

Poverty Alleviation and Civil Society

Our focus this issue:

Civil society
and the struggle
against poverty

"It is essential for all the partners in this development effort to pursue faster, sustainable growth strategies that favour the poor. To spend efficiently – avoiding waste and ensuring that the mechanisms for accountability are always in place. To spend effectively – on activities aimed at human, social and economic development, not on excessive military capacity or on environmentally disastrous projects. And to spend wisely – not committing public resources to activities that can be best undertaken by the private sector." (extract from *A Better World for All*, presented by the United Nations, The OECD, The IMF and The World Bank Group at the Geneva 2000 conference on)

The last issue of CIVICUS World re-visited the issue of women's leadership in civil society five years after Beijing, the UN conference on Women. As this issue is being written, the UN itself is re-visiting the theme of another 1995 conference, held in Copenhagen. Thousands of government officials, inter-governmental functionaries, and civil society activists are gathered in Geneva for an interim examination of progress made towards the seven goals for international



Photo: Liba Taylor ActionAid

Women's Savings and Credit Group in Kenya

development. These goals, established through resolutions and agreements negotiated at previous UN conferences, aim to create a world free of poverty. In this issue of CIVICUS World we examine the expanding role of civil society in helping to achieve that objective.

More than 1.2 billion people are existing on an income of US\$1 per day or less in a world where wealth is growing quicker than ever before. The World Bank Group, the United Nations, and most of the governments of the world profess to be working to reduce or eradicate absolute poverty. Despite their efforts,

these same world leaders face the reality of a lack of significant progress in social development since the Social Summit of 1995. Any progress made has been absorbed by population growth. There are more people living in poverty than there were five years ago.



At the same time there are thousands of civil society organizations working to alleviate, reduce and eradicate poverty. Ranging in size and reach from one person operations launched as a reaction to a specific local need to well funded international NGOs employing thousands, CSOs are at the cutting edge of poverty eradication efforts.

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Secretary General's Corner

"This is about structural power. Unless we change the rules of the game in society, we're not going to be able to make a real difference. Taxes are not going to do it, 20-20 is not going to do it because the basic principle in society today is maximize profit at the expense of human beings and the environment. And it's not a matter that the rich people are bad people."

These words, spoken by a participant at the 1999 CIVICUS World Assembly in Manila, speak volumes about the reality of poverty and poverty eradication efforts in the 21st century. Humanitarian responses to need have driven civil society and philanthropy from the dawn of recorded history. Perhaps no single issue is as central to the *raison d'être* of

civil society than improving the quality of life for all people. For some, this means better schools and community institutions. For others, raising the quality of life in their community means helping parents find ways to feed their children, how to cope with the hungry season, how to survive the diseases that strike down the weak and malnourished.

Despite the lofty targets agreed at the 1995 UN Conference in Copenhagen, poverty continues to affect every community in the world. We are all familiar with images of starving children in Africa and Asia. The United States, with the wealthiest economy in the world, and a seemingly endless list of new-media millionaires, is home to millions of families living below the

country's official poverty line. In Europe economic refugees risk their lives as they cross borders to reach wealthier countries, economies with greater opportunity.

While there are as many specific approaches to poverty eradication as there are CSO practitioners, one fact is striking – most agree that the root cause of poverty is inequality of opportunity. It is those in positions of wealth and power who are perpetuating the suffering of the less wealthy. Government and business policies and practices deprive the citizen, particularly the citizen living in poverty, of equity and justice. Without the ability to speak, and to be heard, in the halls of power, the poor are condemned to marginalization and victimization.

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In this issue of CIVICUS World we present two articles by staff members of organizations that work every day to reduce poverty. Thomas Joseph, Director of the ActionAid program in Kenya illustrates the challenges of combating poverty in a southern country where educational opportunity and access to basic services is scarce.

Kevin Walker, Manager of the Charles Stewart Mott

Foundation's Pathways out of Poverty program, provides a different perspective. In the United States the Mott Foundation is working with poor families struggling to pay their bills and provide for their children in the midst of the greatest economic boom in the largest economy in the world.

The striking element of these two perspectives is that the root causes of poverty in these two very different countries is lack

of equity. The poor are constantly having to battle systems that keep them at a disadvantage. The daily work of ActionAid in Kenya, or the Mott Foundation in the USA may not always look the same, but their target of their programs is the same: levelling the playing field so that every citizen has an equal opportunity to provide for their family and live a full and enriching life.

Please note...

The ability to share information on our members is an important part of the mission of CIVICUS. Please send us news of your activities and events to the address listed on the back page.

Secretary General's Corner

Increasingly, CSOs are focusing their poverty eradication efforts on advocacy and influencing. For many of us, the simple logic of changing the operating practices of multinational corporations, inter-governmental institutions, and national governments to focus on pro poor policies is glaringly obvious. We know what must be done, and we are not shy about telling anyone who will listen what we think. CIVICUS, and many of our members, enjoy consultative status at the United Nations, and have ongoing interactions with the World Bank and other international actors in the effort to eradicate poverty. What does that mean, though? We are there for the purpose of consultation, with the hope of influencing powerful institutions. On whose behalf though? Can we honestly claim to be representing and expressing the voice of the people?

Civil society organizations, whether they be local, regional, or international, are by definition not elected representatives of the people. This reality does not lessen the legitimacy of our participation, but it does present us with a great challenge. How can CSOs develop governance structures that will guarantee that they are driven by the publics that they claim to rep-

resent, and not simply expounding development philosophies designed in northern Universities and institutions?

Tragically, the issue of poverty is one that will remain central to civil society for the foreseeable future. In this issue of CIVICUS World we present brief outlines of poverty alleviation philosophies from two members, ACTIONAID Kenya and the Mott Foundation.

One works with poor communities in sub-saharan Africa, the other with those in the shadow of the vast wealth present in the United States. It is striking to note not so much the differences between their programs, but the similarities.



Kumi Naidoo

Un Message du Secrétaire Générale

"Ceci est un question du pouvoir structurel. À moins que nous changions les règles du jeu dans la société, nous ne serons pas capables de produire des vrais changements. Les impôts ne vont pas le faire, 20-20 ne va pas le faire parce que le principe de base dans la société actuelle est de maximiser le profit aux dépens des êtres humains et de

l'environnement. Et ceci n'est pas une question des riches étant de mauvaises personnes. "

Ces mots, exprimés par un participant à l'Assemblée Mondiale de CIVICUS à Manille en 1999, dit beaucoup au sujet de la réalité de la pauvreté et des efforts de l'alléger au 21ème siècle. Aussi loin qu'on puisse remonter dans l'histoire écrite, les réponses humanitaires à la nécessité et à la privation ont aiguillonné la société civile et la philanthropie.

Peut-être qu'aucune question n'aura autant de valeur aux yeux de la société civile et de sa raison d'être que la qualité de vie de la population de la planète. Pour certains, ceci signifie de meilleures écoles et établissements communautaires. Pour d'autres, l'amélioration de la qualité de vie dans leurs communauté signifie apporter de l'assistance aux parents pour trouver des moyens de nourrir leurs enfants, comment faire face à une saison de famine, comment survivre les maladies qui frappent les faibles et sous-alimentés.

En dépit des grands objectifs convenus à la Conférence de l'ONU à Copenhague en 1995, la pauvreté continue d'affecter chaque communauté du monde. Nous

sommes tous familiers avec les images des enfants affamés en Afrique et en Asie. Les Etats-Unis, avec l'économie la plus riche du monde, et une liste apparemment sans fin de nouveaux millionnaires, a des millions de familles vivant au-dessous du niveau officiel de pauvreté du pays. En Europe les réfugiés économiques risquent leurs vies en traversant les frontières pour arriver aux pays plus riches, et aux économies offrant de meilleures opportunités.

Tandis qu'il y a autant d'approches spécifiques à l'allègement de la pauvreté qu'il y'a de praticiens des Organisations de la Société Civile (OSCs), un fait reste frappant - la plupart des gens conviennent que la cause principale de la pauvreté est l'inégalité d'opportunité. Ce sont ceux en positions de richesse et de pouvoir qui perpétuent la souffrance des moins riches. Les politiques et les pratiques de gouvernement et du secteur commercial privent le citoyen, en particulier le citoyen vivant dans la pauvreté, d'équité et de justice. Sans possibilité de parler et d'être entendu dans les salles du pouvoir, les pauvres sont condamnés à la marginalisation et resteront longtemps victimes.

De plus en plus, les OSCs concentrent leurs efforts d'allègement de pauvreté sur le plaidoyer et l'influence. Pour beaucoup

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d'entre nous, la simple logique de changer les pratiques des corporations multinationales, des institutions intergouvernementales, et des gouvernements nationaux afin de concentrer l'attention sur des politiques pro-pauvres est bien évidente. Nous savons ce qu'il faut faire, et nous ne sommes pas timides pour dire ce que nous pensons celui qui nous prête oreille. CIVICUS, et beaucoup de nos membres, possède un statut consultatif aux Nations unies, et maintient des rapports avec la Banque mondiale et d'autres acteurs internationaux dans l'effort d'éradiquer la pauvreté. Qu'est-ce que cela signifie, en fait? Nous y sommes afin de consultation, avec l'espoir d'influencer les institutions puissantes. Et de la part de qui? Pouvons-nous honnêtement prétendre représenter et exprimer la voix du peuple?

Les organisations de la société civile, fussent-elles locales, régionales, ou internationales, par définition ne sont pas représentants élus du peuple. Cette réalité ne diminue pas la légitimité de notre participation, mais elle nous met devant un grand défi. Comment les OSCs peuvent-ils développer des structures de gouvernance qui garantiront qu'elles seront gérées par le public qu'elles prétendent représenter, et ne pas exposant simplement des

philosophies de développement conçues aux universités et aux établissements du Nord?



Children attending class in a school in Netrakona, Bangladesh. Photo: Donald Maynard

Tragiquement, la question de pauvreté est celle qui restera centrale à la société civile pour le futur prévisible. Dans ce numéro de CIVICUS World nous présentons des profils brefs des philosophies d'allègement de pauvreté de deux de nos membres, ACTIONAID Kenya et la Fondation Mott. L'une travaille avec des communautés pauvres en Afrique, l'autre avec ceux qui vivent dans l'ombre de la richesse vaste qui existe aux Etats-Unis. Il est frappant de constater qu'il n'y a pas tellement de différences entre leurs programmes, mais bien des ressemblances.

En tant que mouvement se consacrant à la participation des

citoyens, CIVICUS est préoccupé surtout avec l'assurance que les voix des pauvres en tant que citoyens font partie du

processus social. Il arrive trop souvent que les pauvres sont spectateurs à un processus dans lequel ils devraient être des acteurs principaux. Les programmes d'allègement de pauvreté sont conduits uniquement ou principalement par les experts qui voient les pauvres principalement comme bénéficiaires plutôt que des agents actifs avec une abondance de connaissance qui peuvent apporter des contributions positives aux stratégies d'allègement de pauvreté. Au cours des dix dernières années nous avons assisté à plusieurs tentatives positives par des organisations de la société civile d'obliger leurs gouvernements, aussi bien

que les établissements multilatéraux à prendre le temps de dialoguer avec les pauvres avec une plus grande intégrité et humilité. Ce n'est pas simplement une question de "politiquement correct". Cela concerne plutôt la capacité de comprendre mieux ce qui est nécessaire, comment cela pourrait être atteint, qui devrait être impliqué, et quel rôle les pauvres peuvent jouer dans la mise en œuvre d'une certaine forme d'intervention dans le développement. C'est pour cette raison que CIVICUS continuera à mettre en exergue le rôle des citoyens, ceux qui vivent dans la pauvreté aussi bien que ceux qui possèdent les qualifications, les ressources et la connaissance à mettre en contribution, comme points critiques à relever les défis de l'éradication de la pauvreté.

Kumi Naidoo

Un Mensaje del Secretario General

"Esto es sobre poder estructural. A menos que cambiemos las reglas del juego en nuestra sociedad no seremos capaces de producir cambios reales. Los impuestos no generarán los cambios, ni tampoco 20-20 porque el principio básico de la

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sociedad actual es aumentar las ganancias al costo de los seres humanos y el medioambiente. Esto no es un asunto de que los ricos sean malas personas."

Estas palabras, expresadas por un participante de la Asamblea de Civicus en Manila en 1999, dice mucho sobre la realidad de la pobreza y de los esfuerzos para terminar con ésta en el siglo 21. Desde el comienzo del registro de la historia del hombre, las respuestas humanitarias a la escasez han impulsado a la sociedad civil y la filantropía. Tal vez no exista otro tema tan relacionado con la razón de ser de la sociedad civil como el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de la gente. Para algunos, esto significa mejores escuelas y instituciones comunitarias. Para otros, el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de sus comunidades significa ayudar a los padres a encontrar nuevas formas de alimentar a sus hijos, cómo enfrentar los tiempos de hambruna y cómo sobrevivir las enfermedades que golpean a los más débiles y desnutridos.

A pesar de los altos objetivos acordados en la Conferencia de la ONU en Copenhague en 1995, la pobreza continua afectando a cada comunidad en el mundo. A todos nos son familiares las imágenes de niños muriéndose de hambre en África y Asia. Estados Unidos, con la economía más rica del mundo y una aparente lista sin fin de

nuevos ricos, también es el hogar de millones de familias que sobreviven con menos de lo mínimo establecido para vivir por los órganos oficiales. En tanto en Europa, los refugiados arriesgan sus vidas para cruzar las fronteras de los más prósperos países en busca de mejores condiciones y oportunidades económicas.

Mientras hay tantas posturas diferentes de cómo aliviar la pobreza como existen trabajadores de la sociedad civil, el factor en que la mayoría concuerda es que la raíz de la pobreza es la falta de igualdad de oportunidades. Son los en posiciones de riqueza y poder quienes han perpetuado el sufrimiento de los menos privilegiados. Igual responsabilidad han tenido las políticas y prácticas gubernamentales y empresariales que han privado a los ciudadanos, particularmente esos que viven en la pobreza, de igualdad y justicia. Sin la posibilidad de hablar o ser escuchados en los salones del poder, los pobres están condenados a la marginación y convertirse en víctimas.

Crecientemente, las organizaciones de la sociedad civil han focalizado sus iniciativas de aliviación de la pobreza en esfuerzos de movilización y generación de influencia. Para muchos de nosotros la simple lógica de transformar las prácticas de las corporaciones multi-

nacionales, instituciones intergubernamentales y gobiernos nacionales en políticas enfocadas a los pobres es tremendamente obvio. Sabemos lo que se debería hacer y no nos atemoriza decir lo que pensamos a todo quien esté dispuesto a escuchar. CIVICUS, así como muchos de nuestros miembros, goza de un estatus consultivo en las Naciones Unidas y tiene mantiene una relación con el Banco Mundial y otros actores internacionales en los esfuerzos para erradicar con la pobreza. Sin embargo, ¿qué significa realmente eso?. Estamos ahí con el propósito de ser consultados, con la esperanza de influenciar estas poderosas instituciones. Pero a quiénes representamos realmente? Podemos honestamente decir que somos la voz de la gente?

Las organizaciones de la sociedad civil, sean ellas locales, regionales o internacionales, son por definición representantes no elegidos por la gente. Aunque en realidad no disminuye la legitimidad de nuestra participación, representa un gran desafío para nosotros. Cómo las organizaciones de la sociedad civil pueden desarrollar estructuras que garanticen que ellos están motivados por aquellos a quienes se asegura representar y no simplemente presentado elaboradas filosofías creadas en universidades e instituciones en el norte?

El problema de la pobreza se mantendrá como una preocupación central para la sociedad civil. En esta edición de CIVICUS World presentamos una breve presentación de las políticas de alivio de la pobreza de dos de nuestros miembros, ACTIONAID Kenia y Mott Foundation. Uno trabaja con comunidades pobres en la zona del Sub Sahara Africano y el otro con la gente que vive apartada de la vasta riqueza presente en Estados Unidos. Lo importante a destacar no son las diferencias sino que las similitudes entre los dos programas.

Kumi Naidoo

CS Mott Foundation's Pathways Out of Poverty Program

By Kevin Walker, Program Director, Pathways Out of Poverty Program

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The United States enters the new century riding a remarkable wave of affluence. However, our clout in the global marketplace has not enabled us to beat poverty at home. The official national poverty rate was 12.7 percent in 1998, worse than it was in 1969. One in five children under age six lives in poverty. Yet these facts have not produced a national sense of urgency around an anti-poverty agenda.

Perhaps the country is mesmerized by its own prosperity. The news of bull markets, Internet millionaires, and budget surpluses has created, for some Americans, a euphoric sense of plenty. A popular financial magazine even went so far as to shout on its cover, "Everyone's Getting Rich!" But for millions who have not tasted the fruits of the recent good times, that headline is a slap in the face. What are low-income Americans supposed to think – that "everyone" no longer includes them?

The good times have come with a high social cost: a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots in

American society. Since 1977, incomes among the top 20 percent of U.S. earners have grown 43 percent, while those in the bottom 20 percent have seen their incomes shrink by 9 percent.

Our booming economy has put many people to work and made many others more affluent. But it has become increasingly clear that those who had little at the start of the current expansion – in terms of assets, educational attainment, and employment skills – have gained far less, or lost ground. Why? The answer is that poor people (and people of color – issues of race continue to lie at the heart of America's poverty dilemma) have found themselves largely excluded from real opportunity. Civil society organizations have chosen a variety of leverage points for addressing this inequality of opportunity, tackling such interlocking issues as housing, health care, childcare, transportation, and urban decay. At the C.S. Mott Foundation, we have built our domestic Pathways Out of Poverty program around three pillars: education, community engagement, and economic opportunity.

In education, we seek to build on the foundation's legacy of support for community education, which is the capacity of people to mobilize their community's assets and

resources around the educational needs of children, youth, and families. The concept began with C.S. Mott's notion that the schools in his adopted hometown of Flint, Michigan, could become thriving centers of civic life if they kept their doors open after the school day ended, offering a safe and nurturing learning environment for all residents. From that vision of the "lighted schoolhouse," the foundation has fashioned a history of support that today includes a range of grantmaking for community-driven educational opportunities in low-income communities. We see such opportunities as crucial because educational attainment is one of the strongest indicators of future earnings. Poor schools in poor communities perpetuate the pattern of exclusion; good schools that respond to the community's needs can help break that pattern.

In community engagement, we have been guided by Mr. Mott's insight that "every person, always, is in a kind of informal partnership with his community." The Foundation's grantmaking seeks to ensure that, for low-income Americans, that partnership is strong and effective. We have done this by seeding local community improvement efforts nationwide. We make annual grants

to intermediary organizations which identify emerging groups and re-grant Mott funds to nurture their evolution. In recent years, we have also invested in the development of organizing networks, which enable local communities to link up with others in order to make their voices heard on the state, regional, or even national level. Our intent is to provide poor people and their organizations with the tools to speak for themselves, to shape the decisions that affect their lives. Without such tools, impoverished communities tend to remain isolated and disempowered. It has been the Foundation's experience over the decades that it takes an organized community to build and sustain pathways out of poverty for its members.

In economic opportunity, Mott focuses on making work pay while promoting the development of a work-based social safety net. In 1996, the U.S. Congress passed welfare reform legislation that replaced a decades-old system of supports with a new, work-oriented approach. The new model puts time limits on benefits and requires recipients to enter the workforce. As a result, millions have left the welfare rolls for work. The down side is that many of the jobs former wel-

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ActionAid Kenya

Poverty in Kenya

The people of Kenya are getting poorer. Population has been growing at 2.9% each year and is currently about 30 million. Growth of national income, however, was only 1.7% in 1998-99 and is expected to be only 1.4% in 1999-2000. More than half the population lives on less than a dollar a day, and this number is increasing. Growing numbers of children do not enrol in school and increasing numbers of enrolled children are dropping out of school. Drought currently has the country in its grip, leading the President to request international food aid for over three-quarters of the population. Infrastructure, such as roads, is crumbling. All over the country, 12-hour

power cuts face both homes and industries for the next six months. Urban crime is on the increase. Decay and degeneration is slowly becoming the norm in Kenya; a sorry state in the broad context of a world that grows more prosperous each day.

Why is Kenya getting poorer? With a relatively low population density and high in natural endowments, the country offered great promise at the time of its independence from colonial rule in 1963. It is now among the world's poorest and is also the second most unequal, with 10% of the population owning 47% of the country's meagre resources.

Amartya Sen's theory of entitlements provides a useful conceptual framework to

understand absolute poverty. Entitlements are based on what one produces, or can trade, or one's own labour, or transfers from others that one can expect from legally instituted mechanisms (including social security).

These entitlements can be exchanged for a basket of goods and services that include adequate nutrition, shelter, education and so on. If a person's entitlement set is inadequate, then the conditions of absolute poverty (hunger, inability to attend school, and so on) become manifest. People starve when



Water collection at a community managed kiosk, Kenya.
Photo: Liba Taylor © ActionAid

their exchange entitlements drop to levels that are unable to sustain life itself. Why are the exchange entitlements of the majority of Kenyans so low that they must live with hunger and deprivation?

Absolute poverty is caused and perpetuated by adverse power relationships that generate social inequities, and

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fare recipients have taken do not pay a sufficient wage to lift families above the poverty line. Further, the law's "work first" emphasis sends people into the labor force with minimal training or education, meaning they may find it difficult or impossible to advance into permanent careers. Another challenge is that many welfare recipients will have difficulty finding and keeping jobs because they face multiple barriers to employment, ranging from childcare

problems and lack of transportation to substance abuse and depression. Mott's grant-making seeks to expand economic opportunity for low-income Americans by demonstrating how public policies might increase labor force participation and make work pay, yet provide an adequate safety net for those who truly cannot work.

In a sense, Mott's Pathways Out of Poverty program, which awarded US\$48.8 mil-

lion in grants in 1999, is an attempt to help our nation live up to its core values. Americans think of our country as "the land of opportunity." But in the land of opportunity, during prosperous times, is it right that one in five young children should live in poverty? Is it right that a young person growing up poor should go to a failing school and leave there with nothing of value? Is it right that a mother who leaves the welfare rolls to take a job

should work full-time, or more than full-time, but remain mired in poverty? Is it right that poor people should have no say in the decisions that shape their communities and their lives, simply because they have no money?

Most Americans would agree that none of these things is right. That is why, in these good economic times, the U.S. must attack poverty with renewed vigor. If not now, when?

ActionAid Kenya



Maize harvest in Kenya Photo: Liba Taylor c ActionAid

combine to deny citizens their basic rights. It is the relative (weak) position of the poor that erodes their meagre endowments and exchange entitlements and so causes poor conditions. Poverty is not caused by the lack of access to schooling, or health facilities, or employment opportunities. Hunger, illiteracy, ill health, and low incomes are some of the manifestations of absolute poverty. These are the descriptive conditions that the poor are confronted with. They are symptoms, not causes.

Under colonial rule, the elite were the minority white settlers. Independence changed little for the poor with a new set of political elites appropriating power and wealth. A highly centralized government has ruled through patronage to the few and the marginalisation of the many. While the vast majority of rural dwellers eke a meagre living from less than two hectares of land, 500 families each own more than 1000

hectares of prime agricultural land.

Corruption and the misappropriation of state owned resources by a powerful minority has bled the country. Mismanagement has pushed the country deeper and deeper into debt and has made it dependent on condition-

alities prescribed by the international finance institutions. These have resulted in the reduction of expenditure on social services such as health care and education and the imposition of user fees to gain access to primary schools and health clinics. At the national level, we must conclude that poverty has been perpetuated and exacerbated by a failure of governance. Inadequate policy formulation and implementation, a culture of impunity that permits a few to steal without fear of retribution, lack of participation by stakeholders (especially the poor) has led to the erosion of endowments and entitlements.

Globalization is an irreversible force that can be harnessed for good as well as bad. In Kenya, the weight of debt and donor pressure led to uncoordinated liberalisation of the economy. It has failed to generate the expected foreign direct investment. Instead, at least two industries – textiles and sugar – have collapsed due to the

dumping of cheap exports in the market. Unemployment grows steadily as urban youth find little alternatives but to take to crime. Policies emanating from the World Trade Organization currently emphasise the rights of powerful interests, notably transnational corporations. These need to shift to focus on the basic rights of the poor, protecting their livelihoods and ensuring that basic needs are met.

Even at the household and local levels, distorted power relationships promote poverty. An example is the subordination of women. They are "second-class" citizens who face legal and cultural barriers in the ownership of property and participation in civic life. Inheritance laws favour the male offspring. Female adult illiteracy is twice as high as male illiteracy. There are few women in local and national government. They have little "voice" in matters that affect them most.

ActionAid-Kenya recognises that it is the relative position of the poor that affects their condition. It identifies imbalances of power at the household, local, national and global levels as promoters of social inequities and the unjust distribution of resources. It works with the poor to improve their capabilities, so

that they are increasingly empowered and can exert influence over institutions that affect their basic rights.

Across Kenya, ActionAid works with over a million poor people helping to build organizational strength and capacity of community based organizations (CBOs).

ActionAid is increasingly moving beyond service delivery. This addresses only the condition of the poor, and is inherently unsustainable.

Empowerment permits sustainable change to policy and governance, shifting resources and laws in favour of the basic rights of citizens.

ActionAid-Kenya also supports the development of a vibrant civil society sector through partnerships with over 50 local NGOs. It has a strong research and advocacy function that pressures state and market actors to respect the basic rights of the poor. It forms coalitions with other NGOs to challenge unjust policies and laws. It supports the growth and development of CBO and NGO networks so that a broader movement for better governance, the rule of law, and pro-poor policies develops. It examines issues not just at the local level but also at national and global levels recognising that all contribute to perpetuating injustice.

Resource Center

ActionAid

ActionAid works with over five million of the world's poorest people in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. ActionAid's vision is a world without poverty – a high ideal, but one they are convinced can be achieved.

Fighting poverty together, ActionAid's strategy for 1999 to 2003, turns this conviction into four specific goals for concentrated effort:

- Helping poor people exercise their basic rights
- strengthening the movement against poverty
- promoting change internationally
- improving gender equity



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Synergos (USA)

Synergos is a nonprofit institute dedicated to developing effective, sustainable,

and locally based solutions to global poverty, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Working with partners, Synergos seeks to reduce poverty by strengthening the capacity of grant-making organizations and bridging leaders in developing countries. Synergos encourages civil society organizations to work with the other two major sectors in society to seek poverty solutions. Synergos believes that organized philanthropy and strong, charismatic, bridging leaders are the two critical ingredients in the formation of a healthy civil society sector.

Synergos strengthens the role of philanthropy and citizen leadership in social development through two programs: Global Philanthropy and Bridging Leadership. The former provides a range of capacity-building services to strengthen foundations and promotes organized philanthropy and the latter gives training, shares experience, documents examples of bridging leadership, and assists corporations, governments and civil society to more regularly incorporate bridging approaches into their problem solving. Synergos is supported worldwide by private foundations, international agencies, corporations and individual contributions.



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Australian Council for Overseas Aid

The Australian Council for Overseas Aid aims to create a vehicle to



enable government to relate to the NGO community more easily. The quality and level of Australia's foreign aid and the role of NGOs in it remain central themes of ACFOA's work. Since 1965 ACFOA has enabled Australian NGOs to share information and analysis of the turmoil in Eastern Zaire and more recently, the famine in North Korea. In a new development, ACFOA has turned attention to the training needs of NGOs dealing with crisis situations, running two major courses during the year, in cooperation with other key players in emergency settings. ACFOA Human Rights has an increased focus at present, thanks to the availability of project funding, with particular attention on Burma and Sri Lanka. ACFOA also has work on environment and gender issues and HIV/AIDS programs.

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Resource Center

Ford Foundation

One of the main goals of the Ford Foundation is to reduce poverty and injustice in the world. Among several programs, the Ford Foundation has developed an economic development unit that focuses in two fields: development finance and economic security and workforce development. The former provides support to organizations that help create employment opportunities and help people acquire, develop and maintain savings, investments, businesses, homes, land and other assets. The latter gives support to organizations and practices that help low-income people develop marketable job skills and acquire and retain reliable employment that provides livable wages. The Ford Foundation works mainly by making grants or loans that build knowledge and strengthen

organizations and networks. Program officers in New York, and in offices in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Latin

America and Russia, explore opportunities to pursue the Foundation's goals, formulate strategies and recommend proposals for funding.

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African Community Education Network

Mission Statement/Objectives: The African Community Education Network (ACEN) is a forum for African community educators, their groups and institutions. ACEN is also the African Region of the International Community Education Association (ICEA). Its work is guided by the vision of a dynamic, inclusive network of people, institutions, and groups committed to struggles for sustainable livelihoods, justice, and dignity which draw from the spring wells of community knowledge generation and a holistic, life-long education. ACEN is grounded in the principles of collective self-reliance and development as partnership-construction, which starts from the collective knowledge of communities. ACEN aims to make Community Education a tool for enlightened, participatory, and sustainable development, informed by the principle of lifelong, comprehensive, and inclusive education. ACEN's objectives are to be a forum and catalyst for the promotion of the theory and practice of community education in Africa; promote the creation and strengthening of national community education networks all over Africa; create a membership base of institutions, groups, and individuals, and work towards members' ownership of ACEN; promote interactive dialogues and mutual strengthening between community groups committed to self-education and development; and strengthen the impact of community organizations through training and other forms of improvement and empowerment of community initiatives. Programs: The programs of

ACEN are based on the key concepts in Community Education of need-satisfaction, life-long education, and citizens' participation. The key components of the Regional activities include building the capacities of the Regional Office and Sub-regional focal points to initiate and manage programs and projects; consolidating the regional network; promoting training in leadership, management, and entrepreneurship development as a means of empowering community groups; information-sharing, through publications and dissemination, to promote community education and interactive networking; ensuring the region's effective participation at the 8th ICEA World Conference; and peace education that exposes communities to concepts of peace building as a key ingredient in development. During 1996, specific project proposals were developed for the following activities— "Seminar on Boundaries and Horizons in Community Education in Africa" and Sub-regional coordinators' consultations; Gender-sensitive community education for peace; familiarization, membership recruitment, and evaluation mission by the regional director; and a National Grassroots Reflection Training Workshop on Community Education and Needs Assessment.

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Resource Center

AMEL Association

Mission Statement/Objectives: The Amel Association— "Together for a Sustainable Development"— works to achieve a balanced and sustainable development to build society on the basis of social justice and through respect of freedoms and rights in health care, food, housing, work, a healthy environment, and democracy. Specific objectives include 1) the struggle against sickness in all its forms by prevention and care, while working to create and popularize projects of public interest; 2) ensuring work opportunities for all citizens, especially women and the handicapped, through projects and services necessitated by public interest; 3) mother and child health care; 4) working on alphabetization courses, fighting ignorance, poverty, and deprivation of all kind, and participating in solving citizens' social problems; 5) material and moral help, especially for the displaced, by providing them with food and clothing; 6) creating projects to re-value Lebanese heritage; 7) cooperating closely with public and private associations for planning and establishing activities offered by these associations, in the domains of promotion and development of social and medical services; and 8) striving for respect of individual freedoms and the defense of human rights. **Programs:** AMEL develops and maintains health care facilities throughout Lebanon. The Association also sends the wounded abroad for treatment and secures prosthetics for the handicapped during wartime. Future projects include the building of two hospitals, a rehabilitation centre, and cooperation with national and international agencies to carry out various national projects

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Approtech Asia

Mission Statement/Objectives: Established in 1980, APPROTECH ASIA aims to increase the access of Asia's poor to the technologies and processes that are appropriate and relevant to their needs and for expanding capacities. To undertake its commitment, APPROTECH ASIA has three main goals: to promote and facilitate the exchange and transfer of appropriate technology, with international understanding and cooperation; to stimulate and facilitate the discussion and promotion of sustainable development issues and policies among policy-makers and social development practitioners; and to strengthen and develop networking strategies and mechanisms for international cooperation and sharing. **Programs:** Approtech Asia carried out the following activities— 1) Development and Dissemination- development of new technologies and technology transfer; 2) Training and Promotional Services- seminars and workshops, exchange programs, publications, and other media support materials; 3) Information Systems Development- information management capability and communications networking; 4) Membership Development- management capability

building and institutional development; and 5) Consultancy Services- provision of expertise in appropriate technology development.

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Asociación Civil Servicio de Apoyo Local – SOCSAL

Mission Statement/Objectives: The mission of the Asociación Civil Servicio de Apoyo Local (SOCSAL) is to promote and support sustainable human development through the strengthening of local development processes, of civil society, and of those initiatives that correspond with the above. **Programs:** SOCSAL's program in local development includes the strengthening of public and private institutions and alliances, as well as their actions, in order to increase the impact of socio-economic, political, and environmental development in local areas. The program includes apprenticeships, training, research, communication, and financial support. The Cooperation and Education in Development program includes raising awareness, education, and support of agencies and programs of cooperation, for adequate use of their resources of development support. The program includes various information

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services; training; operating, financial and technical support; and support for communication, evaluation, continuation, and apprenticeships in project management.

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Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh

Mission Statement/Objectives: The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) is an apex body monitoring the local, national, and international PVDOs (NGOs) engaged in developmental activities in the country. Born in 1974 as the Association of Voluntary Organizations in Bangladesh (AVAB), the Association has had to redefine its aims and strategies over the years in order to address current demands. After shifting from its initial emphasis-interchanging ideas and coordinating various international aid agencies involved in relief and rehabilitation activities- to agricultural development and food production, it became in 1983 an association of nongovernmental agencies working in Bangladesh. This is the function that it has served since then. The dream of ADAB is that of an independent NGO-sector strong enough to play effective roles in assuring better living to the unprivileged timid millions. Towards creating an atmosphere congenial to the

realization of this dream, measures being considered by ADAB for playing the lead roles are coordination, monitoring, networking, and advocacy. Programs: From its inception, ADAB has been stressing the development of the programs and managerial skills of the member agencies through providing them with need-based services and assistance. Along with these, it has continued lobbying and advocacy at various levels in order to create a facilitative atmosphere for poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor undertaken by the nongovernmental development sector. As a coordinating agency, ADAB is interested in the decentralization of its role through the provision of all-out assistance to the sectoral fora. Meanwhile, a good number of sectoral fora and issue-based alliances have come into being through direct as well as indirect assistance from the ADAB. The two main areas of ADAB's program are 1) coordinating, sector monitoring, networking, and liaison, and 2) advocacy, policy lobbying, linkages, and development communication.

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Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development

Mission Statement/Objectives: The mission of the Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development is to fos-

ter civil society in Egypt with a specific interest regarding the collaboration of all-NGOs, individuals, and the state- with the goal of establishing, developing, and applying a national education policy. The Association believes that Egypt must teach its children how to build a new society with their brothers and sisters around the world- a new society founded in social, economic and cultural development, respect of human rights, and environmental protection. The Association acknowledges that this is a difficult task, since the gap between the developing societies and the "developed" world- rich in technical methods- is so enormous. Furthermore, issues such as unemployment and the growing disintegration of society add to the complexity of meeting the needs of education. So it is in this area that the Association focuses its work, using innovative pedagogical means to give children an easily accessible education program. The Association, who works with and for the marginalized peoples in society, is firmly convinced that those persons have a right to a quality education which will liberate them from the constraints of their economic and social condition. Programs: The Association has various strategies, including 1) The harmonious development of all aspects of a child's personality- their body, intelligence, spirit, and sensibility; 2) Guaranteeing quality educators through their selection, education, motivation, training, and review of their work; 3) Encouraging the child's contribution to his or her own education; 4) The use of the school as a meeting ground between village leaders and the local population, where all work together for the development of their society; 5) Linking the scholastic program with a

Resource Center

child's life conditions; 6) Combining the education and development programs with the goal of responding in a homogeneous manner to the needs of the family; 7) Dialogues with the education administrators at all levels; and 8) Maintaining free education. With this comprehensive approach to the development of society, programs initiated by the Association include literacy programs that address children (in parallel schools) and adults; women's advancement; youth formation in leadership and vocational training; cultural development; primary health care that combines curative, preventative, and educational aspects together; and income-generating microprojects through small loans to the poorest beneficiaries.

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Society for Rural Development

Mission Statement/Objectives: The mission of the Society for Rural Development (SRD) is to raise the awareness of the people (especially women, poor, and deprived) to the causes of their present situation and its consequences; to facilitate and support poor women and the socially or culturally backwards to solve their problems through organizing, empowering, and building confidence in communities; to provide resources to local organizations for self-reliance to establish civil society; to conduct various activities for environmental protection; and to organize training seminars and symposium in order to increase the skills of the rural. Programs: SRD in rural development concentrates on organizing people and institutionalizing them so that they can plan activities that are most relevant and beneficial to them. SRD does not believe in structural changes in development unless the confidence, self-esteem, and self-respect of the deprived people will be improved as well. SRD started its first rural development activities through non-formal education in Madan Kudari Village of Madan VC in Kavre District. SRD has already initiated its

activities in Madan, Kartike Deurali, Nala, Anepa, Panchkal and Anekot VDC of Kavre District through a functional literacy group with Tamang, Bramin, Damai, Newar, and other ethnic groups, hoping that they will organize to initiate the process of their own development. SRD has expanded its rural development and people organizing activities in Ramechap District with Thami and Majhiethmic groups, providing them with essential basic services and health care. SRD has played an active role in maintaining and protecting human rights as well as the environment. SRD has completed two more drinking water projects and school buildings. The organization has offered membership to the following organizations: Panchkal Youth Club, Kavre; Kavre Village Development Society, Kavre; Suryodaya Youth Club, Nala; and Roshi Youba Club, Katunje Besi.

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Member News

NEW MEMBERS

- Indus Resource Centre**
Pakistan
- Louise Redmond, Positive Outcomes**
Australia
- Southern California Association for Philanthropy**
USA
- Academy for Educational Development**
USA
- Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, Inc**
Philippines
- CARE Bangladesh**
Bangladesh
- AFS Intercultural Program**
USA
- Civil Society Promotion Center**
Bosnia-Herzegovina*
- Program on Law and Global Philanthropy, University of Pittsburgh**
USA
- United Nations Environment and Development Forum**
England
- Grassroots Development Organization**
Nigeria
- African Dignity Foundation**
Nigeria
- International Center for Development Affairs**
Nigeria
- Grade Banlieue**
Mali*
- Nkong Hill Top Common Initiative Group**
Cameroon
- Pilot Centre for Educational Programming**
Cameroon
- National Institute for Governance, U. Canberra**
Australia
- Wallace R. Baker**
France

The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

NICVA is the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action the representative body for voluntary, community and charitable groups in Northern Ireland.

As well as representing our sector's interests in Northern Ireland, NICVA provides over 700 member organisations with information, advice and training on a wide range of issues.

Voluntary and community organisations or non-governmental organisations play a huge role in the life of Northern Ireland. There is a high level of public participation in voluntary action.

NICVA itself was established in 1938 and has continued to develop over 60 years. NICVA believes that the voluntary and community sector is playing a critical role in the development of a more participative democracy in Northern Ireland.

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America Speaks

The mission of America Speaks, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, is to strengthen US democracy by creating mechanisms for ensuring that the actions of the elected office holders reflect the will of the citizens. America Speaks attempts to resolve these questions:

- What structures and processes of gover-

nance can we fashion so that citizens can once again participate authentically in the policy decisions which are made in their names to solve their problems?

- How can we instill in our system of governance a degree of hopefulness so that Americans will once again believe that America can reasonably define and resolve its critical problems...that life can once again be better for our children?

These questions reflect two fundamental issues facing American governance: strengthening the structures and processes by which citizens shape their practice of democracy, and safeguarding the faith necessary to preserve our democracy. The answers hold the key to the future viability as an increasingly diverse, economically divided, and information-rich nation.

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Transparency International

Transparency International is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to increasing government accountability and curbing both international and national corruption.

The movement has multiple concerns:

- humanitarian, as corruption undermines and distorts development and leads to

Member News

increasing levels of human rights abuse;

- democratic, as corruption undermines democracies and in particular the achievements of many developing countries and countries in transition;
- ethical, as corruption undermines a society's integrity; and
- practical, as corruption distorts the operations of markets and deprives ordinary people of the benefits which should flow from them.

The Agenda

Combating corruption sustainably is only possible with the involvement of all the stakeholders which include the state, civil society and the private sector. Through National Chapters Transparency International brings together people of integrity in civil society, business and government to work as coalitions for systemic reforms.

Building National Integrity Systems

TI takes an holistic view of National Integrity Systems. Simply strengthening prosecution and judicial powers cannot by itself curtail corruption. The National

Integrity Source Book provides a framework and a standard reference point for reformers, it describes practical steps that can be taken in each sector of society and contains a vast best practice documentation.

Building an International Framework

Corruption often transcends the national level. This is increasingly acknowledged by key international actors. Working closely with a growing number of international organisations now starting to address the issue, TI plays a catalytic role in defining and implementing the international agenda against corruption. A key concern is to monitor the implementation of the OECD anti-bribery convention.

Contact

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The Big Issue in Scotland Ltd.

The Big Issue in Scotland is a social initiative launched in June 1993 to help the homeless help themselves.

The concept

The idea behind The Big Issue concept came from Gordon Roddick, Chairman of The Body Shop. It was launched by founder A. John Bird in London in September 1991. Initially the paper was a monthly tabloid, sold on the streets by people who were homeless. It is now a weekly magazine with 2,000 vendors selling 100,000 copies per week.

The London Big Issue team, led by John Bird, were alarmed at the number of homeless people from Scotland travelling to London to sell the magazine. It became clear that Scotland needed its own Big Issue.

The Big Issue in Scotland

The Big Issue in Scotland was launched on 25 June 1993 by current co-directors Mel Young and Tricia Hughes. Their joint backgrounds in publishing, housing and community work make them the ideal force behind the initiative.

The Big Issue in Scotland began with 80 vendors selling 25,000 copies of the magazine per fortnight in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Since 1993, approximately 3,000 vendors have been badged-up to sell, with between 600 and 1,000

working at any given time from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Glenrothes. Sales average 80,000 per week.

The Big Issue in Scotland is a non-profit making company, limited by guarantee. The paper is self-financing through advertising, subscriptions and industry sponsorship. As profits accrue, they are passed directly into The Social Iceberg Foundation (Scotland) - a charity which is devoted to the provision of support services for homeless people.

Contact

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Calendar of Events

August 19–23, 2001

CIVICUS Fourth World Assembly. 19–23 August, 2001, Vancouver, Canada “Putting the Citizen at the Center: Strengthening Volunteerism and Participatory Democracy.” **Contact:** Shabna Ali, 2001 World Assembly Conference Manager, *E-mail:* shabna@attglobal.net. *Web:* www.civicus.org.

March 15–16, 2001

Independent Sector, Spring Research Forum 2001 “Impact of Information Technology on Civil Society” Washington DC, USA. **Contact:** *E-mail:* khume@independentsector.org. *Web:* www.independentsector.org.

April 4–7, 2001

The National Service-Learning Conference, “Partnerships for a Civil Society,” Denver, Colorado. The conference will focus on eight pathways: Education and Literacy, Social Justice and Global Citizenship, Community Development, Youth Leadership, Diversity, The Environment, Research and Policy, and Spirituality. **Contact:** *E-mail:* conference@nylc.org. *Web:* www.nylc.org.

April 30–May 2, 2001

Council on Foundations, 52nd Annual Conference, Philadelphia, USA. **Contact:** Angelique Wilkins, *E-mail:* wilka@cof.org.

May 2–4, 2001

Global Meeting of Generations Partnership Conference, Washington, DC. “Focus on generational inclusion for equitable development.” **Contact:** Kirsten Gelinias, *E-Mail:* kgelinas@idc.org.

14–20 May, 2001

Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Brussels, 14 – 20 May 2001, Venue: European Parliament. *Web:* www.unctad.org/en/subsites/ldcs/3-review.htm.

August 31–September 7, 2001

World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, South Africa. *Web:* www.un.org/rights/racism/.

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. Its members include nongovernmental and voluntary organizations, donor/corporate organizations, and interested individuals from more than 95 countries. Through its international Board of Directors, staff, regional conveners, and Task Forces, CIVICUS works with its members to increase and strengthen the lines of communication among its constituency using its newsletter and other publications, a growing database of information on civil society organizations around the world, representation at international, regional, and national meetings, and other forms of communication.

CIVICUS World is the newsletter of CIVICUS and is published six times a year. It is posted free to all members. Contributions of news, reports, publications, or other subjects of interest to our members are welcome. Please send all contributions, questions and/or comments to:

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