

WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA

2006 ANNUAL REPORT



WOLA

*Promoting human rights,
democracy and social
justice in Latin America*

Contents

Message from the Chairman of the Board	1
WOLA's Mission	3
What We Do And How We Do It	3
Our Areas of Focus	4
Human Rights and Accountability	4
Democracy and Justice.....	5
Security.....	6
Rights and Development.....	7
Key Initiatives	8
2006 Publications	9
Selected Visitors	10
Thank You to Our Donors	12
Financial Statements.....	14
Board of Directors and Staff	16

Cover Image: "Nancy, age 24", Colombia, 2005

Nancy, age 24, and her six younger siblings were displaced after surviving a paramilitary massacre in Colombia. Nancy works with a support group for women who have been affected by the war.

© 2007 Donna DeCesare

A MESSAGE FROM THE Chairman of the Board

While the United States and the world have been focused on the Middle East, important changes are underway in Latin America and U.S. policy. In one country after another, people have voted for new governments to tackle the huge gap – in income, health, opportunity, citizen security and the quality of life – between the rich and poor. Elected governments face growing demands to find effective remedies for their societies' most pressing problems. It is a difficult, often daunting challenge at a time when the policies so confidently espoused for a generation have been found wanting. We are in new territory.

U.S. policy can make a difference and, fortunately, it is showing welcome signs of change. Since the 2006 elections, new majorities on Capitol Hill are taking human rights more seriously and asking hard questions of failed policies, such as the so-called War on Drugs. Some Executive agencies demonstrate a new professionalism in policy and a salutary willingness to seek workable solutions for the problems Latin America faces today, rather than reflexively recurring to old dogmas.

During 2006 WOLA was deeply and effectively involved with these changes, as this annual report indicates. Within Latin America it works closely with the most significant groups – from the leading NGOs to community-level activists – in country after country. Its expertise and strong ties to the region make it a respected and influential voice in Washington. On the Hill, in U.S. government agencies, and in Latin American embassies there is growing recognition that WOLA's agenda contains the building blocks for a fresh approach to U.S. policy in Latin America.

The people of Latin America have the greatest stake in whether democracy and development succeed there. But it also matters greatly to the United States – perhaps more than ever before. The inflow of new immigrants from the region is just the most obvious indicator of how successes and failures tie us together in one hemisphere. WOLA believes the principles for a new, fruitful relationship should be to:



Board Member Gary Fontana (far left) joins U.S. congressional staffers and members of civil society groups on a WOLA delegation to El Salvador on youth violence.

- ▷ Support economic development strategies that achieve both growth and equity;
- ▷ Help strengthen the civilian institutions that provide citizen security; and
- ▷ Foster the development and consolidation of democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

At the core of these principles is the value of human dignity. A common commitment, north and south, is a basis on which new ties can be forged. And it is the surest beacon in the maelstrom of a globalizing world.

Alex Wilde, Chair

WOLA's Mission

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) promotes human rights, democracy and social and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. WOLA facilitates dialogue between governmental and non-governmental actors, monitors the impact of policies and programs of governments and international organizations, and promotes alternatives through reporting, education, training and advocacy. Founded in 1974 by a coalition of religious and civic leaders, WOLA works closely with civil society organizations and government officials throughout the hemisphere.

What We Do and How We Do It

WOLA:

- ▷ Maintains frequent contacts with U.S. and Latin American governments, media, the academic community and non-governmental and international organizations through meetings, briefings, and public events.
- ▷ Serves as a key resource for civil society organizations in Latin America, working with colleagues in the region on research and advocacy initiatives and sharing information with them to advance mutual goals.
- ▷ Produces timely, accurate commentary and analysis on Latin America in memos for Congress, editorial boards and journalists.
- ▷ Hosts visitors from Latin America, giving them direct access to Washington by arranging meetings with Congress, administration officials, multilateral institutions, NGOs and the media.
- ▷ Uses publications, memos and its bilingual website, www.wola.org, as education and advocacy tools, letting colleagues and the general public know what is happening in the region and in U.S. policy toward the region, what WOLA is doing about it, and how to take action.

Our Areas of Focus

HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WOLA believes that for democracy to take firm hold in Latin America, impunity for human rights violations must end. Human rights violators must be held accountable for their acts. WOLA works to support human rights activists in the region and to promote accountability for past violations. In 2006, WOLA:

- ▷ Campaigned to end the killings of women in Mexico and to demand justice for the over 400 murders so far. WOLA played a key role in persuading both houses of the U.S. Congress to pass resolutions urging Mexican authorities to intensify probes into the killings in Ciudad Juárez and punish the perpetrators. Later in the year, the Mexican government requested a hearing before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission in Washington to assert that officials were making progress in solving the killings. WOLA took advantage of the hearing to meet with Mexican officials, including the head of a special commission created to investigate the femicides, Guadalupe Morfin, and Chihuahua state Attorney General Patricia González, to press for more action.
- ▷ Gathered facts on organized crime and human rights abuses in Colombia with a research trip by Executive Director Joy Olson and Colombia Senior Associate Gimena Sanchez that led to a series of reports and events in Washington. Olson and Sanchez met with leaders of internally displaced people as well as victims of violence perpetrated by both paramilitary squads, guerrillas and the military. In Buenaventura and Cauca, they gathered timely information on the plight of Afro-Colombians that they shared with members of Congress and the media, playing a critical role in raising awareness about the marginalization of Afro-Colombians. They heard countless testimonies on violations of Afro-Colombian territorial rights by illegal armed groups.
- ▷ Worked to raise the level of debate and offer constructive solutions to the crime and drug-related violence afflicting Mexico, with several public events and publications. Much of WOLA's work in this area was timed to influence debate and offer insights regarding the country's presidential elections in July. The organization co-sponsored a seminar with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on public security, human rights and the rule of law in Mexico and released a widely-cited publication, "State of Siege: Drug-Related Violence and Corruption in Mexico."



Boats ply the Anchikaya river near Buenaventura, Colombia.

DEMOCRACY

Strong democracies require well-informed, active citizen participation in the political process by all sectors of society both in the U.S. and in Latin America. Democracy is best served by well-informed, active civic participation. In 2006, we:

- ▷ Acted as a bridge between Venezuela and the United States at a time of tense relations, hosting visitors from Venezuelan civil society to Washington and arranging access for them to U.S. government officials, members of Congress, and the media. WOLA strengthened its role as Washington's leading venue for even-handed analysis on Venezuela's political future by holding a series of well-attended public events. These included a seminar in December, at which Venezuelan and U.S. experts offered timely analysis on the results of the country's presidential election five days earlier.
- ▷ Worked to offer the media the best possible information on the presidential elections in Nicaragua, with Senior Associate Maureen Meyer traveling to Managua before the polls and compiling a point-by-point memorandum on issues and election mechanics for the media and analysts.

- ▶ Brought the human impact of U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba directly to the American public by co-sponsoring the “Love, Loss and Longing” project. With photographs and poignant text, this exhibit showed how the restrictions have divided families and caused needless pain. The pictures and text were shown at galleries and museums in 20 cities throughout the United States (and, in 2007, were published as a book). We also circulated a series of memos on the future of U.S.-Cuban relations in light of Fidel Castro’s illness and, in December, co-sponsored a major forum called “Understanding Cuba” to illuminate the policy implications of Cuba’s transition to a post-Fidel government.

SECURITY

The role of security forces – the military and police – is an important concept in U.S. democracy and has been a central issue in the consolidation of democracies in Latin America after dictatorships and civil wars. It is critical that security forces both respect human rights and help ensure the rights of others. In 2006, WOLA:

- ▶ Cemented its reputation as a leader in research on the problem of youth gangs by conducting ground-breaking research into Central American gangs and scrutinizing widely-held assumptions about their membership and ties to groups in the United States. With youth violence becoming a serious threat to personal security in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, WOLA associates worked hard to offer constructive policy ideas to governments, civil society groups, and international organizations. We partnered with the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México on a study of Central American gangs that found that the groups were essentially a local phenomenon that responded best to local solutions. In El Salvador we co-sponsored a forum on gang violence that focused on solutions and best practices for police forces. This work, some of the most original and distinctive in WOLA’s history, led in November to the widely-cited report “Youth Gangs in Central America” and a long line of media appearances for WOLA staff that continues today.
- ▶ Educated colleagues in Central America about the expanding role and perils of “rapid response forces” (RRF), or joint military-police teams, proposed by Central American nations to fight so-called emerging threats ranging from drugs to gangs to illegal migration. We helped organized a meeting in Nicaragua with NGO representatives from five Central American countries to share information on military and policing roles and the RRF concept in each country. We also wrote and distributed a letter to the Secretariat for



Director of Programs Geoff Thale makes a point to a delegation of experts on youth violence in Central America.

Central American Integration, the regional body where the RRF idea originated, expressing our concerns about the expanding role of the military in civilian security. The letter was cited in media in the region and led to a meeting between WOLA and a Central American ambassador.

- ▷ Pressed successfully with Guatemalan human rights groups for the creation of a special commission to investigate clandestine groups and impunity in Guatemala. WOLA worked closely with our Guatemalan counterparts to help develop the proposal for the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, a joint initiative of the government of that country and the United Nations that was finally announced in December.

RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

WOLA promotes a rights-based approach to development and trade, seeking to place human rights at the center of policy and practice in Latin America. It analyzes the impact of U.S. and multilateral policies on the protection and fulfillment of economic rights. To further these goals, WOLA in 2006:

- ▷ Monitored the impact of the policies of United States and international financial institutions on working people in Latin America with a month-long research trip to Central America and the Dominican Republic by WOLA Senior Associate Vicki Gass. She visited workers' organizations and civil-society groups and taught advocacy training workshops. The trip was preceded and followed by publications on the effects of free-trade policies on rights and development in the Americas.

- ▷ Drew international attention to the deaths of two workers, and the wounding of dozens of others, by police during a strike at the SICARTSA steel mill in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. WOLA's actions, including a letter to the state governor Juan Perez, added to our organization's growing concern over the criminalization of social protest throughout Latin America, a trend which WOLA continues to monitor closely.

NEW INITIATIVES

- ▷ Began drawing up recommendations for a new U.S. policy toward Latin America for the next administration with a meeting of academics and foreign policy specialists at Musgrove resort on St. Simon's Island, Georgia. (The meeting led to the publication of WOLA's report on a new policy, "Forging New Ties," in 2007).
- ▷ Worked to enrich our ties to the scholarly community and draw on its expertise with the creation of an Academic Advisory Panel.

Executive Director Joy Olson (left) and Senior Associate Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli visit Colombian human rights group Nomades in Cali.



Select 2006 Publications

Thirty Years of Advocacy for Human Rights, Democracy and Social Justice

A book by WOLA Senior Fellow Coletta Youngers that traces our organization's history of human rights advocacy and research from its founding in 1974, through the Central America wars of the 1980s and 1990s, to the Bush Administration. Published also in Spanish as *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social*.

Youth Gangs in Central America: Issues in Human Rights, Effective Policing, and Prevention

State of Siege: Drug-Related Violence and Corruption in Mexico

Rights and Development: Divisions Emerge Over the Future of Free Trade: A WOLA Bulletin

WOLA Memo: Immigration Reform and Youth Gangs



Selected Visitors

One of WOLA's unique strengths is its close relationship with organizations working for the same goals in Latin America. These regional colleagues are vital to WOLA in formulating and carrying out its programs. WOLA also facilitates their access to the U.S. Congress, policy-makers and media in Washington. Listed below are some of the visitors WOLA hosted in 2006:

ARGENTINA:

Mercedes Doretti

Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (Buenos Aires)

BOLIVIA:

Kathryn Ledebur

Director, *Andean Information Network* (Cochabamba)

Felipe Cáceres

Vice Minister for Social Defense (La Paz)

Jim Shultz

Executive Director, *The Democracy Center* (Cochabamba)

GUATEMALA:

Helen Mack

Fundación Myrna Mack (Guatemala City)

Giovanna Lemus

Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (Guatemala City)

Orlando Blanco

Colectivo de Organizaciones Sociales (Guatemala City)

Freddy Pecereilli

Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (Guatemala City)

PERU:

Sofía Macher

Instituto Defensa Legal (Lima)



Program Assistant Joel Fyke (far left) accompanies Guatemalan lawyer Hilda Morales (far right) and Rosa Franco and Jorge Velásquez, parents of women murdered in Guatemala, to meetings at the State Department and Congress.

Ernesto de la Jara

Instituto Defensa Legal (Lima)

Pablo Rojas

Executive Secretary, *Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos del Perú (Lima)*

VENEZUELA:

Eleazar Díaz Rangel

Editor-in-Chief, *Ultimas Noticias* newspaper (Caracas)

Ana María Sanjuan

Director, *Centro para la Paz y Derechos Humanos, Universidad Central de Venezuela (Caracas)*

Pedro Nikken

Board of Directors, *Ojo Electoral (Caracas)*

Thank You to

WOLA is a non-profit organization. Our work would not be possible without the generous support of individuals, foundations, and the religious community. In 2006, foundation support came from the:

Arca Foundation	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Compton Foundation	John Merck Fund
Connect US Fund	Moriah Fund
Ford Foundation	Stewart R. Mott Charitable Trust
General Service Foundation	Open Society Institute
Google Grants	Public Welfare Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Christopher Reynolds Foundation
Levi Strauss Foundation	Tula Foundation
Lippincott Foundation of the Peace Development Fund	United States Institute of Peace

RELIGIOUS DONORS

In 2006, our religious community support came from:

Catholic Relief Services	National Council of the Churches of Christ
Church World Service	Presbyterian Church (USA)
Episcopal Church Center	Seekers Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Sisters of Charity of Lavenworth
Leonard Neale House	St. Columbans Foreign Mission Society
Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers	United Methodist Church
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

FRIENDS OF LATIN AMERICA

Our major individual support comes from the generous gifts of numerous donors, and we appreciate each one. Listed below are our Friends of Latin America (FOLA) members in 2006:

Anonymous (2)	Christina Cerna and Steve Rose
George Biddle	Gary Cozette
Mike and Iris Buhl	Father Charles Currie, S.J.

our Donors

Benjamin Davis
Jack Dunfey
Joseph Eldridge
Patricia Weiss Fagen
Elliot Feldman
Ralph Fine and Valerie Miller
Jan and Cornelia Flora
Gary Fontana and Denise Silver
Earl and Nancy Fyke
Rachel Garst
Vicki Gass
Carol Gehl
John Gitlitz and Patricia Lee
Robert Goldman
Louis Goodman
Lee Halprin and Abby Rockefeller
George Hatch
Priscilla Hayner
Joyce Hill
John W. Lamperti
Bill Lankford
Gabriela Lemus
William LeoGrande and
Martha Langelan

Danuta Lockett
Michael Maggio
John Maher
Cressida McKean
Ethan Dorr Miller
Cheryl Morden
Cecilia Muñoz
Mark Murray and Joanna Crane
Reggie Norton
Madalene O'Donnell
David Scott Palmer
Morris Panner and Nancy Jardini
The Philanthropic Collaborative
Arturo Porzecanski
Paul Reichler
Lars Schoultz
Peter Sollis and Caroline Moser
Edgar Villchur
Philippe and Kale Villers
Alex Wilde and Anne Pérotin-Dumon
George Withers
Sally and Monty Yudelman
A. Lee Zeigler
Jeffrey and Mary Zients

THE LEGACY SOCIETY

WOLA has established a Legacy Society. As well as being active donors to WOLA, Legacy Society members have agreed to make a long-term commitment to the organization by including WOLA in their wills, reaffirming the important role that WOLA will continue to play in promoting human rights and social justice in Latin America. Legacy Society members include:

Anonymous
Meg Crahan
Joe Eldridge
Ralph Fine and Valerie Miller

Joy and Eric Olson
Margaret Roggensack
William Wipfler

Financial Statements

WOLA Statement of Activities

for the year ending December 31, 2006

REVENUE

Grants & Contracts	1,155,000
Contributions	460,847
Other income	50,242
Total Revenue	1,666,089

EXPENSES

Program	1,196,270
Management & General	126,626
Fundraising	141,591
Total Expenses	1,465,187
Changes in Net Assets	200,902
Net Assets, 01/01/06	761,318
Net Assets, 12/31/06	962,220

WOLA Balance Sheet

for the year ending December 31, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and equivalents	701,266
Receivables	248,627
Prepaid expenses	25,936
Other assets	13,799
Total Assets	989,628

LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	13,268
Accrued Expenses	14,140
Total Current Liabilities	27,408

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	471,107
Temporarily Restricted	491,113
Total Net Assets	962,220
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	989,628

Figures drawn from complete WOLA audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2006, prepared by Berry Group, P.C., certified public accountants, Alexandria, Va.

Board of Directors

(AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006)

Alex Wilde, Chair

SANTIAGO, CHILE

William LeoGrande, Vice Chair

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

**Richard Erstad, Secretary/
Treasurer until October 2006**

AMERICAN FRIENDS
SERVICE COMMITTEE

**Charles Currie, SJ,
Secretary/Treasurer**

ASSOCIATION OF JESUIT
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Martín Coria

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Benjamin Davis

AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY CENTER

Marie Dennis

MARYKNOLL OFFICE
FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Ralph Fine

ATTORNEY

Kathy Gille

FORMER SENIOR ADVISOR
TO THE DEMOCRATIC WHIP,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Louis W. Goodman

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Franklin Knight

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Gabriela Lemus

THE LABOR COUNCIL FOR
LATIN AMERICAN ADVANCEMENT

Danuta Lockett

VICTIMS OF TORTURE FUND

Michael Maggio

MAGGIO & KATTAR

Cynthia McClintock

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Cecilia Muñoz

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

Mark Murray

CORNERSTONE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Joy Olson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Morris Panner

OPENAIR

Arturo Porzecanski

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Raquel Rodríguez

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF AMERICA

Margaret Roggensack

ATTORNEY

Silvia Wilhelm

PUENTES CUBANOS

Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.



Staff

(AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2006)

Joy Olson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Geoff Thale

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

Jason Schwartz

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
AND FINANCE

Lori Piccolo

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

John Walsh

SENIOR ASSOCIATE FOR THE
ANDES AND DRUG POLICY

Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli

SENIOR ASSOCIATE FOR
COLOMBIA AND HAITI

Vicki Gass

SENIOR ASSOCIATE FOR
RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Adriana Beltrán

ASSOCIATE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND ORGANIZED CRIME

Maureen Meyer

ASSOCIATE FOR MEXICO AND
CENTRAL AMERICA

Elsa Falkenburger

PROGRAM OFFICER FOR
CUBA AND GANGS

Connie McGuire

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH
COORDINATOR FOR THE CENTRAL
AMERICAN YOUTH GANGS PROJECT

Joel Fyke

PROGRAM OFFICER

Jessica Eby

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Lilia López

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Kristel Muciño

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Ana Paula Duarte

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

Coletta Youngers

SENIOR FELLOW

George Withers

SENIOR FELLOW

Rachel Neild

SENIOR FELLOW

Laurie Freeman

FELLOW



Bogotá, Colombia

Washington Office on Latin America

1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200

Washington, D.C. 20009

www.wola.org

