

# The Upstream Journal

A woman wearing a vibrant, multi-colored woven headscarf and a matching patterned blouse is laughing heartily. She is holding a basket filled with fresh produce, including red tomatoes and green leafy vegetables. The background is a lush green field, possibly a farm or market.

## Poor and female in Bolivia

Practical responses from community initiatives

## “Women’s gold”

Shea butter of West Africa

## Culture gap

A Guatemalan woman reflects on her first visit to Canada

## Canadian aid with a political bias?

Conflicting views on funding of Haitian women’s groups

## Mesurer la violence à l’égard des femmes

La difficulté de trouver un consensus

## Afghani woman in Montreal builds community

Profile of Makai Harif

## Lived realities challenge market assumptions

How women are changing the dominant economic paradigm

Also:

A new Foreign Affairs Minister - does it make a difference?

Human rights and the trade deal with Colombia

Justice for Hector Reyes

# Women & empowerment through community-based economics

Cover & inside photos, of Guatemalen women at work, by Paul Lemieux

**Red Beets in Vinegar (Ensalada de Remolacha)**

“This simple salad is the principal way Guatemalan cooks prepare red beets.” (From the “Extending the Table” cookbook).

Cook until tender in salted water:

1 large whole red beet or several small ones

Peel and slice, the combine with:

1 small onion, sliced

½ cup vinegar (I used Balsamic vinegar)

salt and pepper to taste

Chill or serve at room temperature



**New education programs coordinator**

We are pleased to welcome Cathy Giulietti as the SJC’s new coordinator of public education programs, taking over from Margo Foster. We benefited from Margo’s energy and abilities for almost two years, and wish her well in Toronto doing graduate studies. Cathy brings a wealth of experience in education, most recently in Ottawa with the NGO Development & Peace.

Contact Cathy by email - [cgiulietti@sjc-cjs.org](mailto:cgiulietti@sjc-cjs.org) - or by phoning the office (514 933 6797).

Many thanks go to the SJC volunteers and interns who helped create this issue, including Aviva Stahl, Roshni Veerapen, Carol Dolbel, Emmanuelle Buchard, Katherine Quast, Marguerite Mendell, Leah Gardner and Elvira Truglia. Interns Sarah Babbage and Jennefer Schulz contributed especially to the contents (Sarah) and layout (Jennefer).

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The *Upstream Journal* is a publication of the Social Justice Committee of Montreal. It is one of several educational materials we offer on human rights and development.

Donations to the SJC are welcome, and go to support a range of human rights & development education activities.

The SJC is a registered charity in Canada, and donations are tax deductible. We accept personal cheques and Visa.

Please consider making a donation and becoming a member.

You can:

- **mail** a cheque, with a note or the reply form in this *Upstream Journal*,
- **call** us (toll free in North America) at 1-877-933-6797 and use your Visa card, or
- make a secure **on-line** donation using any major credit card:  
www.sjc-cjs.org

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**SJC Annual Meeting**

25 September 2008 Venue and activity details to be announced.

Members are invited to participate in shaping the future of the SJC at this gathering to receive the Board of Directors' Report and financial statements, and to elect the Board of Directors.

The SJC Board of Directors has appointed a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of nominees for the Board of Directors and the officer positions to be elected. The Committee will accept nominations in writing from any five (5) members providing that they have the written consent of the nominee and that all nominations are in the hands of the Nominating Committee one (1) week prior to the Annual General Meeting.

## *Dear readers,*

I was reviewing approaches to story writing with Sandra, who just arrived from Austria to intern with the Upstream Journal, when somehow the conversation brought me to saying that although stories normally have endings, ours often don't. Like other stories they have characters and a plot, but conflict may not have a resolution. The stories are to some degree incomplete.

That's where you readers come in. You get to take part, and perhaps change the outcome! We hope so, at any rate. We're putting more emphasis on Canadian content in the global issues we cover, and providing more information about how you can support a worthy effort or have your say on a policy.

The challenge for us is, as always, to go "upstream" to examine not just *what* is happening but *why*.

So when we wrote about some aspects of biofuels and the global food crisis in the previous issue, I was asked why we hadn't dug deeper into the reasons for the crisis, including the role of wealthy countries and organizations like the World Bank and IMF in pushing impoverished countries to shift from subsistence farming to cash crops, leaving them at the mercy of the global market. And consider the 2007 profits for the world's largest grain traders: Cargill (US) US\$ 2,340 million, up 36% from 2006, and Archer Daniels Midland (US) US\$ 2,200 million, up 67%. (Source: GRAIN They have a thorough analysis of the food crisis at [grain.org](http://grain.org).)

And we didn't look at the dynamic of food crops that are grown for livestock - less that 20% of food crops are consumed by people - and the extent to which that is inefficient and contributes significantly to climate change. (Did you know that for most North Americans a 20% reduction in meat consumption is equal to trading the standard Camry in for a hybrid in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions?)

So it was a valid point, and I'm pleased to hear that people expect deep analysis in our magazine.

The stories in this issue provide some glimpses into a few struggles in which women are engaged, but the exploration of concepts of women's "empowerment" isn't without some aspects of controversy. For example, does the use of a word like "empowerment" in itself imply the continuation of an unfair power dynamic? It's a fair question, but in this issue we invite you to explore with us some of its aspects anyway.

The Social Justice Committee undertook its own exploration when we were fortunate enough to be able to host a group of exceptional women for the "Arriba las Mujeres" conference in Montreal a few months ago. Carol Dolbel, one of the organizers, gives us a brief review of the conference on page 18. For two days, there were workshops and panel discussions on many aspects of women's empowerment through local initiatives, with hundreds of participants, both local and from other parts of Canada, sharing experiences with the special guests we brought up from Central America.

We wanted to maximize the impact of these discussions, so we set up a web site with info on aspects of women's empowerment and hosted some other talks and film presentations. We wanted to include young women too, so we set up discussions and a workshop with Queen of Angels Academy.

Dr. Marguerite Mendell opened the conference with a reflection on how the sharing of communities' experiences contributes to the development of "a new paradigm for economic democracy committed to sustainable livelihood."

Let's hope that story, too, will have a good ending. Until next issue,



Derek MacCuish, Editor

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The SJC gratefully acknowledges funding support for the "Arriba las Mujeres! Women Building Strong Communities" conference provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Heritage Canada, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Solstice Foundation, and the many individuals who generously support our work.

# Women in



Photo courtesy of "RaeA"/flickr

A shadow of exclusion and inequality hangs over Bolivia, and it wears a woman's face, says Juan Carlos Nuñez of *Fundación Jubileo*. The most affected groups are women, youth, rural dwellers and the indigenous. Women in Bolivia face challenges in getting involved in politics or in their community; in making a living; in fighting for rights. Their lack of participation puts Bolivia's ranking on the gender-related development index at 117, out of a total of 177 countries. But in groups, women are working to overcome these challenges.

At *El Jardín de la Fantasía*, women are able to balance their family commitments with their economic needs. And at *Fundación Jubileo*, young people learn the skills they need to become astute and independent-thinking leaders in public service.

## Local people build anti-violence programs into children's programs

**“We did a lesson about child abuse so the kids could talk about their own experiences,” Ximena told me one day in Spanish.** “They told me about watching their fathers hit their mothers, about their own beatings, how being at home only sometimes felt safe. Afterwards, I went home and cried.”

I was just beginning my internship last summer in Cochabamba, Bolivia. I spent eight weeks volunteering at *El Jardín de la Fantasía*, a non-profit childcare centre for infants and toddlers that also provides supervision for older children before and after school.

It's a chaotic place. Kids escape from their classrooms when their teacher isn't looking and need to be chased back inside. The few women employed in the kitchen spend their mornings chatting as they shell peas in the sun. There is always a cloud of dust over the playground, really just a meager stretch of grassless turf and two brightly painted but broken swing sets.

*El Jardín* was founded to meet the needs of women who work in La Cancha, the large open market in the

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BY AVIVA STAHL

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city. La Cancha is a dangerous place for children to play. It's easy to get lost between the rows and rows of booths, shoppers are pushy and aggressive, and the market is situated between some of the busiest streets in the city.

Most of the children at the center live in the southern part of town, where one-bedroom shacks are commonplace and running water is a rarity. To meet the needs of the families it serves, *el Jardín* serves two meals a day and has a full time psychologist, pediatrician and physical therapist on staff. The center offers children resources they could not receive elsewhere: a dependable source of warm meals, homework help, and space away from the stress of close quarters.

I was drawn to Ximena right away. In her mid twenties, she wore an eyebrow piercing and spent her weekends playing in a punk rock band. Fiercely committed to her students, she helped me realize how profoundly violence affected the community.

The kids in her classroom were

about 9-12 years old, and just starting to see how many unfair barriers they faced to happy, healthy lives. Urban poverty, racism, alcoholism, the suffocating machismo culture - they all contributed to an epidemic of domestic and child abuse in Bolivia. Over ninety percent of the children at *el Jardín* came from abusive homes.

Ximena and the other staff at the centre inspired me to design anti-violence workshops for the parents. The *el Jardín* staff were very supportive, sending out fliers to invite the parents, finding a large room in the city to host the workshops, and even providing free childcare to the parents that evening. Even though *el Jardín* was founded to meet the needs of working mothers, many of the women we worked with were illiterate, and all of them had spent their lives constrained by traditional gender roles. How could we encourage

## Bolivia: the facts

**1** More women in Bolivia are employed in the informal sector than men.

**2** The profits women make from their micro-enterprises are about **40%** lower than the profits of male micro-entrepreneurs.

**3** **15%** of employees of male-run businesses in Bolivia are women, **82%** of female-run businesses.

**4** Women in Bolivia earn **20-30%** less than men. Women also tend to spend more of their incomes on their families, leaving less for investments.

**5** **70-90%** of owners of Bolivia's farmland are men. Where women own land, their plots are usually smaller than men's.

**6** Bolivia has the highest maternal mortality rate in South America. **602** women die for every **100 000** births.

**Aviva Stahl** is an International Development Studies student at McGill University. From New Jersey, she interned at the SJC this summer.



Women in Bolivia are taking action to improve their position in society. *El Jardín de la Fantasía* and the *Fundación Jubileo* are two groups that help women overcome challenges. Photo © Fundación Jubileo

women to speak about their experiences if their husbands were present in the room? Was it possible to design the activities so that they felt comfortable participating?

The workshops also integrated the knowledge and experience of other committed individuals from across the city. Claudia, who usually led a biweekly discussion group with teens about healthy romantic relationships, helped with a workshop for parents; playing calming music, she asked them to close their eyes and bring themselves back to their own childhoods. Natty, who had designed several workshops for parents about using non-violent methods of discipline, integrated one of her games into my workshops in which parents explored why physical punishment is unhealthy and often ineffective. Marta, who worked at a shelter for survivors of domestic abuse, gave us copies of colouring books to help women process their own experiences of violence.

Even international networking was important. Tony, who worked in Philadelphia counselling Spanish-speaking men who had been abusive, enthusiastically agreed to talk to the psychologist on staff about his work even though he had never heard of *el Jardín* before. The centre recently began offering similar therapy groups for parents.

I left Cochabamba feeling optimistic (and much more humble) having seen how successfully Ximena and the other people I met there tackled the violence in their communities.

El Jardín de la Fantasía  
[www.eljardindelafantasia.com](http://www.eljardindelafantasia.com) email: [irigoyen\\_tinajero@yahoo.es](mailto:irigoyen_tinajero@yahoo.es)

Fundación Jubileo  
<http://www.jubileobolivia.org.bo> email: [consultas@jubileobolivia.org](mailto:consultas@jubileobolivia.org)

# Training Bolivia's future leaders



Photo courtesy of *Fundación Jubileo*

BY SARAH BABBAGE

**I**n a country with a disproportionately young population, where 6 out of 10 people are under 24, youth participation is crucial to achieving representative politics. Unfortunately, Bolivia's political system is highly unbalanced, dominated by elite males.

Fundación Jubileo sees several reasons for the lack of youth involvement in politics. They are often restrained by personal factors, like early pregnancies in young couples. Getting pregnant or coming from a poor family leads young people to assume adult roles and responsibilities in order to provide for their family. They are often forced into the work world or needed to maintain the household.

The political system itself also poses challenges to youth involvement, for it is structured towards and dominated by the country's elites.

Many youth have been discouraged by the barriers posed to their entrance into Bolivian politics, said Nuñez. The only engagement they have with their communities is through sports teams, church groups, cultural organization or other youth groups.

To counteract the challenges youth face in entering politics, Jubileo works on building political capacity. At their Escuela de Gobernabilidad (School of Government), they teach participants between 15-24 how to access information and analyze themes like public management and social control. They also encourage participants to form their own politics and values, and teach them about democratic values and the culture of peace.

"We believe we are creating a generation of leaders with practical skills, but also leaders with strong ethics and a strong understanding of the reality of this country," Nuñez said.

He explained that they encourage youth to think independently, for young leaders are all too often co-opted by the traditional political system which is rife with deception, corruption and suppression.

"We hope to develop values of tolerance, respect and peace among Bolivians," Nuñez said. "We want their political outlook to be critical and purposeful." He added that women have been taking the most initiative on these themes, and that because of the roles they play as mother and educators, they are most likely to be successful in spreading these themes to others.



Jubileo dedicates itself to helping Bolivian youth overcome the obstacles of entering politics. © *Fundación Jubileo*



Women are often unable to enter the political sphere because of personal factors such as pregnancy. © *Fundación Jubileo*



Jubileo promotes independent thought and positive social values, such as peace and respect. © *Fundación Jubileo*

**Sarah Babbage** is an International Development Studies student at McGill University. From Toronto, she interned at the SJC this summer.



Lami Alhassan of Kanfiahiyili shea processing group is holding a calabash full of shea butter. Photo © Louis Stippel/USAID.

## **African women build a future with** *fair trade* **skin care**

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BY ROSHNI VEERAPEN

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**I**n 2005, the 265 women working at Burkinakarité, a network of shea butter producers in rural Burkina Faso, won a business and development award that provided them with the funds to buy their first grinding machine to produce shea butter. “Before we had the grinding mill, we had to crush the Karité nuts by hand. That was time consuming. With this mill we save a lot of time and energy, and production has gone up,” said Millogo Diara, the Burkinakarité president.

Burkinakarité eliminates the middleman, allowing women to sell directly to Western buyers and get 2-3 times more than they would through other markets.

Karité butter, as it is known in the local Dioula language, has often been referred to as “women’s gold” by the villagers of Burkina Faso. The tedious process of extracting it, involving 22 different steps, has been done primarily by rural women.

Generally grown only in the wild, shea trees serve multiple functions. The bark is used in traditional medicine to fight childhood ailments, the shell of the nut is used to repel mosquitoes, and the fruity inside produces the oil used in cooking, soap-making and skin care.

Shea nuts were Burkina Faso’s second largest export during the 1980s, but during the economic structural adjustment program of the 1990s they were neglected, as the government was forced to concentrate instead on cotton. This transition was especially costly to women in numerous poor rural communities.

But in the last decade, the shea butter industry has been revived with the support of the government, several NGOs and bilateral donors. One of the first initiatives was the Projet National Karité (PNK), a program set up to intensify shea butter production and enhance the economic position of





The Lulu Livelihoods Program supports dozens of Lulu Works processing centers, owned and operated by women, that produce shea butter moisturizer and soap. These means a substantial, sustainable, local source of income for 850 Sudanese women, their families and communities. Photo © Lulu Works/USAID.

women in rural Burkina Faso.

The PNK initiative has been supported extensively by the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) since 1997. CECI has been working to develop the capacities of rural producers and marketing associations to strengthen the position of rural shea workers in the fair trade market.

“What is very interesting about shea butter is that all revenues return to women. It is the only economic activity reserved only for African women,” said Cindy D’Auteuil, the marketing advisor of CECI’s shea butter program. “Women benefit directly from the increase in revenues and consequently an increase in living standards for themselves and their families.”

For producers and buyers following fair trade guidelines, the minimum guaranteed per-kilo price has increased. All profits are transferred

to local associations, through which rural women are able to pool their resources to purchase simple machinery such as grinding mills that would significantly improve efficiency. Since less time is required to process the shea nuts, women are able to spend more time improving technical skills as well as developing literacy, which is extremely low among shea workers.

In North America, awareness of fair trade products has been on the rise in recent years. Fair trade cosmetics are gaining popularity for their quality and environmental friendliness. A recent survey suggests that 48% of Canadian consumers would be willing to pay more for fair trade certified cosmetics.

In January of this year, CECI, in partnership with Transfair Canada, introduced fair trade certified organic shea butter to the Canadian market, and now it is available in Quebec.

Sally Richmond, a Ten Thousand

Villages store manager in Montreal, says that sales of the products were initially slow, but in April, four months after their introduction, things started to change. A Radio Canada program discussed the availability of fair trade cosmetics and the benefits they would provide rural women in West Africa striving for an independent source of income. “Suddenly people were coming in three to four times a day to buy the product,” Richmond said.

With an increasing trend toward natural, organic products free of synthetic materials, shea products like lip balms, body milks, shampoos, and massage oils have a strong appeal to Canadian consumers.

To contact Burkinakarité: BP 3492, Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso  
[info@burkinakarite.com](mailto:info@burkinakarite.com)

**Roshni Veerapen** is an intern at the SJC. She is going into her third year at McGill majoring in International Development Studies.

# My first experience in a northern country

BY ROSA GARCIA CORADO  
TRANSLATED BY CAROL DOLBEL

*The Social Justice Committee invited the Alianza por la Vida y la Paz to send a representative to Montreal to participate in the conference on women's empowerment that the Social Justice Committee organized last September. They chose Rosa to represent the network and share their experiences in community-driven cooperative farming.*

**I recently visited Canada – my first experience in a northern country – and saw how women's groups and others fight for their rights and to meet their needs, just as we do in Guatemala.**

Although Canadian women face troubles in employment and lack representation in political parties, what struck me most was the difference in living standards between Canadian and Guatemalan women.

In Canada, many women struggle against obesity, and in Guatemala many women struggle against hunger. The majority of children and youth in Canada have access to education, and salaries allow people to feed their families because food is relatively cheap. Parents provide a variety of food to their children to ensure adequate nutrition. In Guatemala, a poor family sometimes cannot even provide clean water for their children.

Farmers in Canada have tools to help them work, like tractors to cultivate the land and vehicles to transport their products to markets. They also receive subsidies from the state.

In Guatemala, women from peasant (campesino) families must make great efforts to feed their children, and often can only provide the minimum amount required for survival. The income for a peasant family in Guatemala that cultivates corn and beans does not exceed 5000 quetzales (675 dollars) a year. This limits the amount and variety of food we eat, leading to malnutrition and even death



Guatemalan women suffer triple discrimination for being female, poor, and indigenous. Photo courtesy of "ali eminov"/flickr.com

among women and girls.

Machismo affects our food intake because the best foods are given to the boys and men of the house. We are raised in a macho culture; it is instilled in us. Although we are fighting to break down these walls and are making advances, little by little, violence against Guatemalan women is extremely high, especially in the form of spousal abuse.

In terms of health care, although Canadians have some difficulties, these are nothing compared to the situation in Guatemala where we have no access to health and where the mortality rate for women continues to rise.

Guatemalan women suffer triple discrimination for being female, poor, and indigenous. This discrimination affects our lives in many ways, most particularly by the lack of basic services. Most rural communities do not have potable water, so women must collect water from rivers and lakes, and often have to travel long distances to do so. Poor families are also affected by global warming, especially droughts and floods, not just in Guatemala, but in all of Latin America.

In Guatemala, boys and girls in many communities don't have access to education, and instead spend their time working with their parents in the fields and doing household chores, leaving them no way to improve their future. For women especially, lacking education creates many fears – of looking for work, of participating in meet-



A woman washes her clothes in an unprotected spring in Guatemala. © Water For People/John Niewoehner

ings, assemblies and other public spaces, of making decisions, even if the decisions will benefit them.

Many women in Guatemala have no access to minimum wage employment because they do not have enough education or are illiterate. These women often end up employed in the houses of the wealthy, taking care of their children, cleaning, preparing meals, ironing and working twelve, fourteen or eighteen hours a day for a salary between \$75 and \$100 dollars a month - not even minimum wage. The women have no economic alternative to this exploitation aside from being economically dependent on a man – usually their husband or father.

Despite workers' low salaries, the prices of goods remain high. Although salaries have increased by 10% in 2008, the prices of basic necessities have increased by 75% and the price of traveling to worksites has increased by 50%.

The big question is how long Guatemalan men and women will tolerate these low standards of living, a result of the exclusionary policies of governments that for the last 60 years have sunk us into deep poverty and social inequality. For all of these reasons many people are organizing for their own survival, creating their own alternatives with a social vision of solidarity and fair trade against all government policies that exploit and exclude us.

From what I can see, many women in many countries have their own needs and they struggle to be heard and considered in decision making and to be represented in different spaces. This fills me with satisfaction, because we are many – fighting for our own interests, to the benefit of all.

## **World Bank urges countries to support reproductive health for women**

**A** new World Bank report says that despite a huge increase in contraception globally, 51 million unintended pregnancies in developing countries occur every year to women not using contraception. Another 25 million pregnancies occur because women's contraception fails or they use a contraceptive incorrectly.

According to the report, "Fertility Regulation Behaviors and Their Costs," 35 poor countries in Sub-Saharan Africa along with Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Djibouti, and Yemen have the world's highest birth rates (more than five children per mother) along with low levels of education, high death rates, and extreme poverty. Moreover, many poor women turn to abortion as a last-resort means of birth control. Some 68,000 women die each year as a result of unsafe abortion, while another 5.3 million suffer temporary or permanent disability as a result.

The report also says that pregnancies which are less than 15 months spaced apart more than double the risk of the mother dying. Teenage pregnancies carry a higher risk of obstetric complications such as obstructed labor, eclampsia and fistula formation, and yet teenagers are less likely to receive antenatal or obstetric care, making them twice as likely to die during childbirth as women over the age of 20.

"It's simply tragic that so many leaders in poor countries and their aid donors have allowed reproductive health programs to fall off the radar," says Joy Phumaphi, World Bank Vice President for Human Development, and former Health Minister in Botswana.

**Rosa** works with the Alliance for Life and Peace (Alianza por la Vida y La Paz) in northern Guatemala. The SJC developed and provides technical support for their web site, [www.vidaypaz.org](http://www.vidaypaz.org).

# CIDA funds controversial women's organizations

BY SARAH BABBAGE

Since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's fall from power in 2004, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been working to increase political participation among Haitian citizens. One of its top priorities has been the empowerment of women.

There has been progress. An unprecedented number of women voted in the 2006 election, 100 female candidates ran for office, and 5 bills were passed in government to

## Quick facts on Haiti

- Jean-Bertrand Aristide was first elected as President of Haiti in 1991, when he served for seven months.
- He was reelected for two more years in 1994, and again in 2000.
- In 2004, after threats of armed protest and mounting international pressure, Aristide went into exile. He left the country via a U.S. plane and it is unclear whether the Americans forced him to leave or were providing him a safe mode of exit.
- Boniface Alexandre, head of the Supreme Court of Appeal, became acting President until the 2006 elections, when another Lavalas leader, René Prével, was elected.



ENFOFANM, one of the women's groups that receives aid from CIDA, has been criticized for how that aid is spent. © www.enfofanm.net

support women's rights, including the criminalisation of rape.

But critics question whether if groups Canada is funding deserve the money.

Rights and Democracy, a Canadian government international human rights body, coordinates the funding CIDA provides to two main women's groups in Haiti, the National Coordination for Action on Women's Rights (CONAP) and the Organisation Féministe de Promotion et de Défense des Droits des Femmes (ENFOFANM). They are headed by Danielle Magloire, a woman who Yves Engler, a critic of Canadian policy in Haiti and author of *Canada in Haiti*, says is "basically a neofacist, not the type of person you would want to put in charge of building civil society."

The CONAP-ENFOFANM controversy extends back to the 2000 election of Aristide. He and his party, Fanmi Lavalas, swept through the elections on support from working class votes. 60% of registered voters cast ballots and Aristide won 92% of the vote.

There is not a consensus on the legitimacy of the election. While the International Coalition of Independent Observers declared the vote fair, non-Lavalas supporters, including CONAP and ENFOFANM described the election as "severely flawed and rigged." All major opposition parties

boycotted the vote.

Marjorie Villefranche, a spokesperson for Montreal NGO Maison d'Haiti, believes the election was fair. "It was fair, it was democratic, and it represented the people," she said.

There is also a difference of opinion on Aristide's record once in power. In press releases, CONAP and ENFOFANM called it an "illegitimate and outlaw regime, actively engaged in corruption and human rights violations" that "institutionalized corruption and dilapidation of the public treasury, aided and abetted drug trafficking, perverted the national police and further consolidated its power through arming gangs of street children and delinquents."

They campaigned against Aristide, and have been accused of collaborating, along with the international groups that fund them, in his 2004 overthrow.

Engler disagrees with their portrayal of his regime, saying that it was the best Haiti had seen thus far. Engler also points to Aristide's successful dismantling of the Haitian army, which he argues proved that Aristide's intentions were good.

CONAP and ENFOFANM considered their support of the coup justified, arguing that the overthrow of Aristide "was and is a democratic demand. All elected officials, even those who have a deficit of legitimacy,

must be held accountable for their actions.”

After the 2004 coup, conditions in the country worsened. A study published by the Lancet medical journal showed that 22 months after the coup, 35 000 women had been raped in the capital of Port-au-Prince, and 1 in 7 of those rapes was committed by a member of the Haitian police force (which also receives funding from CIDA).

“Why don’t CONAP or ENFOFANM ever speak out about rape being used as a political tool?” Engler wonders.

CONAP and ENFOFANM agreed that conditions worsened, but said that Lavalas partisans committed the violence and destruction. Others disagree, believing instead that Lavalas partisans were the victims of the violence, not the perpetrators.

Villefranche says that although there was an initial increase in violence, it subsided. “Ultimately it is the economy that suffered the most from the coup. Violence diminished but the economic problems have multiplied.”

In the 2006 elections, CONAP and ENFOFANM called for the Lavalas candidates to be barred from running and that media giving them a voice be shut down.

“These are intellectually elite groups, representing the Haitian middle class, which is about 1% of the population but owns most of the country,” Engler says, but Villefranche supports CONAP and ENFOFANM and their work. “I don’t believe they have connections to the government,” she said. “They are working for the good of Haitian women.”

And if CIDA wants to support female participation in Haitian government, there aren’t many other options. “The other organizations don’t have the same reach as CONAP and ENFOFANM,” Engler concedes, “Getting \$100 a month would be a lot for them but CIDA only funds groups that are anti-Lavalas, or at least passive toward it.”

Rights and Democracy declined to comment.

## Staff Changes at CIDA and the IMF

**T**o sustain the changes the Canadian government is making to its international aid policies, Stephen Harper has brought in two important new leaders. On June 12, Harper named Margaret Biggs, a deputy secretary to cabinet in the Privy Council, as the head of CIDA, and Michael Horgan, former Deputy Minister of the Environment, as the Canadian representative to the IMF.

Biggs got her start as a Director of Research at the North-South Institute (NSI) where she worked until 1985, and has since held various positions at the department of Human Resources Development. Roy Culpeper, President of the NSI, calls her “an excellent choice.”

Biggs takes over from Robert Greenhill, who was appointed by former Prime Minister Paul Martin and only held CIDA’s top spot for three years. Biggs will become the 13th president CIDA has had since 1989, a figure that illuminates the constantly changing nature of the department.

Horgan has a background in finance, but according to Culpeper, he “may nonetheless be relatively progressive” in IMF policy. He takes over from Jonathan Fried.

## Canada gives bilateral aid to empower Guatemalan women

BY SARAH BABBAGE

**S**ince 2002, Canada has given \$3 million in bilateral aid to empower Guatemalan women, with the goal of creating economic, political, social, and cultural equality between genders.

The program helped set-up a Presidential Secretariat for Women, which helped create a platform for institutions to advance the cause of Guatemalan women. It also ran a university program on gender and public policy.

CIDA, in part with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, also set up a Guatemalan’s Women Empowerment Fund, which gave civil society organizations funding. Their work fought violence against women, the integration of women into the labour force, and research on the situation and condition of women.

CIDA’s work on gender equality is wrapping up this July, and no new gender equality initiatives are planned. “We’re in a bit of a limbo with this particular program,” said Pierre Marion, Director of the Program Support Unit at the Canadian Cooperation Office in Guatemala. “But gender equality remains a concern and we are trying to address it in all areas of programming.” He said his staff are working to identify new areas that programming could focus on, and believes they will receive funding approval for at least one program.

# La violence faite à l'égard des femmes

## La difficulté pour mesurer la violence est de trouver un consensus

PAR EMMANUELLE BUCHARD

**D**ans le monde entier, au moins une femme sur trois au cours de sa vie est soit battue, soit forcée à avoir des rapports sexuels, ou soit soumise à des sévices. De plus, la violence à l'égard du genre est reconnue comme un problème majeur de santé publique et une violation des droits de la personne. La violence envers les femmes est un problème persistant partout dans le monde mais aussi au Canada. La violence conjugale est en effet majoritaire au Canada, avec un rapport selon StatsCanada de 57 femmes sur 1000 subissant ce genre de violence.

Pour y mettre fin et envisager des interventions efficaces, il faut doré et déjà pouvoir effectuer un état des lieux et mesurer de manière certaine la violence faite à l'encontre des femmes. Cependant, comment donner des indicateurs sur lesquelles puissent reposer une analyse fondée? Avec une évaluation publique fiable, les décideurs pourront alors mesurer l'étendu de la gravité des problèmes sociaux que cause la violence infligée aux femmes. En effet, la violence compromet l'égalité sociale et économique, la santé physique et mentale, le bien être et la sécurité financière des femmes.

A l'issue de la 7<sup>ème</sup> session du Conseil des droits de l'homme en janvier 2008, la promotion et la protection de tous les droits de la personne ont encore été renforcées. Madame Yakin Erturk a voulu agir en soulignant l'urgence de la situation dans le nouveau rapport des Nations Unies en janvier 2008.

En sa qualité de porte-parole spé-

ciale pour la Commission des droits de l'homme, Madame Erturk, originaire de Turquie et professeur de sociologie à Ankara, a proposé des indicateurs pour mesurer la violence faite aux femmes, dans le but d'aider les états à éradiquer cette violation des droits de la personne.

Un indicateur est ainsi une donnée qui résume un certain nombre d'information en un seul chiffre, de manière à donner une indication de changement dans la durée. Contrairement à des statistiques habituellement liées à une certaine norme pour établir un état des lieux du nombre de victimes, le rôle de l'indicateur apparaît comme un appareil de mesure pour faire progresser et construire une banque de données stable. L'analyse des genres et la recherche sociale sont des compléments à ces indicateurs et permettent des structures explicatives.

### LA DIFFICULTÉ DE TROUVER UN CONSENSUS

La principale difficulté pour mesurer la violence est de trouver un consensus. La violence faite à l'égard des femmes peut être aussi bien sexuelle, physique, économique ou encore morale, et psychologique. Le savoir international se concentre surtout sur la mesure des violences intimes faites aux femmes par leurs partenaires car c'est l'une des sources les plus importante de la violence. Désormais, on prend en compte les études transnationales, avec par exemple la Commission économique des Nations Unies en Europe. Cela enrichit les indicateurs. Il s'agit aussi de relier le développement de ses indicateurs aux droits de la personne et des citoyens.

*« La violence à l'égard des femmes et jeunes filles continue de ne pas diminuer dans chaque continent, chaque nation et chaque culture. Cela a un impact dévastateur sur la vie des femmes, de leur famille et de la société dans sa totalité. La plupart des sociétés interdisent une telle violence cependant la réalité est trop souvent ainsi décrite, elle est masquée ou tacitement approuvée »*

— Monsieur Ban Ki-Moon,  
Secrétaire général des Nations Unies

La position adoptée dans le rapport a donc été qu'on parle désormais d'indicateurs structureaux pour refléter la nécessité d'adopter des instruments légaux et d'institutionnaliser des mécanismes de base indispensables à la réalisation des droits de la personne.

Les états ont alors été invités à répondre à un questionnaire pour recueillir leurs impressions sur un tel projet d'indicateurs. Les obstacles pour une adoption unanime des indicateurs ont été nombreux, entre les différences de cultures, les barrières dressées par la tradition, ou encore la difficulté intrinsèque de mesurer un processus et un résultat. En effet, il n'est pas si simple de dire s'il s'agit ou non d'une « violence », en mesurant l'appauvrissement des femmes, ou leur insécurité. D'autres indicateurs minimums servent de standards, comme la ratification sans réserve de la Conven-

tion pour l'élimination de toutes les formes de discriminations à l'égard des femmes (1993). Ainsi, des bons indicateurs doivent être spécifique, mesurable, accessible, pertinent, temporel.

Le Canada a alors répondu positivement à cette initiative de recherches d'indicateurs lancés par les Nations Unies. La rapporteur spéciale était présente à Ottawa en début d'année, comme en témoigne les affaires étrangères et commerce internationale d'Ottawa. Filmée dans une entrevue du 27 janvier 2008, elle a discuté de l'efficacité et du futur des droits humains ainsi que des défis y étant reliés.

« Je crois que, pour éliminer la violence faite aux femmes, il faut vraiment saisir le fondement même de la Déclaration universelle: la non-discrimination, absolument – la non-discrimination fondée sur le sexe et tous les autres indicateurs; que les femmes sont des êtres humains et qu'il n'existe pas de restrictions à leurs droits. Cette compréhension n'est toujours pas inté-

grée par les populations du monde. »

Comme le rappelle ce rapport, le rôle d'une ONG est d'être critique et de servir d'intermédiaire, « d'agir comme un pont entre les victimes et l'Etat » afin de fournir la meilleure protection aux victimes. Le rapport sur le programme et le réseau des Nations Unies concernant les femmes (WUNRN: Women's UN Report Network) est une organisation non-gouvernementale qui met en oeuvre les conclusions et recommandations de l'étude des Nations Unies sur le statut des femmes de leurs points de vue religieux et traditionnel.

La violence peut en effet dévaster la santé reproductive, aussi bien que d'autres aspects mentaux et physiques de la personne, des douleurs à répétition, une dépendance aux drogues et à l'alcool. Ces femmes risquent d'avantage d'être touchées par des fausses couches et des infections sexuellement transmissibles comme le SIDA.

Si l'on considère la déclaration sur l'élimination de la violence contre les

femmes de 1993, celle-ci soulignait bien l'inégalité des sexes comme la sources du problème de violence. Le nouveau rapport des Nations Unies a ainsi cette volonté de prendre ce problème comme un sérieux enjeu non pas isolé mais prenant part à un contexte de renforcement du pouvoir des femmes, vers un statut d'égalité.

Selon Madame Erturk, « La violence à l'égard des femmes ne peut être éliminée que si nous considérons la violence non pas de manière isolée, comme une simple question d'ordre public, mais comme un enjeu faisant partie intégrante de l'égalité et du renforcement du pouvoir des femmes en général. La violence est utilisée comme [moyen] pour entretenir l'inégalité entre les sexes, et je crois que ce fait est largement démontré. »

Etudiante en 4ème année de Sciences Po Rennes, France, **Emmanuelle** était une stagiaire au CJS en juin-juillet 2008.

## FACTS - WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

**1** 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. 70% are women and girls

**2** Women make up 40% of the global paid workforce, earning 26% of the world's income.

**3** Most of the working poor in the world are women – 330 million of 550 million people.

**4** In Sub-Saharan Africa 61% of adults living with HIV are women. Girls and women 15 to 24 years old are up to six times as likely as boys and men to be infected with HIV.

**5** In Australia, domestic violence constitutes the single biggest health risk to women of reproductive age, resulting in economic losses of about \$6.3 billion a year. In the United States, that cost is \$12.6 billion.

In India a study finds that, on average, each incident of domestic violence results in seven days of lost work. **6**

In Chile domestic violence in 1996 cost women \$1.56 billion in lost earnings, more than 2% of the GDP. **7**

60% of people working in family enterprises without pay are women **8**

Most trafficked persons are women and children. Human trafficking is a \$32 billion industry, with an estimated 2.5 million victims. **9**

Women comprise 20% of the management and less than 10% of governors at the World Bank and IMF., and run 25% of the top 1000 multinational corporations. **10**

# Profile: Makai Harif

How she has empowered women and mobilized communities around the world

BY KATHERINE QUAST

**A**t 57 years old, Makai Harif has a long history of mobilizing the community around her.

A teacher and school principal in Kabul, Afghanistan before the arrival of the Mujahideen, she left for Kazakhstan with her husband and five children in 1992. She then worked for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kazakhstan before founding the Afghan Refugee Women's Association (ARWA) in 1996. Russia then permitted ARWA to register Afghan refugees and Harif was instrumental in helping more than 3000 Afghans obtain legal documentation.

This pivotal change allowed ARWA, the only organization of its type in Central Asia, to provide Afghan refugees with assistance in language and coping with difficult economic situations. ARWA created alternative income-generating opportunities and made close contact with the International Women's Club.

The Harif family was allowed to immigrate to Canada in 2000, and within a matter of weeks of her arrival in Montreal Harif started networking through a local community organiza-

tion.

Harif wanted to gather and mobilize Afghan women in Montreal, and came up with the idea of an Afghan catering service for community organizations. To plan their first event, Harif invited a group of Afghani woman to meet at the Place d'Armes metro. Amid the rumble of the trains, the women planned an event for 500 guests. From this first event, they developed their collective kitchen.

The collective kitchen has been successful, but faces everyday obstacles. The women operate out of small community centre or, when parties are very large, rent a kitchen. They need their own, well-equipped kitchen, but cannot obtain a big enough loan to buy one. The red tape in obtaining a charity number, which would assist them in getting funding, is frustrating.

Harif's job at a community organization also brought her access to resources to further help her promote woman's rights. Two years after her arrival in Montreal the Afghan Women's Association of Montreal (AWAM) was founded.

AWAM hosts and participates in many community activities that increase Afghan women's capacity. It aims to promote cultural exchange and sensitize the broader community to women's issues.

The group has set up two Saturday schools where they instruct Afghan children in Dari, Afghanistan's native language. Mothers who were not able to learn Dari in their homeland often accompany their children to class.

Harif acknowledges that women in the collective continue to face obstacles.

"Afghan men prefer not to have



The Afghan Women's Catering provides jobs for women in Montreal, while also promoting a sense of community.

their wives, daughters, sisters, or mothers out in the community, learning or sharing unless it causes no financial burden to the family and it doesn't prevent a woman from performing her domestic duties," Harif said. "The men have the power and the women do not stop to think of their own needs or wants. Men typically use cultural beliefs and attitudes to keep women in what they believe is the woman's rightful place."

Even so, the Afghan Women's Catering, which started with a "can do" belief at a metro stop and is now one of many AWAM activities, continues to create jobs for the women involved while fostering their personal growth and helping build a vibrant Afghan community.

## The facts:

- About 3000 people of Afghan origin live in Montreal.
- Their population is relatively spread out, with families in Park Extension, Cote des Neiges, Henri Bourassa, and the South Shore.
- Another association for female Afghan immigrants is the Afghan Women's Organization in Toronto, which promotes the successful settlement of Afghan refugees in Canada through advocacy, and a wide range of settlement services.

To support the Afghani Women of Montreal, please visit its website: [www.afghan-women-catering.com](http://www.afghan-women-catering.com)

**Katherine Quast** is the Director of the Montreal Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC) in Montreal.



# **The lived realities of women provide alternative economic models for the collective good**

*Exerpts from speaking notes for ¡Arriba las Mujeres! Women Building Strong Communities Conference, Sept. 2007.*

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BY MARGUERITE MENDELL

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## **Citizen-based socioeconomic initiatives are the components for an alternative economic model.**

Micro credit, revolving loan funds, comprehensive local development initiatives such as Villa el Salvador in Peru, collective kitchens, and the solidarity economy rooted in popular struggle in many countries are just a few. These lived realities are challenging the basic principles that underlie neo-classical economics, the dominant paradigm. They are contesting the prevailing model that explains the allocation of resources – land, labour, capital, technology- and they are contesting the key underlying behavioural hypotheses that places individual satisfaction above collective interest and the public good, that privileges profit maximization.

In other words these initiatives are contesting the theory of wealth creation, the dominant paradigm that is taught in schools and universities, that is the basis for economic policy in countries in the North and the South and has tragically been the basis for policy prescription by the North for countries in the South.

In different countries and within different regions in many countries, initiatives like the growing micro-credit movement, the social and solidarity or popular economy, local and/or community economic development strategies in the North and in the South are “scaling up”. They are scaling up with respect to their results and impacts, and the financial and human resources involved.

They are also scaling up through increased visibility, increased legiti-

macy and recognition by governments of their capacity to generate wealth and to address social injustice and inequality in ways that governments have not been able to, in large part because of the absence of commitment, but also because of what we may call a “policy vacuum” that years of neo-liberalism has generated.

What we need to explore critically is whether these initiatives are on the margins, whether they are “managing poverty” or whether they are, instead, transformative and the foundations for an alternative paradigm that is being designed by the activists, organizations, social movements who are combining resources – land, labour, capital, technology and knowledge – in new ways.

If so, and I believe this to be the case, we need an analytical framework that captures these initiatives and their processes of social and economic transformation. We need to move beyond a localized, territorial and sometimes sectoral and/or juridical focus towards a political economy of citizenship that recognizes the productive roles that citizens are playing in generating private and public wealth.

I'd like to focus on institutional innovation, as this is necessary if we wish to integrate these initiatives into a systemic strategy –into a movement for social transformation and economic democracy. Doing this work, I believe, must now become a priority, a strategy in and of itself, for several reasons.

One reason is that by carefully documenting these initiatives, their stories, their histories, their contexts, we are better able to identify common characteristics – namely alternative

mechanisms of resource allocation that generate income and wealth, that create employment, that promote the development of new enterprises and new sectors of activity – that contradict the basic principles of economic behaviour that I noted above.

These are collective initiatives that are embedded in social relations, in a commitment to a common good. The economic results of these activities – job creation, the production of goods and services, the creation of new financial/investment markets, are, themselves embedded in these social relations that set the goals and the parameters for these activities.

This is in sharp contradiction with prevailing doctrine that separates the economy from society, from its institutions, its culture, and is certainly in contradiction with “methodological individualism” the central hypothesis of economic theory.

A systemic approach is empowering, in the sense that we wish to appropriate this term widely used today. By developing a systemic approach, we bring together those working in micro credit and the many new financial institutions that make up what is referred to as ‘solidarity finance’ today; the organizations dedicated to innovative training and education; the numerous and innovative research environments in universities, progressive think-tanks, etc. that are documenting these experiences in collaboration with social actors, the collective or community-based enterprises that are networked sectorally, the networks of the cooperative movement and associations, the social movements increasingly engaged in socio-economic activities.

In Quebec, we have learned that a

single voice is both politically indispensable to represent this “movement” of “movements” and indispensable to drafting a blueprint for socio-economic transformation. It provides an institutional setting for democratic deliberation, dialogue and most important, it provides a unique inter-sectoral learning environment and information commons. Our experience in Quebec confirms the need for intermediary institutional spaces to negotiate effectively with government. Citizen movements have built such spaces; the Chantier de l'économie sociale is a unique example as it is totally independent of government but is engaged in constant and constructive dialogue with government.

Globalization provides an opportunity for sharing these experiences and creating international communi-

ties of practice and collective learning environments. The institutional cultures and complexities of individual countries often present barriers, but they are more permeable today, I believe, because of paradigm failure but more so because of the demonstrated intelligence, ingenuity, “guts” and creativity of social movements to design and institute socio-economic tools and transformations strategies.

The process or the road map will differ considerably from region to region, even within countries; we are certainly experiencing this in Canada where the Quebec experience cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. The globalization of many initiatives, such as micro credit, for example, must also be carefully scrutinized so that it does not become a panacea and an isolated poverty management strategy. We are interested in transformation, in

movement.

Improving the lives of individuals and their families is the objective, but how to do this is not by relying on market forces and representing people as simply agents of sale and purchase in a depersonalized market economy.

We are engaged in the democratic re-appropriation of resources by citizen based movements and organizations and in so doing, we are drafting a new paradigm for economic democracy committed to sustainable livelihood.

**Dr. Marguerite Mendell** is Associate Professor and Vice-Principal of Concordia University's School of Community and Public Affairs. She heads the Concordia research team on the social economy within a multi-university partnership with over 30 Quebec community-based organizations, unions and coalitions.

## Women building strong communities

BY CAROL DOLBEL

**I**n September 2007, the Social Justice Committee brought together women community leaders from Latin America and Canada to discuss their strategies for building strong, sustainable communities, at a conference in Montreal that we called “¡Arriba las Mujeres! Women Building Strong Communities.” The women that came spoke about their experiences creating alternate economies, sustainable livelihoods and agricultural initiatives that provide income to small-scale women farmers. All of them are committed to promoting development that incorporates social, cultural and environmental values.

Victoria Alverca helped found a fair trade coffee cooperative in her native Ecuador when she was only 16 years old. Teresa Lopez and the Fundación Simiente of Honduras helped create 55 micro-enterprises, most of them focused on agricultural projects promoting food security and sufficiency. Rosa Garcia Corado and the Alianza por la vida y la paz connect small scale women producers of Guatemala directly with consumers.

These women were among several who came to Mon-

tréal to describe how community organizations work to address women's practical needs while helping women develop skills needed to address their strategic interests.

For example, when training women to increase the productivity of their subsistence farming techniques, an organization can also incorporate participatory methods that teach women to take decisions and work collectively and democratically. The Fundación Simiente in Honduras provided women with a few farming tools, and the collective sharing of resources helped the women develop an attitude of cooperation and mutual self help, building democratic decision making skills and a sense of solidarity within the group that was not felt previously. This in turn led to the creation of a network of women producers to demand women's economic and political rights.

It is important, however, to make a distinction between practical needs and strategic interests when discussing women's empowerment and gender equality.

“Practical needs are immediate and material and arise from current conditions. Strategic interests are long-term, related to equalizing gender-based disparities in wages, education, employment, and participation in decision-making bodies,” is how the Association for Women's Rights in Development defines the distinction. While practical interventions may increase women's participation in the development process, they should also change gender relations and inequitable divisions of labor.

# The competent best choice?

## Canada's new Foreign Affairs Minister

BY SARAH BABBAGE

**Two years after crossing the floor to become Minister of Trade with the Conservative party, the adjective most used to describe David Emerson is “competent.”**

Emerson was an obvious choice to replace former Maxime Bernier - who has not been similarly described - who became embroiled in scandal at the end of May, leaving a Department of Foreign Affairs described as being in a state of chaos and staff morale at a low.

Born in Montreal, now a resident of Vancouver, Emerson has a background in finance. In the minority Liberal government, Paul Martin named him Minister of Industry, where he helped resolve the softwood lumber dispute. From 1998 to 2004 Emerson was the top executive for Canada's largest producer of softwood lumber, the Canfor Corporation.

Emerson ran successfully as a Liberal in the 2006 election, then crossed the floor to join the Conservatives, lured by the portfolios of International Trade, the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

Emerson is now very unpopular in left-leaning Vancouver Kingsway. If he wishes to be re-elected it will have to be in a different riding.

As Minister of International Trade, he was willing to negotiate controversial trade agreements with developing countries with low human rights and environmental standards, such as Peru, Columbia and the Dominican Republic. He has also been fighting to get Canada listed as an “approved

destination” for trade with China.

These trade agreements ostensibly suggest a disinterest in human rights and the environment, and the Canadian economy would lose out without them. Emerson believes sufficient social responsibility guidelines are built in to the agreements.

As Minister of International Trade, he was influential in channelling Canadian aid to developing countries via the private sector, with the argument that it was to make aid more effective and accountable. Critics are concerned that this shifts the focus from least developed countries to where some development already exists.

Emerson's time as Foreign Affairs Minister will depend on how much control he can wrest from the Prime Minister's office and how long the current government lasts. Expect Emerson to take a moderate stance, and to maintain a focus on Latin America in line with the Conservatives' push to increase ties with the region.

Bob Rae, Liberal Foreign Affairs critic, gave me his assessment of the situation.

Morale at the Department of Foreign Affairs is at an all-time low, he said. “It's as bad as I've ever seen it. Staff there are completely demoralized. What they need is a strong minister who is prepared to champion the foreign service.”

Can Emerson provide that?

“He's what you'd call a steady pair of hands in any government,” Rae said. “Competent.”

The department itself underwent major staff changes after Bernier's departure, so a strong leader is needed



Will David Emerson be able to revitalize Canada's Foreign Affairs Department?

Photo: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

to help restore order. Bernier's senior advisor, chief of staff and director of communications have all been replaced.

Emerson will have to stabilize Canada's relations with other countries.

“When you have someone like Bernier heading the department it's an embarrassment to the country,” Rae said. “We aren't taking this seriously enough.”

Rae considers Emerson the best option, but this isn't unqualified. “He doesn't have a head in strategic foreign relations, but then again no one in the current government does.”

Emerson's biggest challenge will be restoring morale at the Foreign Affairs Department, and rejuvenating Canada's foreign relations.

In the current government, many of the decisions are made at the Prime Minister's office. “It's a highly centralized government with a tremendous amount of power at the Prime Minister's office,” Rae said. “Foreign Affairs needs someone to balance the department's views with those of the government.”

Rae expects Emerson to act with caution. “David is very much in the middle of the road.”

# The trade deal with Colombia

## Does it undermine human rights?

BY SARAH BABBAGE

**O**n June 7th – a Saturday - Foreign Affairs and International Trade minister David Emerson made the quiet announcement that the government had finalized a free trade agreement (FTA) with Colombia. The announcement came just days before the Standing Committee on International Trade could finish a report on human rights and environmental concerns in the country.

Human rights activists and members of the opposition who have opposed the agreement from its inception were outraged.

“By making this announcement only days before the Standing Committee on International Trade report would have been completed, the government is clearly saying that it does not respect the work of parliament,” Liberal International Trade Critic Navdeep Bain said in a press release.

Colombia has a long history of suppressing worker mobilization. According to the International Confederation of Trade Unions, there were 1615 murders of Colombian trade union members between 1994 and 2006. Many unions have also been dissolved or abandoned out of fear, leaving only 4% of the population unionized, the lowest rate in Latin America.

While most crimes go unprosecuted in Colombia, some American corporations have been tried in their homeland for crimes they committed in the country. In 2007, members of a union of workers at a mine owned by US company Drummond Inc accused their employer of executing three

former leaders of their union in 2001. They were able to bring their case, to US courts under the Alien Tort Claims Act, which allows individuals of any nationality to try human rights abusers in US courts if there is no other court available to give them a fair trial. The US court, however, ruled that Drummond Inc was innocent.

Chiquita Banana was also charged under the Act in 2007 for funding the terrorist organization United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia as well as two others. They pleaded guilty and paid a fine of \$25 million.

Canadian government officials argue that human rights conditions in Colombia have been improving and the investment from this agreement will continue to help them develop. They also argue that they have built sufficient environmental and labour provisions into the agreement.

“This agreement contains some of the most comprehensive labour provisions to be found in any agreement anywhere in the world,” said Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour, in a press release. “As the Colombian government moves forward to strengthen labour rights after a difficult past, Canada will be there to help. We believe that agreements for free trade and labour cooperation are powerful tools that can bring prosperity to workers.”

But Maria McFarland, Senior Americas Researcher at Human Rights Watch, says having labour provisions won't change the country's problem with extra-judicial killings. “Most

### Colombia by the Numbers:

**44 million**  
Colombia's population.

**\$154 billion**  
Colombia's GDP.

**\$1.14 billion**  
the value of trade between  
Canada and Colombia in 2007.

**2550**  
the number of unionists  
murdered in Colombia since  
1986.

**26**  
the number of unionists killed  
in 2008, according to Human  
Rights Watch.

**78**  
the number of people who have  
been convicted for unionist  
murders.

**43**  
the number of those 78 people  
who were convicted in 2007  
alone, when Colombia began  
negotiating its FTA with the US.

of those provisions have to do with changing labour laws. They don't deal with the problems of people being killed,” she said.

McFarland says Colombia badly wanted the deal, which gave Canada significant leverage to press them to improve their human rights abuses before anything was signed. She points out that although US President George Bush signed an FTA with Colombia in 2007, Congress has refused to ratify it until human rights conditions in the country improve.

“It's precisely because the US has used their leverage by not ratifying their FTA that we're seeing improvements,” said McFarland. “Canada is squandering its leverage. It's under-

mining the changes the US is making in the country and for once the US looks far more enlightened than Canada on human rights issues.”

Only 26 labour unionists have been killed this year, a number McFarland attributes to pressure being exerted by the US. “That’s still more than any other country in the world,” she added.

Canadian export industries are relieved to have the agreement settled. Heather Frayne, spokesperson for the Canadian Wheat Board, said farmers would have lost a significant amount of business without the agreement. “Other countries are organizing bilateral agreements with Colombia so if we didn’t have one as well, we would have been left out in the cold,” she said. The Board exported 400 000 tons of wheat and durum and 80 000 tons of barley to Colombia in 2007.

Importers like New Brunswick Power and Nova Scotia Power, which use coal from Colombia’s Cerrejón mine, will also benefit. They have come under fire from human rights groups in the past for using coal from the mine because of its alleged human rights abuses. In 2002, it razed a local community to expand its mining territory.

In February 2008, an independent study was commissioned by the mine’s owners to study its corporate social behaviour and make suggestions. The study, lead by John Harker, president of Cape Breton University, found that the mine needed to improve its community outreach. It found no allegations lodged by locals concerning extra-judicial killings or disappearances, only allegations of harassment by security officials around the perimeter of the mine.

According to Margaret Murphy, a spokesperson for Nova Scotia Power, her company is satisfied with the report’s findings and is confident that the recommendations have been implemented. They plan to take advantage of the trade opportunities that the new FTA will provide.



Rubiel Zapata is the manager of ASOCUR (Association of Ure), an association of rubber tree farmers in Colombia. His association will be able to export rubber without tariffs under the new Canada-Colombia FTA. © USAID/Colombia.

## **NDP introduces bill to try human rights abusers in Canadian courts**

**N**DP MP Peter Julian wants to open our courts to foreign plaintiffs seeking justice for human rights violations that occurred abroad, and curb possible human rights abuse by Canadian corporations, through his **International Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Act (IPPHRA)**, introduced in December 2007.

The bill indicates that, should human rights be violated in a place where victims cannot receive a fair and timely trial, they can bring their case to Canadian courts. Neither the plaintiffs nor the defendants need be Canadian and the violation cannot have taken place on Canadian soil.

“Although no Canadian connection is necessary, we expect most cases will have one,” said Nick Milanovic, Adjunct Research Professor at the Department of Law of Carleton University, who provided legal counsel on the Act.

The law is modeled on the American Alien Tort Claims Act, which foreign complainants have used to pursue claims concerning genocide, war crimes, extrajudicial killing, slavery, torture, unlawful detention and crimes against humanity. Most notably, the Act can be used to hold corporations liable for committing human rights abuses abroad.

“The basic premise of the bill is that your human rights abuses travel with you wherever you go,” Milanovic said. “Borders won’t give you immunity.”

Foreign citizens have tried to bring cases that occurred outside Canada into Canadian courts in the past, but have been unsuccessful due to the “forum non conveniens” test, which allows judges to dismiss any case that could be tried in another country. The IPPHRA would modify the test to require defendants establish that no other court would deal with their lawsuit effectively.

Since the bill’s introduction, Julian has been approaching interested individuals and human rights organizations to support the bill. It is expected to be presented to Parliament for its second reading next year.

# eye on the World Bank and IMF

## Growth in fossil fuel investments contradicts World Bank's pledge on climate change

Source: Bank Information Center (BIC), a Washington, DC NGO focused on World Bank reform, with additional information from the *Upstream Journal*.

**A**s the World Bank launches two new climate investment funds and positions itself as the “climate bank,” new statistics developed by the Bank Information Center show that the World Bank’s private sector arm, the International Financial Corporation (IFC), increased its lending for fossil fuel projects by 165% in FY2008. The World Bank as a whole increased its fossil-fuel lending by 60% this year.

World Bank financing for fossil fuel projects is estimated to have been nearly US\$2.3 billion in 2008 - more than double the \$1 billion it contributed to renewable energy projects, such as hydro-power, geothermal, wind and solar. IFC projects accounted for most of the World Bank lending for fossil fuels. Its investments include two large coal power plant projects, totaling US\$750 million – the Tata Ultra Mega project in Gujarat, India and the Calaca project in the Philippines. These two projects alone account for 33% of World Bank Group fossil-fuel financing for the year. The Tata plant will emit 25.7 million tons of CO2 per year for at least 25 years

The IFC defends its funding of the

Gujarat power project, which will use coal, by arguing that new technology will reduce the plant’s emissions. “It is expected that India will continue to be dependent on coal to fulfill its power requirements due to limited availability and high pricing of gas, hydro and other renewable sources. Therefore, IFC is supporting thermal power projects which have better greenhouse

gas and environmental performance.”

Critics argue that technology only provides marginal improvements in efficiency over conventional coal powered plants, but Canada has supported the IFC’s approach.

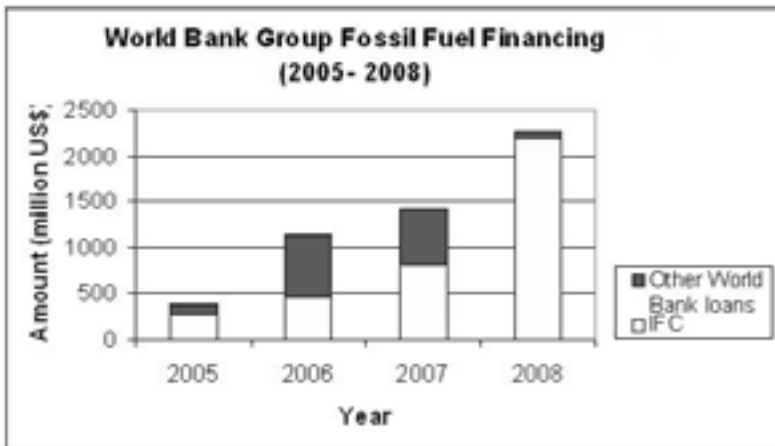
“There is a large demand for increased energy generation in developing countries and the most profitable types of activities for the private sector continue to be fossil fuel based,” a government source said. “The IFC rejects many more fossil fuel based

projects than it supports; only critical fossil fuel projects are supported and even then only when the IFC can bring environmental or social additionality to the venture, i.e., make it cleaner than it would have otherwise been. The IFC actively seeks out and tries to make those renewable energy projects that are submitted to them work, and they bend over backwards to invest in them whenever the opportunity arises.”

The World Bank has established two new climate change funds. The Clean Technology Fund, for which the Bank is seeking \$4-5 billion in contributions from donor countries, is intended to help emerging economies such as India and China to transition to clean energy technologies to help reduce their carbon emissions. The Strategic Climate Fund, for which there are no firm commitments of money to date, is to help poorer countries adapt to climate change.

These funds have come under criticism from environmental and civil society groups. “The Clean Technology Fund has no definition of clean technology,” said Kenny Bruno, International Program Director for Oil Change International. “What they are really proposing

is a ‘slightly less dirty’ technology fund.”



For more info, contact Heike Mainhardt-Gibbs of BIC at: [Hmainhardt@bicusa.org](mailto:Hmainhardt@bicusa.org)

Canada’s representative at the World Bank is Samy Watson [swatson1@worldbank.org](mailto:swatson1@worldbank.org)

At the IMF, Michael Horgan became Canada’s representative Aug. 1. [mhorgan@imf.org](mailto:mhorgan@imf.org)

# IMF programs worsen tuberculosis outcomes in post-communist countries

Study finds that IMF economic reform programs are associated with significantly worsened tuberculosis incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates in post-communist Eastern European and former Soviet countries

**A new study published by the Journal Public Library of Science Medicine found that “each year of participation in an IMF program increased tuberculosis mortality rates by 4.1%.** Increases in the size of the IMF loan also corresponded to greater tuberculosis mortality rates. Conversely, when countries left IMF programs, tuberculosis mortality rates dropped by roughly one-third.”

The study argues that “statistical tests indicated that IMF lending was not a positive response to worsened tuberculosis control but precipitated this adverse outcome and that lending from non-IMF sources of funding was associated with decreases in tuberculosis mortality rates. Consistent with these results, IMF (but not non-IMF) programs were associated with reductions in government expenditures, tuberculosis program coverage, and the number of doctors per capita in each country. These results challenge the proposition that the forms of economic development promoted by the IMF necessarily improve public health. In particular, they put the onus on the IMF to critically evaluate the direct and indirect effects of its economic programs on public health.”

## IMF RESPONDS

IMF spokesperson William Murray disagreed with the findings in an email to the *Upstream Journal*.

“Anyone can try finding a rationale for anything. Public spending on critical social needs is among the most productive and responsible expenditures by a country. Our extensive published analysis is clear evidence that we are very sensitive to

the important role of healthcare and personal well being.

The most obvious counterfactual is their claims on the timing of the increase in tuberculosis mortality rates. These rates are matched to the point at which IMF funding was introduced. Tuberculosis is a horrible disease that evolves over time, so presumably the increase in mortality rates must be linked to something that happened much earlier.

Was there not a significant and well-documented increase in tuberculosis cases in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s? Weren't prison populations in the Soviet Union well documented as unfortunate carriers of the disease? Add the economic shock of the Soviet break up, where public enterprises that provided healthcare went bust, and you have deeper health problems for the population in the short run. If the IMF had not stepped in to help the post-communist countries, the declines in health spending would likely have been more pronounced and disease generally more severe.”

## AUTHOR'S DEFENSE

The study's main author, David Stuckler, responded to these statements in an email to the *Upstream Journal*.

“The IMF is basically suggesting that we conducted some sort of ‘fishing experiment’. We looked at countries to see which came first, tuberculosis rises or IMF loans. We found tuberculosis rates were falling or steady before the IMF programs began and rose during the IMF programs. When countries left the IMF program, tuberculosis rates fell.

We considered the possibility that

the IMF was an innocent bystander, and so our results were simply ‘guilt by association.’ Tuberculosis rises occurred at the point of or within a few years after, but not before, countries took on an IMF lending program.

TB deaths do not take a long time. Mortality from tuberculosis is an immediate response to inadequate access to care and poor medical supervision. TB is a long process when you're talking about dynamic trends, not mortality. We corrected for time trends in tuberculosis rates. The relationship between IMF programs and tuberculosis rates persisted; had the IMF not stepped in, all factors pointed to tuberculosis continuing to decline – as had been happening in the region for the 50 years prior to the IMF's arrival on the scene. .

The IMF correctly notes that prison populations were important carriers of the disease. We never claimed that the IMF was the only determinant of rising tuberculosis rates, but that exposure to their programs helped explain some puzzling differences across countries.

When you have one correlation, you raise an eyebrow, but when you have more than 20 correlations pointing in the same direction, you start building a case for causality. We hope to see the IMF engage with this important scientific finding, rather than dismiss what may be a deadly unintended side-effect of their programs.”

Authors of the study are David Stuckler (Cambridge and King's College) Lawrence P. King (Cambridge and Emmanuel College) and Sanjay Basu (Yale).  
[www.plos.org/press/plme-05-07-stuckler.pdf](http://www.plos.org/press/plme-05-07-stuckler.pdf)

# WHERE IS HECTOR REYES?

BY LEAH GARDNER

**O**n March 28, Mariano Cael and Carmen Reyes Rojas of the Pro-Justice Nueva Linda group spoke at the Social Justice Committee to demand justice for Hector Reyes and an end to impunity in Guatemala. The pair were in town as part of their three week speaking tour of Quebec, organized with Project Accompaniment.

Reyes, a labour activist and administrator on the Nueva Linda farm, was disappeared on September 3, 2003, apparently under orders from the farm's owner. Carmen Rojas, now blacklisted from area plantations, described the working conditions there –where women are paid the same as children- as difficult. She stressed that Reyes' ability an organizer made him a marked man.

Violent crime and disappearances are common in Guatemala, and in atmosphere of impunity, Reyes' story risked fading into the background. Area residents, however, refused to be silent. On December 13, 2003, 1200 campesinos occupied the Nueva Linda farm, demanding a formal investigation to the case.

Their actions drew national attention, provoking a response from President Oscar Berger, who stated: "The state must protect private property. The state police must be sent in to evict the squatters in Nueva Linda." On August 31, 2004, state and private security forces pushed the protesters off the land in a skirmish that left nine farmers and three police officers dead. Since the incident, the Pro-Justice Nueva Linda group has lived by the highway outside the plantation in protest.

A mother of eight, Rojas has made great sacrifices to live by the roadside. She argues, however, that "what they did to him, they could do to us. We need to work together." Rojas went on to highlight the importance of international support. "Farm owners recognize it," she said.

For this reason, Rojas and Cael have brought their story to Montreal, demanding a formal investigation of the eviction on August 31, 2004, and justice for the Reyes family.



Mariano Cael and Carmen Reyes Rojas travelled from Guatemala to Canada to raise awareness about the disappearance of Hector Reyes, a labor activist on the Nueva Linda farm. They are concerned that the justice system in their country is ineffective in enforcing what laws exist to protect workers.



For more information on Pro-Justice Nueva Linda visit: [www.justicianuevalinda.org](http://www.justicianuevalinda.org).

**Is right now a good time  
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# Lester B. Pearson School Board students to benefit from SJC resource on globalization, while new educational web site come close to completion

BY ELVIRA TRUGLIA

**2,000 secondary school geography students from the Lester B. Pearson School Board will be using excerpts from the Social Justice Committee's print resource for high schools, the A Different World Tool Kit, as part of their final school projects this year on deforestation of Brazilian Amazonia.**

This special project, called a Learning Evaluation Situation, was designed for English and French geography classes by the Lester B. Pearson School Board in collaboration with the SJC.

Students will complete learning activities on globalization and trade, and developing radio programs

to be presented in class as their final project. The Magazine Radio Project is a means for students to apply what they have learned from the interactive activities.

This will be the largest implementation of the Tool Kit in Quebec schools so far.

The Different World Tool Kit is a 250-page educational resource

on the themes "Poverty and Basic Human Needs" and "Globalization and Trade." Using a project-based approach, the book provides teachers with a large number of interactive activities, fact sheets, handouts and resources on global themes.

This educational resource was developed and produced in French and English last year.

feature free on-line resources, including excerpts from the print version of the Tool Kit plus two new learning units – "Poverty & Basic Education" and "Migration, Trade & Human Rights" - and other multimedia resources.

The development of these internet resources follows the promotion of the print resource across Quebec to English and French secondary school teachers. Introductory workshops and presentations have reached some 150 teachers/educators at the most important teacher conferences and conventions in the province, such as the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers Convention.

Through these initiatives, the SJC aims to introduce interactive, accessible, multimedia

learning materials about social justice to secondary students across Quebec and beyond.

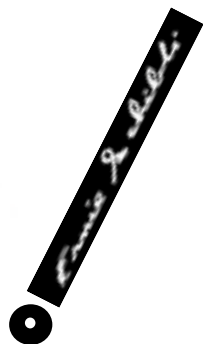
*A Different World* is available through the publisher, the Leading English Resource Network (LEARN).

If you'd like to find out more, please contact project coordinator Elvira Truglia at [elvira@sjc-cjs.org](mailto:elvira@sjc-cjs.org)



The website for *A Different World: An Educational Tool Kit for Building Global Justice* will help expose secondary students to issues of social justice.

Now, with further support from the Canadian International Development Agency, the Foundation of Greater Montreal and many educational partners, the SJC has been able to continue developing and promoting this important resource. The web site for *A Different World: An Educational Tool Kit for Building Global Justice* is close to completion. It will



## Increased demand, limited resources spells disaster for the world's poor

**S**everal months ago when I was in Guatemala, I had the opportunity to meet with a man who has for many years analyzed the political, economic and social life of that country. I wanted to get his views on the current situation. He treated me to a succinct, yet thorough, analysis of what is going on under the new Colom government, and one of his observations really struck me. Thanks to the rush to use land for the production of bio-fuels, he said, the Guatemalan political and economic elite, always very hesitant about land reform, now won't hear about it at all. Bio-fuels provide a new opportunity to make money, and so they are grabbing up every bit of land that they can.

In a country like Guatemala, where almost all the best land is already in the hands of a small number of land barons, this spells disaster for the many people deprived of land. One of the major agreements in the Peace Accords that ended the civil war was land reform. Twelve years after those accords, land reform was still at a snail's pace. Now it is at a virtual halt.

Our conversation brought to mind a drive I made a few days earlier, along part of Guatemala's Pacific coastal

area. I was amazed to see huge stands of African Palm trees. Admittedly, I haven't spent much time on the coastal plain over the years I've been coming to Guatemala, but this was the first time I had seen these trees, prized for their oil that, among other things can be used as a bio-fuel.

I had been back in Montreal only a few weeks when I received several messages from Guatemala saying that food prices were rising rapidly and that many people were, as a result, facing hunger, and calling for international action. "Cada dia hay alimentos basicos que suben de precio y ya mucha gente no tienen acceso a lo necesario. Urge reflexiones a nivel nacional y internacional..."

Even as I was writing this column, I received an urgent action request from the NGO Rights Action. Let me quote a few paragraphs:

"Historically, the area known as Finca Los Recuerdos has been farmed by [local] communities as it pertains to their territory. Approximately three years ago a bio fuel agribusiness, Ingenio Guadalupe, began cutting forests and planting large extensions of sugar cane for ethanol production." Apparently a group of some

sixty Kekchi families began to farm the land when they were attacked by security forces associated with the company, and were forced to flee.

"The agrarian conflict has become worse in recent years with massive investment in bio fuel production, both in ethanol via sugar cane and in bio diesel through African palm production," the Rights Action message said. "The rapid growth of bio fuel industries in Guatemala was stimulated by the interest of the Inter American Development Bank in bio fuels."

In my talks, I often mentioned that if everyone on the planet lived the North American lifestyle, we would require several planets Earth to survive. As we begin to experience diminishing supplies of natural resources such as water and oil, what is occurring in places like Guatemala will spread. Those who have will continue to take, and those who have little will lose what they have. New technologies will help us out to some degree but not enough. What we really need is a significant change in the lifestyle of those who have, wherever we may be.

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC and our coordinator of public education programs. Contact: [ernie@s-j-c.net](mailto:ernie@s-j-c.net)

The SJC can provide public speakers with experience and expertise in issues of human rights and development in Guatemala, and the roles of Canadian government policy and corporate responsibility (including the issues of gold mining and social responsibility discussed in previous issues of the *Upstream Journal*). Give us a call or write if you'd like to know more – 514 933 6797, [info@sjc-cjs.org](mailto:info@sjc-cjs.org).



The Social Justice Committee  
Le Comité pour la justice sociale

**The Social Justice Committee of Montreal** has been working to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and repression in the world through our education programs since 1975. We work in solidarity with organizations in a number of Third World countries in the search for a more just and sustainable global socio-economic system.

The Social Justice Committee depends on financial support from its members and the general public. It is a registered charitable organization; donations are tax deductible.

**We invite you to donate today, and become a member by supporting the mission of the Social Justice Committee to:**

- Analyze the underlying structural and global causes of poverty, human rights violations and other social injustices.
- Contribute to informed popular participation in eliminating these injustices.
- Work in solidarity, and through education, to transform our world into a just society.

The Social Justice Committee believes that social and economic change is essential for the creation of a sustainable world, and that each person has the right and the responsibility to participate in the process.

Le Comité pour la justice sociale remercie le **ministère des Relations internationales** de son appui à sa mission d'éducation à la solidarité internationale. The Social Justice Committee thanks the **Québec Ministry of International Relations** for its support of our mission of education on behalf of international solidarity.

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