

**CONCERN AMERICA VOLUNTEER OPENING: 2009 COLOMBIA**

**PROJECT TITLE:** "Integrated Community Health Project, Colombia"

**POSITION:** Advanced Medical Professional

**LOCATION:** Departments of Antioquia and Chocó, Colombia

**STARTING DATE:** Anytime

**DURATION OF POSITION:** Two years (renewable)

**Concern America:** Concern America is a unique nonprofit, nonsectarian, nongovernmental development and refugee aid organization - **unique in that its philosophy emphasizes the transference of skills and thus the creation of opportunity (seen as a more permanent solution to ending poverty), not just the placement of resources into impoverished regions.** Since its establishment in 1972, Concern America has worked in fifteen countries on three continents. Through training and accompaniment provided by experts from a variety of disciplines (medicine, education, agriculture, water engineering, business, etc.), Concern America has made a measurable difference in the lives of more than a million people in thousands of communities. Concern America has earned a solid reputation for working with formally encamped refugees, internally displaced peoples, and other materially poor communities in "developing" countries. To carry out its mission, Concern America has eight part-time and five full-time employees, more than 200 volunteers in the U.S., and twenty field personnel in various countries.

**Project Background:** In response to the devastating violence and displacement of families and communities in Colombia, caused by the ongoing civil war in that county and resulting in a severe humanitarian crisis, Concern America was invited to provide health promoter training and to accompany local health care workers in order to develop a sustainable, grass roots health/public health program operated at the local level. Many of the communities in question do not wish to be part of the ongoing armed conflict in Colombia. Despite the ongoing civil war in Colombia, and in response to the severe lack of basic health/public health infrastructure in the region, Concern America began work in March 2004.

In an effort to help meet the immediate, emergency health needs of the region, as well as set up a long term health/public health infrastructure that will eventually be administered and run by the people themselves, the project has been designed with five major focuses: **(1) Health Training:** basic and advanced health promoter training, including both curative care and also the most essential public health and sanitation measures; **(2) Women and Children:** addressing the needs of children and women, including pregnancy and delivery, basic reproductive health care, domestic violence, and other human rights; **(3) Access to Medicines:** establishment of essential medicines and medical

supply warehouse for health promoter support; **(4) Training/Formation of Team of Appropriate Technology (AT) Promoters:** basic and advanced training of local appropriate technology leader and training of some health promoters to also become appropriate technology promoters in various communities; **(5) Community Organization:** training local communities in organizational, administrative, and accounting skills and in the "formation" of viable community health and other service committees or organizations.

The first group of health promoters and midwives in this region was recruited and began training in 2004. The Concern America field personnel currently working on the project are: a Physician's Assistant with many years of experience working in health and development in war-torn regions of Latin America is the Project Coordinator; a Medical Doctor, and a Logistics Coordinator.

### **Qualifications:**

- \* Broad based medical background; a medical professional with diverse experience (MD, PA, NP);
- \* Experience in public health or community health;
- \* Experience in teaching and training with an interest in community work;
- \* Willingness to adapt to changing needs of the program and to learn new concepts along with the health promoters in order to fulfill needs expressed by them;
- \* Ability to learn and improvise in the absence of reliable labs or good hospitals;
- \* Ability to work with and accept the decisions of community leaders and the local health workers;
- \* Ability to work as part of a team and great organizational skills;
- \* Fluency in Spanish and an appreciation of cultural diversity;
- \* Training and/or experience in adult popular education highly desirable;
- \* Familiarity with Colombian history and current events;
- \* Minimum of two--year commitment;
- \* Valid driver's license;
- \* Humility, flexibility, maturity, a sense of humor, responsibility and ability to motivate highly desirable, and ability and willingness to live in hard conditions.

Field personnel receive monthly stipends, housing, and transportation to and from Colombia.

### **Responsibilities:**

From a base in Rio Sucio, health promoter training courses will be continued which will include the following activities:

- \* Planning and teaching health courses to health promoter candidates from the local communities;

- \* Supervise health promoters in their consults, especially with emergencies and in learning new skills;
- \* Support and collaborate with local health committees;
- \* Administration and coordination with health promoters;
- \* Manage central stockroom of medications and supplies, including purchasing and distribution for the project;
- \* Coordinate with other local groups working with health and attend meetings regarding health;
- \* Support community public health activities;
- \* Communicate regularly with the Concern America home office;
- \* Submit written quarterly reports to Concern America's home office.

Please contact Catharine Quinn at (773) 772-9523 or [cquinn\\_concern@earthlink.net](mailto:cquinn_concern@earthlink.net) for any further questions. It is possible to download the Concern America field volunteer application from the Concern America web site: [www.concernamerica.org](http://www.concernamerica.org).