robbery case against him and his son was awaited. The anticipated hearing for Julio was cancelled at the last moment. This was the third time that the Tribunal cancelled the hearing at the last moment. At the time of publication of PBI Guatemala's Monthly Information Package for July, the conclusions of the judge were made known with criminal proceedings suspended in favor of Julio and Antonio.

From: Monthly Information Package-Guatemala, Number 58, PBI-Guatemala.

Indonesia

PBI currently maintains three sub-teams within Indonesia, located in Jayapura, and Wamena in Papua, and in the capital city Jakarta, on the island of Java, with a current total of 14 volunteers from around the world.

Story from the Field

A man was shot dead in Wamena on August 9, 2008, at a celebration of United Nations Indigenous People's Day, as reported by eye witnesses, including PBI client JAPH&HAM (Advocacy Network for Upholding Law and Human Rights). Directly after speeches calling for international attention, four flags were raised, including the Morning Star flag currently banned as a separatist symbol. As the police moved to bring down the flags, unidentified bystanders are said to have thrown stones at police, who fired warning shots. Opinus Tabuni, 45 years old and unarmed, was reportedly standing near the group raising the flags and was shot at close range. It is not yet clear who fired the shot, but the police confirmed that members of the Polri (Indonesian Police Force), TNI (Indonesian Military Force), Kopassus (Special Forces Command), and various intelligence agencies were present. The bullet has been taken to a forensic laboratory in Makassar for analysis. On the night of August 10, 2008, large numbers of the

non-indigenous population sheltered at the Kodim (Military Command for a District Area) and Polres (District Level Police) revolted. This was in response to rumors of revenge attacks planned for the following morning. Rumors were spread by text messages and by police who patrolled Wamena town in vehicles, taking members of the non-indigenous population to the Kodim and Polres. Around midnight, police began searching houses and made some arrests. Many shops closed and citizens state that they are frightened. Some authorities describe the situation as not yet safe. Members of the organizing committee for the event at which the flags were raised have expressed concern for their own safety. PBI client JAPH&HAM has asked the family of the victim to stay calm and to discourage their community from making war against state authorities or the non-indigenous population.

From: Bi-Weekly Update, 14 August 2008, PBI-Indonesia.

Mexico

PBI has maintained a group of internationals in Mexico since 1999. PBI-Mexico provides protective accompaniment to numerous human rights organizations and offers security training workshops for NGOs, human-rights leaders and threatened community members. The current team consists of seven members from around the world operating out of the state of Guerrero.

Story from the Field

During July 12-27, 2008 the National Attorney General's Office (PGR) began excavations in Atoyac de Álvarez, Guerrero, as part of the search for remains of over 500 disappeared persons from the Dirty War (1970's). Excavation work began in the area of the closed military barracks. Claudia Bisso, member of the Argentinian Team of Forensic Anthropology (EAAF), participated on behalf of the Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Violations (AFADEM), along with María Sirvent Bravo-Ahuja, Coordinator of the Program on Transitional Justice from the Mexican Commission for the Defense

and Promotion of Human Rights. There were several disagreements between the PGR and AFADEM regarding the procedure: Claudia Bisso was not allowed to take pictures during the procedure and investigators' requests to use large machinery were denied by the AG stating that resources were not available, nor was it possible to change the methodology. In the end, excavations proceeded with shovels and picks, one percent of the territory was uncovered, and nothing significant was found. At this point it is unclear when the excavations will continue and whether or not a different methodology will be used.



A major documentary, produced by Witness and covering the activities of AFADEM over the last several years, was screened on August 24 on the anniversary of the disappearance of one of the groups' founding members, Tita Radilla. 100+ community members attended the showing, as well as representatives from national and international human rights organizations. The event was very emotional, since the film included stories from many in the audience about their missing loved ones. Additionally, community members toured excavated areas and tied symbolic red ribbons with names of the missing individuals around trees. The evening was also attended by PBI-Mexico In-Country Coordinator, Jamie Wick, Helen Yuill, International Communications Officer, PBI International Office, and PBI-USA Executive Director, Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh.

From: PBI-Mexico.

Nepal

PBI has accompanied human rights defenders in Nepal since 2006. The current team, made up of members

from around the world operates out of Kathmandu. The team currently accompanies Advocacy Forum (AF) and Conflict Victims' Committee (CVC) and hopes to enhance the security of human rights defenders in Nepal through advocacy, networking and protective accompaniment.

Story from the Field

In collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), PBI has been monitoring Tibetan protests since the last week of June 2008. When PBI first started monitoring the Tibetan protests, both the protestors and police involved were relatively peaceful and calm. However, lately the protests have become more violent, with kicking and punching observed on both sides, from the Tibetans and the police. PBI's role in these demonstrations is to observe and report incidents to the proper authorities. On July 1, 2008, PBI received word from various contacts that a group of about 50 Tibetans were on a march from Kathmandu to the Nepal-Tibet border. Once the Tibetans reached the border, they would try to cross over in a protest to save Tibet. Before the day of the protest march, the Tibetans were camped in the hills near the Tatopani border, delaying their march because they expected to be prematurely stopped by authorities. The PBI field team failed to reach the protest site in time because of a major landslide that blocked all traffic going towards the border, but the Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON) monitors managed to be present at the protest site. HURON observed that the Nepal police had stopped the Tibetans about 8 kilometers from the border because they were planning to cross without proper documents. When the marchers pressed on, the police arrested them. The entire process was peaceful and no injuries were reported. The police escorted the Tibetans back to Kathmandu, and they were released that same night.

From: Namaste Monthly Newsletter, July 2008, PBI-Nepal.

Note: Excerpts taken with expressed permission from publications of PBI Field Projects in Colombia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico and Nepal.

PBI-USA Aiming to Increase Volunteer Recruitment, Mentoring, and Alumni Group Efforts

By Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh and Theresa Mutter

New Volunteer Recruitment

PBI-USA is gearing up to meet its goal of tripling the number of volunteers recruited, accepted, and deployed to Field Projects over the coming year. Numbers of volunteers coming from the United States, as compared to other PBI Country Groups in Europe, Canada, and Australia, have dwindled in recent years and it is our goal to reverse this trend. PBI-USA currently has seven volunteers deployed in the field—Krystal Mason and Chaya

Shapiro in Nepal, Emily Nelson, Amanda Hooker, Lisa Kunkel and Jacob Blickenov in Colombia, and Frank Tool, recently deployed to Indonesia.

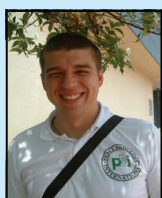
Tool, 28, from Martinez, CA, was selected by PBI-Indonesia earlier this spring and completed the required four-month long language training in Indonesia before returning to the



Frank Tool

U.S. to await approval of his visa. He recently received the go ahead and deployed to Indonesia on August 15, 2008. Frank is greatly enjoying his experience already and thinks that “the human rights workers we have the opportunity to support are some of the bravest people on the planet.”

PBI-USA recently also had three potential volunteers selected for Field Project trainings—Jessica Fujan will be attending training for PBI Guatemala in October, Diego Benitez will be attending training for PBI Colombia in September and Gretchen Begley is hoping to attend training with PBI Colombia in February 2009. There are a number of other volunteer



What Makes a PBI Volunteer?

◆ Current PBI-USA Volunteer in Colombia reflects on application experience

My name is Jacob Blickenov. I am 27 years old and originally from Cincinnati, Ohio. I graduated from Earlham College with a degree in Peace and Global Studies, and joined PBI’s Colombia Project in early March.

It has been many years since I first heard about Peace Brigades International. I do not remember exactly how I found out about PBI, but I do remember joining the Emergency Response Network (ERN) and receiving grassroots emergency activations from the field. I was especially attracted to PBI’s projects in Latin America, but I was still in college and did not yet meet all of the requirements to be a volunteer. However, I stayed in contact with PBI through reading the PBI-USA newsletter, checking the website, and donating money. After college I attended an Orientation Weekend in Washington D.C. and got pretty excited about actually becoming a volunteer, but still needed to improve my language skills in order to apply.

Finally, in August of 2007, I felt like I was ready and turned

in my application. The application process for the Colombia Project is long, including a telephone interview, a series of workbooks, and finally a week long training/final evaluation period in Spain. I was really nervous about the week in Spain, but after the first few days I felt comfortable with all the participants.

It turned out well and I was accepted into the program, and although the application process was long, I felt prepared when I got here. I really enjoy the work that we do here in Colombia. Talking to the people that we accompany and seeing how much they value our presence is really heart-warming.



PBI-USA Volunteer Jacob Blickenov with local children in Colombia.
Photo Courtesy of Jacob Blickenov.

candidates interested in applying as well. PBI-USA is holding two orientation weekends in October 2008; one in San Francisco, CA from Oct 4-5 and one in Washington, DC from Oct 25-26.

If you or someone you know might be interested in volunteering with PBI (acceptance by Field Projects through application process is required), please contact Theresa Mutter, PBI-USA Program Associate for Volunteer Recruitment and Services: theresa@pbiusa.org,

Volunteer Mentor Program

As part of our goal to significantly increase the number of volunteer recruits, PBI-USA is upgrading the support services that we offer our volunteers. The Volunteer Mentor Program, co-developed and coordinated by former PBI volunteers Karen Brandow and Dave Schenck, will be up and running again this month. The program was instituted a few years ago, but we hope to reactive it with even more success in the future. It includes a group of past volunteers—Serena Cosgrove, Mary Link, Zwanet Hamming, Joe Sperry, and Steve Molnar, as well as Karen and Dave—who have committed their time to the program and have undergone targeted training on mental health and resource issues. They will be appropriately matched with new volunteers and will mentor and support them before, during, and after deployment to the Field Projects.

As many of us who have experienced service on the ground in a conflict region know, it is very valuable to be able to debrief, share feelings and experiences, and have support from someone who has experienced similar situations and is trained to help support us upon return to our home country.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Volunteer Mentor Program, please contact Karen, Volunteer Mentor Program Coordinator, at: Kbrandow2@aol.com.

Volunteer Alumni Group

We have had requests over the years from a number of PBI field volunteer alumni to create a more structured national Volunteer Alumni Group to organize involvement and leadership in PBI-USA programs and projects, as well as to facilitate connection and sharing with each other.

Andrew Miller, former PBI-USA Co-Director and PBI Colombia volunteer, is a highly respected and active alumnus who has graciously agreed to be the Chair of a new ad-hoc Steering Committee to organize and develop the new Volunteer Alumni Group. Theresa Mutter, PBI-USA Program Associate, will provide staff support. The group plans to play an active role in volunteer recruitment, mentoring, fundraising, orientations, speaking tours, house parties, peace education training, and other social and educational events. On July 27, 2008, Andrew hosted a well-attended alumni event for DC-area supporters at his new home with hopes of more to follow. Angie McCarthy, NCC member, plans to host the next gathering in the fall. Our hope is that the alumni group will be the beginning stage of development of PBI-USA regional chapters over the coming years.

If you'd like to get involved in the Steering Committee, please contact Andrew Miller at: brigadista55@hotmail.com or (202) 423-4828.

Upcoming Orientation Weekends

October 4-5, 2008
in San Francisco, CA

October 25-26, 2008
in Washington, DC

To register and for more information, please contact Theresa Mutter at: theresa@pbiusa.org or call (202) 232-0142.

Upcoming Deadlines

Field Project applications due:
Indonesia—September 15, 2008
Nepal—December 1, 2008

For additional deadlines and more information, please contact Theresa at: theresa@pbiusa.org or call (202) 232-0142.

PBI-USA Delegates To Attend PBI General Assembly

◆ International Gathering looks to Improve Organization

PBI-USA will send five delegates to the upcoming Peace Brigades International General Assembly (GA) held in Hamburg, Germany, from 16-21 November, 2008. National Coordinating Committee (NCC) members Angie McCarthy and Sarah Simonson will attend the GA, alongside PBI-USA office staff, who will serve as observers. The Herb Block Foundation is generously supporting this involvement.

The GA is the highest decision-making body of Peace Brigades International and provides an important forum for exchanging information and ideas between Country Groups. The role of the GA is to take decisions on the following:

- The strategic direction of PBI over the following three years;
- Approval of the renewal of field Projects' mandates;
- Changes to PBI's Principles, Mandates and Bylaws; and
- Review of financial reports.

The GA takes place every three

years and is scheduled at a time when different parts of the organization can all meet and interact. It helps delegates to understand the role of the international secretariat and the PBI International Council. International Council members are based all over the world and usually meet only in person at the time of the General Assembly.

For a comprehensive summary of the 2008 GA please await a report in our upcoming Spring Newsletter.

Discussion at the 2005 General Assembly in London. Photo Courtesy of PBI-UK.



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