

Report from U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration

2010 US Social Forum

Detroit, MI, June 22-26th

Dear Friends,

We are sending this to you because we had the opportunity to meet you at the US Social Forum in Detroit and/or because you are already involved with some of the Collaboration's organizing and educational work. We want to share some of the highlights of our time in Detroit with nearly 18,000 other social justice seekers.

In pre-USSF planning and organizing, members of the Collaboration Coordinating Committee were involved with the National Planning Committee, with organizing the NW USSF delegation, and with work on the Gender Justice Working Group and National Network on Cuba (NNOC). In Detroit at USSF 2010, members of the Collaboration's leadership team and supporters were present in a variety of venues and communities. We helped staff tables with our new postcards and campaign-related handouts at the NNOC and Gender Justice Working Group, and had friends and sisters in the Youth Tent and People's Media Center. We received a small Technical Assistance grant from Resist which allowed us to help subsidize the cost of hotel accommodations to maximize the participation of diverse women at USSF 2010.

To support and advance our 3 Campaigns on *Promoting the Right to Travel*, *Educating about the Realities of Cuban Women's Lives*, and *Advancing Global Feminisms*, we organized and participated in three workshops during USSF with respected speakers and exciting media from Cuba and Venezuela, as well as from the US. Here are brief snapshots of the workshops:

Why Women? Why Cuba? Building a Women's Movement for Cuba! This two hour workshop was co-sponsored with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's (WILPF) Women, Cuba, and the Bolivarian Alliance Issues Committee. It was attended by approximately 40 people, predominately women. Panelists included Cindy Domingo and Jan Strout from U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration, Bernie Dwyer, journalist and film director currently living in Cuba, Catherine Murphy, film director of "Maestra" and Caroline Sanchez from Cuba's Ministry of Culture. A lively discussion was conducted after the panel presentations ranging on issues of freedom of the press and the issue of race and racism in Cuba.

End the War Economy! Build an Economy for Peace! This two hour workshop with about 15 people in attendance was organized by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration was also a cosponsor. Cindy Domingo, Chair of WILPF's Women, Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Committee, presented a panel with Catherine Murphy, who screened "Maestra," and with Elizabeth Santos, a young woman urban organizer from Venezuela. Since the panel only had 1/2 hour of this workshop, the discussion briefly focused on Cuba's literacy campaign and Venezuela's initiatives in the area of international solidarity.

Sisters Crossing Borders: Advancing Women's Rights Through Global Feminisms This two hour workshop was co-sponsored by WILPF, National Organization for Women, & Venezuela Information Office with more with 90 people in attendance. Presentations on the various United Nations Treaties and Declarations focused on the work that needed to be done in the US for their passage as well as the accomplishments of the women's movements in Cuba and Venezuela. As in all three workshops conducted by the Collaboration, the highlight was the screening of film director Catherine Murphy's *Maestra* (about role of young women in Cuba's 1961 literacy campaign). National Radio Project's Executive Director Lisa Rudman was on hand to record the entire workshop (posted soon to our website) which also included Jayariyu Farias Montiel, Venezuelan indigenous health organizer, and media journalist's presentation on a "Making Contact" special feature on Venezuela.

From these workshops, events and tabling we were able to sign-up more than 250 new and diverse women activists to take action on our Collaboration's issues, to broaden our networks and coalition partners, to meet with

some of our National Advisory Board members, and to renew or strengthen ties with our existing partner organizations to expand organizing of our Collaboration.

Because of the strong interest in our campaign about the Realities of Cuban Women's Lives, we are excited to be offering upcoming US speaking and organizing tours featuring Cuban women leaders and action researchers: (1) University of Havana Women's Studies leader and Social Psychology professor, Dra. Norma Vasallo Barrueta, whose visit is planned for October 10 - 31, 2010; and (2) feminist communications specialist and psychologist Norma Guillard, together with National Advisory Board member and filmmaker Catherine Murphy (*Maestra*), currently being scheduled for March, 2011. We are also planning our 2011 US Women's Research Delegation to Cuba around to coincide with Profesora Vasallo's biennial International Women's Studies conference, *Women in the 21st Century*, set for May 16-20, 2011. Go to our web site www.womenandcuba.org for the current itinerary for Profesora Vasallo's US speaking tour, and news of upcoming events and delegations.

In order to continue organizing a strong, diverse US women's movement for Cuba, we need YOUR support!

Please share this e-mail or letter with a friend, your own networks, colleagues and family. We encourage you to sign up for our strategic action e-alerts and/or to get involved with our Campaigns via our web site

www.womenandcuba.org

As of this writing, we urge action on :

1. Right to Travel - HR 4645, urge your Congressperson to co-sponsor this bill in the US House of Representatives for freedom of US citizens to travel to Cuba without limitations and for increased US agriculture exports;
2. Global Women's Treaty - urge our US Senators to ratify the Women's Treat/CEDAW which is the most comprehensive human rights treaty for women in the world; the US is the only industrialized nation which has not ratified it. Details for both of these actions and more on our web site www.womenandcuba.org/actions
3. Donate to our work with a tax deductible donation in any amount through our Pay Pal web-account or by sending a check made payable to our fiscal sponsor, Center for Action Research, CAR-Hermanas, c/o 6705 W 27th Ave, Seattle, WA 98177

We so appreciate all your support and work toward global justice, peaceful relations and feminist solidarity!

Cindy Domingo and Jan Strout, for US Women & Cuba Collaboration
September 2010