

## UCRES 2010 General Assembly: Celebrating the Past, Preparing for the Future



On December 18<sup>th</sup>, the current team and communities that form UCRES celebrated their Annual General Assembly. The assembly included analysis of the national reality and time for old friends to connect and new friends to be made. While there was mention of some of the greatest challenges to UCRES' work in 2010, the focus was on celebrating the year's achievements and looking towards the future.

One major reason to celebrate? The current UCRES team has invested time and effort into the process to gain legal status for the organization and is close to achieving this goal. This will open many doors for UCRES, allowing them to present their own grants and projects to large international cooperation agencies. The hope is that this will create more opportunities for solidarity and financial accompaniment, allowing UCRES to improve their support for community organizing and expand into more and new communities.

The team proudly shared some of their major highlights from 2010, which include the following:

A team of 25 youth has been trained in Culture of Peace formation facilitation. Over the course of the year, these youth have replicated this formation process with youth committees and schools in communities throughout the UCRES region. Issues that youth discuss and learn about include cooperation, the concept of peace, violence and conflict, self-esteem, recognition of their own abilities and barriers, democracy, human rights, culture and violence, and non-violent conflict resolution.

Accompaniment of twenty communities in the celebration of their repopulations, foundings and patron saint festivals, ideal opportunities to promote culture and historical memory.

Participation in the creation of a National Rural Women's Proposal, presented to the national government and non-governmental institutions. The UCRES women's coordinator held four participative assemblies with women leaders and committees in the region to develop UCRES' proposals. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, over 350 women from the region participated in a march on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

"We want to demonstrate that despite all of the repression that we have suffered, we have the ability to contribute to the development of our communities and our country, and make ourselves heard," one of the participants explained.

Alex, the current UCRES President, closed with the following:

"We infinitely thank all of the people and institutions, national and international, that have contributed to making these opportunities for change possible. Their solidarity is transforming our reality and it motivates us to continue, accompanying communities, their organization, and their struggle for integral development."

*Photos taken from UCRES' "Annual Report of Labors," presented at the Assembly.*

