NEWSLETTER

THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PAHO/WHO STAFF MEMBERS

VOL. XXXVII, No. 3 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Church at the Entrance to Christiania, Copenhagen, Denmark

Contents

Editorial

By Hernan Rosenberg

As you all know, from the outset we have made it a point to reach our members living outside of the USA, or even outside of Metro Washington. When our Association was created over 30 years ago, most former staff had established residence in this area, for family, business, or other personal reasons. Thus, our original bylaws required Board members to physically be present for most meetings, de facto a requirement to live in the Washington area. And of course, being here to facilitate dealing with our main source of relations, PAHO, also required our presence. Even voting in our elections required physical presence or issuing a written authorization, also tantamount to living in that location.

Several things have changed:

- Communications are easier and cheap. Having a Zoom or WhatsApp meeting is being taken for granted these days. Just think of 1990, faxes and expensive phone calls, to see how far we have come.
- Although many more members are returning to their original countries or establishing themselves in places other than the USA, with digital communication now they find it easy and convenient to participate in the Association.
- We certainly keep a keen eye on "traditional" issues, like health insurance and pension. But we have also gotten more involved in substantive issues of interest to our group, mainly healthy long life (healthy ageing may be seen as having a negative connotation).

To facilitate the incorporation of non-Washington colleagues we have taken several steps:

- We modified our bylaws to allow for electronic voting regardless of residence.
- We hold our meetings online, so anybody can attend (except for the obvious and rare cases in which confidentiality is required).
- We have improved access to and contents of our website.

- We have active social media interactions on some platforms.
- We support our chapter in Colombia as well as a good number of focal points in several countries and subregions.

So, you can see we take this issue seriously.

And talking about focal points, sharing is a very important topic. What works in one place may or may not work in another, but ideas can surely serve as inspiration. In that connection, you can read elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter the details, but I would like to present what our Focal Point (FP) in Chile has successfully launched. He found out that some colleagues were not able to solve their concerns or even go to the PWR to ask for assistance. So, he started to visit them personally, and assist with forms, petitions, and the like. The interesting point is that some of the people assisted wanted to pay the FP for his services, which he, correctly, rejected. But the colleagues insisted. We found a Solomonic solution: the funds collected will be kept in the country as a collective fund and used for activities for all former staff there. The PWR has been very helpful in the **management** of this, and the former staff are very happy.

Obviously not every country can or should do the same. But it is a very good example of how, with very limited resources, it is possible to have a big impact on the life of our less fortunate colleagues. That alone should be a source of satisfaction for all of us.

Finally, all these matters are the result of inputs from people like you and me. The Association can only be as effective as the membership participation allows. Thus, we encourage you to propose yourselves or others for positions on the Board, as country FP, or as volunteer cooperators. We are starting a new election process, and we hope many of you will participate regardless of residence, background, or anything else. There is strength in numbers; let's make the most out of it.

PS. After having finished this editorial, we found out that the White House is withholding US$45 million from PAHO. This is bad news for the Organization, but, as we have noted before, it does not affect the Pension Fund, so do not get nervous with the news. We will report if there are any changes later.

Health Update

By Carol Collado

Greetings and a Healthy change of season to everyone! Hoping that you are being responsible for your health: putting into practice all that you know about being healthy and how that incorporates into a happier and longer life!!

We will start out with a recap of those health threats still significant.

Health Threats

Dengue

As mentioned before, the climate changes globally have affected the geographic incidence of this disease. It is now estimated that half of the world's population is susceptible to this disease. The biggest danger is for those who have had the disease before, as they more often develop severe dengue with severe abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea, often with blood, and this requires immediate attention to avoid long-lasting problems. We mentioned in the last Newsletter that although a vaccine is available, it is still not recommended within the country programs. However, there is now a restricted vaccine recommendation for children 6-16 in vulnerable areas, and those traveling to high prevalence areas who have had at least one previous case of dengue.

Measles

Confidence in the health systems and other beliefs, have caused the percentage of the population having the 1st dose of the vaccine to fall below 80% (Coverage goal is 95%). Actual statistics for the Region of the Americas showed a slight increase in 2024 of only about 2%. As of 8 August, 10,139 cases in the Region have been reported with 18 deaths. Seventy-one percent of those cases were in unvaccinated people, with another 18% unknown. The reported incidence is much higher in North America with Canada, Mexico, and the USA showing not only higher incidences of the disease but also registering more deaths. Other countries reporting in order of incidence are Bolivia, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Peru. The answer is evident: two doses of the triple vaccine!

Covid 19

Still on the horizon but seemingly evidencing less danger due to vaccine coverage and population immunity. This Region has identified 13,815 confirmed cases and 675 deaths as of the 3rd of August (Remember that reporting is not obligatory and often only through viral monitoring on waste water). There has been a slight increase in cases in Central America and

the Caribbean as well as in Tropical areas of South America, but simultaneously a slight decrease in viral surveillance with only 4.1% testing positive. Vaccination reinforcement is still recommended for the ageing population, as a population more susceptible. Good news: the reported incidence of Long Covid is decreasing, although that is little consolation for those suffering. A study in England demonstrated dismissal and "gaslighting" from the medical professionals. Research is underway but because most studies need a length of time parameter, results are so far very few. A new Study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA Network Open) identified 5 common symptoms that will assist in consolidating research since the symptoms often vary considerably. These symptoms are: increase in tiredness, pain or tightness in the chest, diarrhea (3+ loose stools in 24 hr., decrease of change in smell, and fatigue.

Other Health News

The World Health Organization together with the World Meteorological Organization has issued a declaration highlighting the health challenges posed with extreme heat. With Global warming, it is a critical condition we must take into account when planning outdoor activities.

In September, the United Nations will look at the Sustainable Development Goals, with only 5 years until their proposed deadline. Established in 2015, very few are on the course to be met when 2030 comes. While only one goal deals explicitly with health, in all 17 goals, there are defining factors in a healthy lifestyle, such as poverty, access, food security, etc. Goal 3 on Global Health Gains has seen some decrease in the targets established. However, still far from the targets.

An Australian study comparing the results of increased healthy activities identified 7000 steps a day as the goal to cut death risk by almost half (47%). A Chinese study of 88,461 people looking at sleep habits over 6.8 years found correlations of poor sleep habits such as irregular bedtimes, poor slumber habits, and disrupted circadian rhythms and 92 different diseases.

One final warning: While the Northern Hemisphere still has a month or so of possibilities of very warm weather, and the Southern group is entering into the warmer weather, there is an advisory for people to take care in drinking iced beverages in any quantity to relieve the high heat, suggesting that small amounts are fine, but anything above that would be better satisfied and provide less danger to your health by consuming fruits or vegetables, especially for those with pre-existing conditions.

Have a healthy time: keep your healthy promises and enjoy life!

Conclusions of the Pension Board's 81st Session in Vienna

29 July 2025

The 81st session of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board was held from 21 to 25 July 2025 at the Headquarters of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna, Austria. Chaired by Mr. Gerald Anderson, the session addressed a comprehensive agenda spanning governance, actuarial, investment, benefits, administrative, financial, and audit matters. The Chair emphasized the importance of the Board's fiduciary responsibilities and the need for continued modernization and efficiency in fund operations. The Board reviewed the Fund's performance, approved key policy updates, actuarial assumptions, investment strategies, and budget estimates, and considered its long-term sustainability. It also addressed complex issues such as spousal benefits and small pensions. The session underscored the Fund's commitment to transparency and operational excellence in serving its global community of beneficiaries and was marked by a collaborative spirit, with all constituent groups contributing to robust discussions and consensus-building. The Board concluded its work with expressions of appreciation for the Chair's leadership and the contributions of outgoing members.

Update on the Fund's performance

Ms. Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive, briefed the Board on the Fund's continued funded position, operational performance, and modernization initiatives. She reported that the Fund maintained high service levels, processing a record high number of benefits (17,000 in 2024 and over 10,000 in 2025) and completing 94% of initial benefits and recalculations within the target of 15 business days from the receipt of separation documents. Ms. McClean highlighted progress under the CARE Strategy, including the widespread adoption of the Digital Certificate of Entitlement and expanded multilingual communications. She noted significant growth in client engagement, with over 27,000 townhall attendees since 2024, and a 35% increase in website traffic in the first half of 2025. Key modernization initiatives include preparations for the launch of a new financial suite, automation of key processes, and upgrades to the Member Self-service platform.

Mr. Toru Shindo, Acting Representative of the Secretary-General for the investment of the assets of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, informed the Board that the Fund's assets have surpassed $100 billion as of June 2025, marking a historic milestone for the Fund. Regarding performance, Mr. Shindo reported that the Fund has exceeded its investment objective of 3.5% real return above U.S. inflation, delivering a 4.9% real return over the past 15 years – thanks to both strategic asset allocation and skillful active management.

Actuarial Matters

The Pension Board reviewed and approved recommendations from the Committee of Actuaries regarding the assumptions for the 31 December 2025 actuarial valuation. The Board agreed to maintain the economic assumptions from the previous actuarial valuation with a change in assumed participant growth, reflecting the anticipated staffing changes across the UN system. The Board also approved appointments to the Committee of Actuaries and the plan for procuring the next Consulting Actuary contract.

Investments of the Assets of the Fund

The Board received detailed reports on the management of the Fund's investments, including the latest findings from the Investments Committee, the updated Investment Policy Statement and initiatives to strengthen the risk framework. The Board was also consulted on the membership of the Investments Committee, reinforcing its commitment to sound governance and strategic oversight.

Governance Matters

The Board reviewed the report of the Governance Review Working Group and, with modifications, adopted its recommendations to strengthen decision-making and accountability. It also approved a revised Ethics Policy and endorsed updates to the Fund's Funding Policy. The Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring (FSALM) Committee submitted its report, affirming the Fund's stable financial position.

In addition, the Board confirmed appointments to various committees and recommended the appointment of a new Deputy Chief Executive of Pension Administration. It also made decisions on the revision of the admission fee structure for new organizations joining the Fund, updates to committee memberships, and the performance evaluation of the Chief Executive of Pension Administration. The venue and dates for the Board's 2026 sessions were also selected.

Benefits System

The Board discussed the future process for reviewing the Special Adjustment for Small Pensions, which will be incorporated into the regular monitoring of the impact of currency fluctuations, enabling the Board to assess when adjustments may be needed.

The Board received information on the impact of currency fluctuations on pension benefits, which indicates that the two-track system is functioning as intended, with only modest volatility in benefit levels across different cohorts and countries. The Board also considered an update on provisional payment mechanisms and, in this context, the Chief Executive highlighted the positive impact of initiatives by the Pension Administration and member organizations to reduce the overall time from separation to payment of the first pension benefit.

Administrative Matters

Updates were provided on the Emergency Fund, which continues to offer critical support to beneficiaries facing financial hardship. The Board also reviewed the status of ICT systems and operations, noting progress in digital transformation and system resilience.

Financial Matters

The Board approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024, which received an unqualified audit opinion from the United Nations Board of Auditors. The statements reflected a strong financial position, with investment assets valued at $94.4 billion and investment income of $7.5 billion for the year. The Board also approved the proposed budget estimates for 2026, totaling $166 million (before recosting), based on the report of the Budget Committee, which confirmed the budget's alignment with the Fund's strategic priorities and operational needs. In doing so, the Board endorsed the Committee's recommendations.

Audit Matters

The Board reviewed and took note of the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors, which issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Fund's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024. It also discussed the implementation of the Board of Auditors' recommendations and acknowledged the findings of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), which aimed to strengthen internal controls and governance. The Audit Committee submitted its annual report, and the Board approved its recommendations, which focused on enhancing risk oversight and preparing for system upgrades. These included the development of a Fund-wide risk appetite statement, regular progress updates on system implementations, and a readiness audit for the upcoming financial system upgrade, to be conducted by OIOS within its regular audit plan. These reviews reinforced the Fund's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

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AFSM-FCU Virtual and Regional Meeting

By Violeta Mata Garcia

At the initiative of the Focal Points in Mexico and with the support and monitoring of the AFSM Executive Board, a virtual special regional meeting was held by the Federal Credit Union (FCU) on 22 August 2025. The objective was to clarify doubts and issues that some of the FCU members had expressed, following the updating and implementation of regulations and requirements, due to the prevailing political and economic situation that affects us globally.

One of the main issues was ensuring that the W8BEN form was properly updated, as it is a conditional certificate needed by FCU

members living abroad to justify the lack of withdrawal of taxes in the United States.

It is important to keep this form up to date to avoid future issues at the national and regional levels, related to taxes, legal fees, and/or noncompliance by the Credit Union. This form is valid for three years, always ending in December of the third year, and must be submitted by each account holder, completed and signed, along with a copy of a valid passport.

Approximately thirty attendees from different countries actively participated, clarifying their personal and national concerns, as some of the issues were due to local legislation rather than the FCU's.

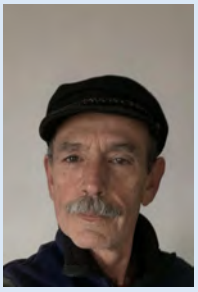
We once again appreciate the invaluable support of AFSM, FCU, and the PAHO/WHO Representative Office in Mexico for making possible this important initiative, which is of such importance to both retired and active staff members.

PLEASE ADVISE OF CHANGES IN CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important to us to not lose touch with our members. If you change your email, phone number, or snail mail address, please send the changes to our Membership Chair Karen Gladbach at gladbach.afsm@gmail.com

Peer Collaboration

By Rodrigo Pascal



In my role as Focal Point for our association in Chile, at one of the meetings I shared my experience supporting former colleagues in vital administrative matters. The board of directors felt it would be helpful to share this experience with all members, and that is what I am doing in this article.

As a brief introduction, I present the context in which I carried out the actions or activities described below.

Every time I started supporting people or groups in my life, I asked myself this question: What support do people need? I also ask the people we want to support this important question.

My years of experience supporting vulnerable groups have taught me this important lesson. We begin with a legitimate desire, and a firm will: to support those most in need. Although we may be part of the target group, this membership does not always reflect the diverse needs of the people within the group.

When we ask this question, a variety of issues often arise that we never imagined. Normally, we think we know what the most pressing issues are. However, the answers raise a significant dilemma: the issues may be of an institutional policy that governs or affects the specific group, along with more basic needs arising from the vulnerabilities of the people we want to support. So, do we focus on influencing the policies that affect the group, or do we dedicate ourselves to assisting people with their most basic needs? The answer is simple and equally complex, as it is in both areas where our support can be most effective and also most meaningful. We forge a path with a clear direction for improving the policies that govern the group, where their achievements are often not so visible as changes take time, while policies generate a kind of meandering that is not easy for everyone to navigate. On the other hand, assisting with the most basic needs of the people in the group generates tangible, immediate visibility, and an easily measurable result. Along with establishing closer personal relationships, we could consider this as a validation with the group and the people we are supporting.

I have been serving as AFSM's Focal Point in Chile for a little over a year. While the challenges are not of life-or-death, they are significant and, for many members, a source of anguish, anxiety, and/or fear. It is from this context and experiential analysis described that I approach my work with AFSM, participating in meetings with the international group, learning about the political events that affect us, holding information sessions in the areas of interest—the credit union and health insurance

- with those responsible at PAHO headquarters, and attempting to update the data on retired staff in Chile. I also provide direct assistance/support in the homes of those who request it on issues beyond their capacity to resolve, or where the digital divide generates a level of anxiety that prevents them from addressing the issue.

I will describe two situations, which differ in context and type of needs. In both cases, I use fictitious names to protect the privacy of my colleagues.

The first case was when Mrs. Isabel, over 90 years old, requested support with her savings at the PAHO Credit Union because she did not know how to log in; the digital divide here was evident. Although she had a person who looked after her 24/7, they did not have the skills to resolve these issues. So, I went to her apartment with my computer, which I used for the entire process, and I contacted the credit union via telephone. The person wanted to transfer her funds to her bank in Chile. Unfortunately, the entire process could not be completed the same day. We were only able to identify the account and the steps to follow to achieve the goal. A legal power of attorney was also required to complete this process. Mrs. Isabel has a nephew who supports her with some issues, so, given the need for a power of attorney, she decided to continue the process with her relative. I followed up on the situation for a few weeks, talking with the nephew, who was later difficult to locate. So, I closed the case, with no results other than identifying the account and the processes for transferring its funds to her bank in Chile.

A second case concerns Ms. Claudia, 62, who left the PAHO Chile Office more than 10 years ago and is now of retirement age. Given the time that had elapsed between her leaving the office and reaching her retirement age of 62, certain institutional processes were unfamiliar to her. Beyond that, however, the anxiety and fear that she might lose her pension generated such stress for her that when faced with the computer and online processes, she felt unable to address the issue alone.

I must confess that all of this has also been a very valuable learning process for me.

In this situation, I acted the same way as in the previous case, but with more confidence. After her phone call requesting support, we arranged a visit, and I headed to her apartment. This time, we used her computer, which was much newer and faster than mine. Because she had left the office several years earlier, the retirement process was not supported by PAHO. Her situation was unlike that of employees who reach retirement age when they are still working for the Organization. They receive support from PAHO throughout the transitional process of preparing for the new reality by sending them emails and accompanying them every step of the way until their actual retirement. Based on this context, the first thing I did was to call the Pension Fund requesting information about the application process and the necessary documentation. This call was key to receiving the unique identification number (UI) which the system gives to the retiree to be used over time. With this step resolved, the following steps were easier. This generated a very impressive change in Ms. Claudia. By the next visit, she had reconnected to the Pension's website on her own and provided me with a set of information, making it

possible to complete the process. When I talk about an impressive change, it is because at first, she did not even dare to Access the Pension website, and now, happily and empowered, she shared with me the information I needed to complete this process. Her words and face lit up. The process was completed after about four visits to her home, due to the time the system takes to process the information. She is now finally integrated into the system, and her retirement is clear to her. Since her 62nd birthday was six months ago, the pension that had accumulated over those six months are ready to be deposited into her account - much to her delight.

Nothing is more satisfying than the happiness that showed on Ms. Claudia's face when we completed this process. This has established a personal relationship that is as valuable to her as it is to me, thus reinforcing AFSM's presence on the ground and its positive perception among its members.

Welcome to New AFSM Members

Carlos Ayala Cerna - Colombia

Beatrice Carpano – USA

Ivonne May, USA

Stephen Miller, USA

Silvia Torresano, USA

Jenny Valencia-Korn, USA

Monarch Seniors Club Addresses Loneliness

By Pat Byrne, President Monarch Senior's Club

Pat Byrne attending a celebration of life for a childhood friend's mom who was 96, he is next to his friend's nieces.

Time is moving quickly. We are all ageing, some better than others. We are about to witness one of the world's greatest shifts in population change. The 2017 US Census shows that by 2040 one out of every four people will be over 75 years old; yes 25% of the population will be in that cohort. In the US alone that estimate will be in the range that 92 to 100 million Americans will be older than 75 years.[1] This is an unheralded shift in population. Are we ready? What are the care levels we will need, how do we staff it, run it, how will we survive, how will we live, how long are we going to live and who lives the longest?

I spent the last 30 years in the retirement home industry and has recently changed his focus with his skill set to help seniors cope, help them deal with the issues of ageing and show them how we can cultivate some 'low-hanging fruit' and simply to save some old souls by helping them meet new friends.

How one spends time is critical to how one sees the world and how one lives life. Does one have social wealth, mental wealth, financial wealth, physical wealth, and spiritual wealth? Our collective wealth makes us who we are, and if we take stock of this, it can show us how to live full lives and be happy. We all seek happiness.

If one is fortunate enough to have lived the longest in one's circle of friends, then one has outlived one's spouse/life partner, all siblings, relatives, co-workers and neighbors, and so there is a pretty good chance that one feels all alone. Loneliness is one of the main contributors to an early death for a senior.

Over the last few years one of the most impressive papers that I have been fortunate enough to read on loneliness, isolation, anxiety is from "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation".[2]

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[1] https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61164#_idTextAnchor002

[2] https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf

Without socialization and human contact, seniors can become depressed and anxious and not have any help in addressing those conditions. It has been noted that an hour of social contact each day for a senior is more helpful to his/her wellbeing than taking daily medication.

Socialization through the Monarch Seniors Club (MSC) is a non-invasive solution to a senior's loneliness, without the use of medication. Longer life for seniors can be facilitated if they continue to socialize, meet new people, and remain friendly.

The Monarch Seniors Club strives to help these seniors by helping to make their lives better through combatting loneliness, anxiety and depression, and help them to socialize easily with one another.

I studied demographics at university and saw the grey tsunami coming, in 1992 he ventured out on his own preparing feasibility studies for new site locations for various hotel companies. But his true reason for entering the business was that his grandmother lived with him until she was 94. Growing up with a senior in his home gave his family a true appreciation for elderly people and how socialization can keep helping them to feel younger than their years.

Pat started Kingsway Arms in 1995 after purchasing the Bradgate Arms Hotel, converting it into one of the upper end retirement homes in downtown Toronto. Since 1995, Kingsway Arms has owned and operated 12 retirement homes in the mid market sector across Canada providing housing ranging from independent living to assisted living and memory care, with over 1,200 beds and 650 employees.

Approximately twenty years ago, Kingsway Arms created a new seniors social club at each of the homes that it managed, they were called the Monarch Seniors Club. What emerged was a natural funnelling of new residents to the Kingsway Arms homes and, more importantly, an abundance of seniors living nearby wanted to and were welcomed to join the MSC. They were looking for some social time with one another. Often as seniors aged, they became frail and then stopped coming out to attend MSC functions. MSC wanted to reach out to those seniors that were at home alone and could not get out.

To address this challenge MSC developed a new website

(WWW.MONARCHSENIORS.CLUB) as a way for these isolated seniors to link with each other from all corners of the world. The goal is to connect seniors with one another, have them join MSC, to become the new modern day 'Pen Pals' for 2025. It is hoped that the system will match these seniors with like-minded seniors all over the world. This is not a dating service, but a social club, a website/platform that is safe for seniors to interact with one another. Think of hooking up Mrs. Smith from New York with Mrs. Ricci from Rome. They are physically apart, they are from different cultural backgrounds, religious groups, and nationalities, but they are seeking a little time each day to connect with like-minded seniors, even if it is just virtually.

THE SUN IS SETTING; we are ageing, we must get moving.

If life was a football game we are entering into the fourth quarter, the clock is ticking, and we don't know what to do or what is going to happen.

Pat purchased the Bradgate Arms in Toronto in 1995 and converted it from a 5-star boutique hotel into one of Toronto's finest retirement homes. It currently serves as the Kingsway Arms Clarington Center

This home was designed and built by Kingsway Arms is 2003. It is a 130-room fully operating retirement home connected by a tunnel to a 125-unit seniors' condominium. This was one of the first buildings to offer a Monarch Seniors Club.

Teaching the New Public Health

By Hernan Malaga

In this article I am comparing an interesting experience of implementing a new type of public health in Peru; one in which the community and academics worked collaboratively to improve the life conditions of a population group.

In the second semester of 2011, I was summoned by the Director of the Superior School of Veterinary Science (Escuela Superior de Ciencia Veterinaria) of the Ricardo Palma University to teach a course on project development to the alumni of the first cadre of students. I proposed to first teach epidemiology and secondly, project development by applying the methodology of the logical framework. In the semester that followed, I taught three courses, with the last one being The New Public Health. This learning experience had to be carried out by being in the community, and through the process of having the community identify its problems and take the necessary action to implement their solutions. We selected a community in the Pachacamac District, where I had worked many years previously and it is a district with semi-rural conditions near to Metropolitan Lima and the university.

The first group of students conducted a study of the living conditions of the different communities of Pachacamac and identified their relationship to chronic infant malnutrition. The relationship with the social determinants of health was also confirmed. The community that has the greatest deficiency in living conditions also had the greatest prevalence of chronic malnutrition. Finally, the Healthy Community of the Gardens of Manchay (la Comunidad Saludable de los Jardines de Manchay), was selected for a meeting of neighborhood leaders from throughout the Manchay District. This followed a

brainstorming process, led by the students, in which the community identified fourteen problems. Five of these were prioritized: food safety, control of stray dogs, the high rate of adolescent pregnancy, the low percentage of houses with planted green areas, and city safety. With these priorities selected, the group developed a problem tree with their causes and thus decided upon the objectives of the project.

The second group of students, considering the determining factors found in each of the five projects, conducted a survey in the community to find out the priority given to the expected results. It is interesting to note that at school it was observed that boys under the age of four were better nourished than girls of the same age. These results were published in the Peruvian Journal of Epidemiology. (Málaga H, Piña J, Denegri A, Stefan T, Cedamanos D, Alvarado D, et al. Priorización de problemas de salud comunitaria en una localidad de Lima Metropolitana en el marco del programa de Municipios Saludables. *Rev peruepidemiol* 2014; 18(2): e08)

A subsequent group of students was assigned to conduct a project to follow up. In the second semester of 2016, I invited Professor Dominino Vilca from the Department of Social Outreach and Community Extension, who taught them how to make molds and ceramics. As a result, another project was introduced, which provided income for the participating families.
The implementation of these six projects has led to the following results.

Security
Over one hundred families received more than 6,000 laying hens at various stages of development, donated by two prominent poultry farmers. The first batch was donated by the Pro-Niño Foundation, which provided $5,000 to purchase six hundred four-week-old chicks that were fed until they were 25 weeks old. The materials for constructing the drinking troughs and feeders were donated by a former student of mine from the University of San Marcos, and the vaccines were donated by Laboratorio Farvet and administered by the students.

In this first batch, eighteen beneficiary children were selected, and before the hens produced eggs 44% of them were found to be anemic. At the end of course, in January 2015, a new sample was taken from sixteen of these children and none were found to be anemic.

Teen pregnancy

Talks relating to prevention efforts were given to girls in the community. Several courses were held, sports were promoted, and a teenage girl who had given birth was even encouraged to participate in these meetings to raise awareness among her peers.

Stray Dogs

The control of stray dogs and reduction in bites was achieved through the neutering of dogs. Eighteen dogs were neutered, and American television Emmy Award winner Dr. Paul Weber participated in one of these procedures, thanks to the fact that he was in Lima at the time.

Green Areas

Pastor Piña from the town built fifty small plots on his own land to promote green areas. He also provided seeds for each family to plant vegetables on their plot so that after the six-month course ended, they could replicate this in their own homes.

Public Safety

Alarms were installed and neighborhood patrols were organized with the participation of residents. The soccer field which had served as a meeting place at night for people who had caused damage within the was illuminated.

Sports

Sports including soccer and volleyball were promoted. PAHO staff member Dr. Marco Vigilato promoted the teaching of judo and, in addition to donating the mat for the activities, he went every Saturday with a delegation. He was later replaced by another Peruvian judo master, Joel Moreno Lazarte, who continued this activity until the pandemic started.

In 2017, the University Council of Ricardo Palma University decided that the Social Outreach and University Extension students from all faculties of the university should take the course. In 2019, two courses of this nature were offered. The most important result was the establishment of a guinea pig breeding initiative made possible by a donation by several women from the 5th graduating class of the Santa Rosa de Lima School and my wife, who donated enough money to buy 100 guinea pigs that were distributed among 20 families in the community. The Christmas celebrations, which are still being held today, are eagerly awaited by the children of the community.

The author with the rector of Ricardo Palma University, on the day he received his honorary doctorate.

An evaluation of the food security project is currently being conducted through a thesis comparing the situation before and after, as the COVID-19 epidemic prevented us from taking the students out into the field. The project therefore ended with my retirement from the university in December 2019. I appreciate it very much that the university recognized these results by awarding me an honorary doctorate on 18 June 2018. Thank you very much.

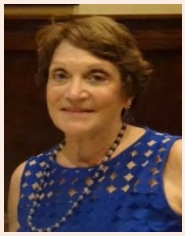
In Memoriam

DEATHS NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED

Narey Placido Cotrina Perez, 15 August 2025, in Madrid, Spain

My Visit to Christiania – A New Paradise?

By Marilyn Rice



When I was much younger, I fantasized about living in a commune of some kind and sharing all the chores of daily life with others in the community. I thought it might be fun to go to Israel and live on a kibbutz. Instead, I ended up going to Brazil to live on a sugar cane plantation in Northeastern Brazil to develop health and nutrition recuperation programs. It is what led me to go into the field of public health. I never ended up living in a communal situation, but it was definitely a part of what I envisioned in my youth and always part of my idealism was to consider everyone equal with the same rights.

During my recent visit to Copenhagen, Denmark I had the opportunity to visit Christiania (also known as Freetown Christiania), a neighborhood located in a former military compound where chemical weapons were made. The Danish government closed down the military site because it would be too expensive to restore the decaying buildings, the oldest of which dated back to 1688.

In the late 1960's, a few young people started moving out of central Copenhagen as they could not afford to live there, and they began to "squat" in one house called the "hippy house". A journalist wrote in the "Head Paper" about this alternative living situation – a place where people could live and create their dreams of a socialist-based community. The location became named after a place in Sweden called Christiana, but a third "i" was added due to a door to an ammunition storage area that had three yellow dots that looked like eyes, thus the name Christiania.

The community started with the creation of small villages, with the goal of having a society based on peace and love. Today 900 people live there (about a third of which are children). Initially, the city government gave them two years to stay, but with many appeals to the government, and based upon a local development plan that included restoration of the old buildings, they were permitted to stay. Some of the houses have been purchased with a 30-year mortgage and some of them are rented out. Individuals pay to restore their own buildings, getting 50% of the cost back from the city government. Today there are 15 small communities, some as small as 16 people and others as large as 200, but all buildings are owned by the Christiania Association. Everyone pays a monthly fee of DK 1,530 (about USD240); there is a discount if there are children in the household under 18 years of age. This produces DK 50 million (about USD 7.8 million) per year for the community

association. These common fees pay for utilities and to run the community, with 80% reimbursement from the city. Some of the residents work outside the community and others produce goods such as art pieces and clothing that are sold in their local store.

There is no school in the community. The children attend public schools outside in the city proper. Today it is difficult to find a new place to live within the community, as it is very expensive to renovate the old buildings and maintain them, so most young people leave. If the children remain in their parents' house, they can inherit the property and take over the payments, but if they leave the community and later wish to return, they have to apply for admission and are subject to the same review process used for any outsider.

The community has a septic system, recycles, and is linked to the city water and electrical system. It has its own church with a resident priest. There is also a Muslim Mosque.

There is a concert hall where well-known artists come to perform and where community celebrations like Christmas take place. In addition to the craft store, there is a small grocery store, a restaurant, and outsiders can come and sell their crafts (for a fee) at the outside "hippie market". There is a health center staffed Monday to Friday from noon to 6 PM, paid for by the city and supported by the income taxes that all residents must pay (people throughout Denmark pay between 35-55% in taxes depending upon their income bracket, and then all education to the highest levels, all medical care, and a social safety net for disabled and very poor people are provided for free by the government).

The community is based upon some very simple, specific, and egalitarian rules. It is what led to many drug dealers establishing their businesses there and at one time it had a very bad and unsafe reputation. However, working with the police and setting up common community activities in this location (like ice skating in the winter), the drug dealers were moved out and today the community is quite safe.





The Christiania Constitution states "Everyone is free to do what they want as long as it doesn't infringe on the freedom of others doing what they want. The purpose is to create a society that depends on itself and strives through a common effort to ward off any psychological and physical pollution" (I have edited this to make the most sense in translation).

Here are the basic rules of the community:

- No private cars allowed,
- No hard drugs allowed. (In the beginning they tried to rehabilitate drug addicts, but it didn't work so they give addicts six months to get clean or they would be evicted. Many went away to rehab and never returned.)
- No "Bull Shit Gang" (at one time there was a war between the "Bull Shit Gang" and the Hells Angels gang and the Bull Shit Gang was kicked out)
- No violence
- No weapons
- No bike gangs
- No bulletproof vests
- No fireworks
- No stealing

As I left the community, taking one last photo of a peaceful-looking community member watering her beautiful flowers, I was struck by the solidarity that was so essential to them. Asking about the meaning of a sign that said "Keep the US out", I was told that the President of the US might be an emperor in his own land, but he should keep his hands off Greenland (a part of Denmark) and the internal workings of other countries. It saddened me to know that in a few short weeks I would be returning to what scarily looked like an emerging military dictatorship in my own country. Yet I was heartened to know that in other parts of the world there were still communities and governments that believed in providing a safety net for all and the freedom to explore creativity, while respecting the privacy of individuals and the history of the country.

Where Are They Now?

From Regional Health to Local Homes: A New Chapter in Real Estate After 35 Years at PAHO

By Patricia Cabrejo

After dedicating 35 years of my life to public health at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), I made a major transition—one that many might not expect after retirement. I traded in my badge for a real estate, and today, just five months after retiring, I find myself thriving in an entirely new career.

My time at PAHO was filled with purpose, collaboration, and the privilege of contributing to meaningful regional health initiatives. But as I approached retirement, I began to reflect on what would come next. I knew I wanted to stay active, engaged, and continue serving people—this time, on a more local level. Real estate had always intrigued me, and I realized it could be the perfect way to

apply my organizational skills, communication experience, and deep love for the diverse communities in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area.

So, I took the leap.

In just under five months, I've had the honor of helping a family buy their dream home, assisting another in selling their longtime residence, and coordinating five rental transactions for clients from all walks of life. Each of these experiences reminded me of what I loved most during my PAHO career: helping people navigate complex systems and reach their goals.

What's been especially fulfilling is working with members of the international and diplomatic communities—people I naturally connect with, having spent my own career in a multicultural, multilingual environment. Whether it's guiding newcomers through their first rental in Washington, D.C., or helping a fellow retiree downsize in the DMV area, I bring the same commitment and care that defined my years in public service.

Real estate isn't just about property - it's about people. And I'm incredibly grateful that, even in retirement, I get to be part of such an important chapter in my clients' lives. If my journey proves anything, it's that it's never too late to start something new - and that the skills we gain over a lifetime can open doors we never imagined.

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