



Seeking Justice in **PERU**

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La Oroya has claimed the heart and calling of Jed Koball, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission worker. Jed brings together Peruvian partners and Presbyterian congregations and presbyteries in the United States who strive to make La Oroya a healthy place to live and raise children. “I am a pastor, an educator, an organizer—even a translator,” says Jed, “as together we face the difficult realities that an unjust world can thrust upon us.”

Building Bridges

His work is part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program’s Joining Hands initiative, which links coalitions of congregations and other organizations around the world with U.S. Presbyterians to address the root causes of poverty. In Peru, Joining Hands works in a city that the respected Blackstone Institute has named as one of the 10 most polluted cities in the world.

Joining Hands in 2005 arranged for a study by St. Louis University that showed that 97.2 percent of La Oroya’s 11,000 children have toxic levels of lead in their blood. It’s a condition that can affect cognitive development and stunt physical growth.

Presbyterian advocacy has begun a tidal shift of awareness and concern, leading to news coverage in Peru and the United States. The attention has prompted the Peruvian government to enforce its environmental laws.

Empowering Children

This Christ-centered accompaniment of local partners has also empowered La Oroya’s children to speak up and seek change. They have formed a group called CAMBIALO (which means change it!). Thanks to gifts from Presbyterians throughout the United States, CAMBIALO produces and presents weekly radio spots. These messages have brought international attention to the situation in La Oroya.

In the United States, kids from Public School 58 in Brooklyn who call themselves the Eco-Tech School have been skyping with the kids in La Oroya. The kids help each other heighten awareness about lead pollution and environmental justice and to invite people to become involved.

What’s Jed’s primary job in Peru? He emphasizes his main role is to tell the story. “And through this story, tell the story of our faith,” he explains—“how God’s justice is made real through this struggle; how God’s hope is heard for all of us; how God’s peace is lived out in the midst of such tension.”

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To donate online, visit www.pcusa.org/give. To learn more about Jed’s ministry and read his letters, visit www.pcusa.org/jed-koball. To learn more about other mission personnel visit www.pcusa.org/missionconnections



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