

# The Upstream Journal

## Rights of people with disabilities



**La paix en Guatemala**  
**Development & sport**  
**After the tsunami**  
**World Bank & “consultation” vs “consent”**

Free publication of the  
Social Justice Committee

## Changes at the Social Justice Committee

Recognizing the need for the organization to be more efficient and effective, the SJC staff and the Board of Directors committed to a major restructuring in recent months.

Key developments include:

- The creation of a position of organizational Coordinator, with responsibility for coherence and accountability in all program areas. The Board of Directors has asked Derek MacCuish, editor of the *Upstream Journal* and coordinator of economic justice programs, to assume this position.
- The creation of a new administrative position, with responsibility for financial integrity and strategic planning. Michelle Lin has been hired for this position.
- The retirement of our coordinator of Mexico programs, Karen Rothschild.
- The retirement of our coordinator of Central America programs, Gloria Pereira.
- The decision not to continue the contract for a position in Washington.

The SJC is very grateful for the years of dedication and service provided by Gloria and Karen, and for the expression of solidarity with struggles in Central America and Mexico that they provided through their educational work and many urgent action letter-writing campaigns.

Thanks to Jackie Jacobsen for editing      Printer: Payette & Simms  
and other assistance with this issue

### Stories that need telling

64 year-old Alvaro Juárez ("Don Alvarito"), a community activist in Guatemala, was assassinated as the *Upstream Journal* went to press. He was a leader of community groups in the Petén region that are fighting to keep their land and culture.

The *Upstream Journal* wants to tell his story. Who was he? Why was he targetted to be killed? By all accounts, he was an easy-going family man working for better schools, clinics and roads for

his community. With your financial assistance, we can go to Guatemala to get his story, and the photos that will make the situation and struggle in Guatemala better known and understood. Call me to find out more, at 514 933 6797.

- Derek MacCuish, Editor

**If you want to sponsor a "story that needs telling," please send your donation today.**

**The Upstream Journal is a free publication of the Social Justice Committee. 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 activities. The SJC is a registered charity in Canada, and donations are tax deductible. We accept Visa and MasterCard.**

**Please consider making a donation and becoming a member. You can use the reply form on the back cover of this Upstream Journal, or call us (toll free in North America) at 1-866-RIGHTS-2.**

## Contents

The G8 - progress?	3
What is 'disability'?	4
People with Disabilities in:	
Lebanon	5
Nepal	7
Nigeria	13
Tanzania	14
Uganda	15
Disability at the World Bank	9
The UN Convention	11
La paix en Guatemala	17
Development & sport	18
After the tsunami	20
Consultation vs consent	21
Ernie's opinion	23

### Contact us:

**Comments or contributions can be sent to the editor, Derek MacCuish, by email: [editor@upstreamjournal.org](mailto:editor@upstreamjournal.org)**



# Missing: voice, empowerment, human rights

by Derek MacCuish

**BOB GELDOFF, BONO AND THE LIVE 8 CONCERTS** demonstrate the growing reach and strength of an emerging global civil society. It is taking its place in the power structure of recent history alongside the business sector, the state, and international institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations.

Political leaders don't seem to be able to claim much in terms of moral authority (not even compared to rock musicians, a sobering thought) and they are coming under new pressure as civil society evolves internationally as a substantial force. The expansion of communications capacity in recent years sometimes allows people to bypass traditional representation entirely.

Even as global power dynamics shift, however, there is little discussion of how aspects of power - or lack of it - affect Third World development and efforts to "make poverty history."

Cancelling the debt, changing terms of trade, and delivering better aid are all essential to improving the lives of millions of people in poor countries.

They will not be enough if poor people do not gain a voice in how their future is being shaped.

Any progress in cancelling Third World debt, for example, has significance in two ways.

A country like Zambia, literally dying of AIDS and poverty, will get to keep some of the US\$500,000 it is scheduled to pay every day on decades-old debts. Cancelling debt also removes one of the key mechanisms of

IMF and World Bank control.

Senegal's poverty reduction program and debt relief were put on hold for months, at the cost of millions of dollars, because the government was slow to comply with IMF demands to raise electricity tariffs.

Not surprisingly, reviews of IMF and World Bank programs find low levels of success when there is a lack of government "ownership" from the outset.

Yao Graham, an economist with an NGO in Ghana called the Third World Network, illustrates African suspicion

of "democracy" nor "human rights" appear at all.

This doesn't mean that world leaders aren't fumbling in the direction of a rights-based system for decision-making. There are improvements in transparency, accountability and information disclosure at the World Bank and IMF, and rich countries are promising to deliver more funds to poor countries that demonstrate better governance and reduced corruption.

Even so, the elimination of poverty is going to require at least two more major efforts beyond what is being discussed so far.

One is promoting the full spectrum of human rights, including the economic, social and cultural rights recognized in UN covenants and declarations along with worker rights identified by the Interna-

tional Labour Organization.

The other is building the capacity of Third World people to have a voice in decision making. They need to be empowered to participate to the extent that they provide clear prior and informed consent to programs that affect them.

Geldoff and Bono demonstrate the extent to which people are appalled at Third World poverty, and the power of western popular culture to give a voice to that dismay.

The empowerment and voice of the poor, on the other hand, are not up for discussion.

For anti-poverty efforts to work, the most vulnerable will have to benefit from the growth in power of global civil society, and join the discussion.

*"Geldoff and Bono demonstrate the extent to which people are appalled at Third World poverty"*



of efforts to instil a sense of national ownership in development policies:

"Be warned. When Western leaders talk about developing country 'ownership' of economic development, they don't mean democratic control. Instead, Western governments, international financial institutions and multinationals first determine African policies and then exhort Africa's peoples to make them their own."

**WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES** for Finance Minister Ralph Goodale, for example? A quick look at the wording of three recent speeches on international development gives an indication.

The words "private sector" show up twenty-three times, and "investment" appears twenty times. Neither "de-

# How Canadians Define “Disability”

From “Canadian Attitudes Towards Disability Issues” (Social Development Canada 2004)

Canadians define the concept of disability in a number of ways, but chiefly in terms of physical handicap (e.g., uses a wheelchair, deaf). Perspectives on this issue are surprisingly consistent between persons with and without disabilities.

Unprompted Associations of Disability. The initial survey question was open-ended, asking respondents what first comes to mind when they think of the word “disability”, to capture their general associations. This question evokes a broad range of responses, but most fall into several broad themes.

The results largely confirm that Canadians tend to think of human disabilities in terms of physical handicaps, and that for many, a person in a wheelchair is the prototypical image. The most predominant theme of association pertains to “physical disability” (mentioned by 52% of the population), which is most likely to be mentioned with reference to wheelchair use/mobility issues or being physically challenged. Within this theme, considerably fewer define disability in terms of limited sight or hearing, loss of a limb, an accident or speech difficulties.

Canadians are much less likely to think about disabilities that affect mental or cognitive functioning (21%). Most who identify this category think of it primarily in terms of individuals who are mentally challenged, rather than experiencing learning disabilities or emotional problems.

There is considerable variation in the extent of public agreement around what is and is not a disability. Consistent with the results from the unprompted question, there is virtual consensus that someone who uses a wheelchair has a disability (95%), with almost as many placing this descriptor on someone who is deaf (89%). This finding suggests that permanent wheelchair status and deafness are two conditions that classically define “disability” across the Canadian population (along with blindness, which was not specifically tested in this survey because deafness was used as the principal sensory type of disability).

Beyond these obvious types of disability, there is majority agreement but less than consensus around the disability status of 10 other conditions, including using a wheelchair only some of the time, difficulty speaking, limited vision (but short of blindness), chronic pain, difficulty learning, limited mobility, requiring a hearing aid, difficulty remembering things, and chronic depression.

The list also includes four other conditions not traditionally defined as a disability, and this is reflected in the survey results. Fewer than half of the Canadians interviewed expressed the opinion that this term should apply to someone who has difficulty with social interactions (49%), is obese (44%), or has HIV/AIDS (42%), and only three in ten (31%) believe it applies to someone who is homeless.

*The United Nations estimates that 600 million people in the world have disabilities, and that 25 percent of all people is affected by disability.*

## What is disability?

### **A World Bank perspective:**

“Disability is the result of the interaction between people with different levels of functioning and an environment that does not take these differences into account.

In other words, people with physical, sensory or mental limitations are often disabled not because of a diagnosable condition, but because they are denied access to education, labor markets, and public services.

This exclusion leads to poverty and, in a vicious circle, poverty leads to more disability by increasing people's vulnerability to malnutrition, disease, and unsafe living and working conditions.”

### **Public attitudes about the capabilities of people with disabilities**

Canadians are more likely than not to believe (or at least say) that someone with a disability can perform equally as well as anyone else in these roles. At the same time, both the role and the type of disability make a difference in the public's perception of capability.

By role, Canadians are most likely to feel that a disability would not be a significant limitation in being a community volunteer (77%), small business owner (76%) or parent (74%), while somewhat fewer believe this would be the case for teachers (63%) or factory workers (60%). By comparison, no more than half (53%) of Canadians believe a person with a disability could do a good a job as a doctor, and only a third (33%) say that a disability would not limit the ability to serve as a police officer. These results are consistent with the public's general view of disability as involving physical limitations.

# Disabled in Lebanon hail recent victories, push for more



*The Lebanon Physically Handicapped Union demand that their government implement laws protecting the rights of people with disabilities* [photo courtesy LPHU]

by Kira Costanza and Zahia El-Masri

**I**N THE FIGHT FOR VOTING RIGHTS, a certain degree of agency is required to win this worldwide battle. Some individuals push their concerns to be voiced, while others allow themselves to be sidelined. Sylvana Lakkis, president of the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU), wants to be heard.

Lakkis, a physically disabled woman confined to a wheelchair, described an experience in which she attempted to vote in a local election. She arrived at the voting station to find the ballots were on the fifth floor, with no wheelchair access. As she explained, “they certainly cannot bring down the ballot box, neither will I let them carry me up there.”

She was unable to vote.

Until recently, physically handicapped persons in Lebanon were not allowed to vote at all. The law was changed after a six month battle but, even so, Lakkis’ experience at the polls demonstrates that ob-

stacles still exist for disabled Lebanese. Despite having the right to vote, accommodations that would enable the physically handicapped to do so are not readily available.

The LPHU is a grassroots organization that tries to address such loopholes in Lebanese law that repress the handicapped. Founded in 1981, the organization includes people from different religious groups and with various forms of physical disabilities, providing a positive and innovative example for the development of human rights in the volatile region.

**“OUR PROGRAMS ARE AIMED** at creating leaders in advocacy,” Lakkis said in an interview with the *Upstream Journal*.

In 2000 the LPHU lead a successful campaign for legislation that Lakkis says “provides a framework for the basic rights of the disabled

people in Lebanon to proper education, rehabilitation services, employment, medical services, sports, and access to public transport and other facilities.”

Since then, the LPHU has pursued a campaign to promote and ensure the law’s implementation.

**“Our programs are aimed at creating leaders in advocacy”**

**OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED** clauses in Lebanese law that apply to the rights of the physically handicapped, the LPHU now focuses its campaign on three main points:

- the right to vote,
- the right to work, and
- the right to receive an education.

The LPHU runs programs throughout Lebanon aimed at raising awareness and changing the misconception of the physically handicapped as helpless, vulnerable and dependent.

One of its practical programs to facilitate the physically handicapped in the workplace is aimed at employers. It provides handbooks explaining the type of arrangements that are necessary for handicapped employees. This program aims to bridge the gap between the private sector and the physically handicapped searching for employment, picking up the slack for the ineffective governmental ministry responsible for such projects.

**“Fewer than five percent of children with disabilities are able to attend school”**

She observes that even the Women’s Union in Lebanon does not address the problems faced by physically disabled women in its agenda. However, the LPHU has integrated a gender analysis approach in all its activities, and conducts workshops tackling issues such as ‘Women and Citizenship’ and ‘Women and Leadership.’ These workshops have begun to educate women with disabilities to follow Lakkis’ example and “to take the

lead in the campaign and lobby for equal rights.” To bolster this message, the LPHU organized its December movie festival on the theme of physical disability and women’s rights.

As a result of the LPHU’s efforts, forty percent of Lebanese citizens now have a clearer idea of the issues facing the physically disabled, and more women and youth are getting involved. The organization aims to continue to develop programs for Lebanon’s future “leaders in advocacy.” ♦

For more info: [www.lphu.org](http://www.lphu.org)

**YOUTH GETS SPECIAL ATTENTION** within the LPHU, which encourages participation by young people, giving them opportunities to represent the LPHU internationally for example.

Because fewer than five percent of children with disabilities are able to attend school, the LPHU reaches out to schools and universities. It has set up film contests and organized camps that expose non-disabled youth to the life of the physically disabled.

Lakkis identified the particular hindrances that disabled women face in participating fully in Lebanese society, and wants to do away with simple, logistical issues that lead to exclusion.

“If we have a meeting in the evening, a physically disabled woman residing in the village won’t be able to make it, either because of family constraints or a lack of appropriate, accommodating transportation.”

## UN DRAFTS CONVENTION ON RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The United Nations is engaged in a year-long effort to foster policy changes and influence attitudes about the 600 million persons living with disabilities worldwide, hoping with this effort to draft a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Over the past two decades, a rights-based approach to disability has been gaining strength. The UN is now seeking a global declaration of these rights that would provide that individuals living with disabilities be better protected as subjects under the law, in order to empower disabled persons and remedy situations that cause disability.

The decision to draft the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities was taken by the UN General Assembly in 2001.

The ad-hoc committee, established to consider how rights should be recognized in drafting the convention, will hold its sixth session of considerations in August.

For info on the Convention, see [www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable)

*“This major human rights convention represents a shift in the way governments interact with persons with disabilities.*

*Many have said that the rights of persons with disabilities are already guaranteed in existing human rights treaties, but the reality is that persons with disabilities have been deprived of those rights.”*

*- coordinator of the informal consultations, Don MacKay of New Zealand.*



# Nepali NGOs surmount obstacles, raise disabilities awareness on a tight budget

Claire Dawes

A child with multiple disabilities was abandoned, nameless, at the Educational Rehabilitation Association (ERA) in Kathmandu, Nepal, after his parents were unsuccessful in enrolling him in school. Due to the nature of his disabilities, he remains unable to express

Disabled persons live under all types of conditions, but generally share one experience: exclusion.

Historically, people living with disabilities have been shut out of schools and workplaces, and forced to depend on their family or community for needed support. Low expectations, prejudice, and ignorance also contribute to their invisibility.

The causes of disability have become increasingly preventable, but remain unacceptably high. Diseases, natural disasters, violent conflicts, and pollution are major causes of disabilities. Two-thirds of the disabled population live in developing countries where the ability to respond to these factors is very low.

his identity.

The case of the nameless boy is not uncommon, according to Pashupati Parajuli, Chairman of the ERA and an activist with the disability movement in Nepal for almost thirty years.

“Discrimination is highly prevalent in rural areas, where people with disabilities are treated as skeletons in the closet. They don’t want to see children with disabilities in the community and families don’t want to disclose that they have a disabled child. Having a child with disabilities is a matter of social embarrassment,” he explained.

**SOCIAL STIGMA ISN’T THE ONLY** hurdle people with disabilities in Nepal have to face. A developing country with a diverse geography, it lacks the infrastructure to provide adequate transportation for people with disabilities to benefit from social services, which are generally centred in the capital. People with disabilities in remote areas are often unaware of these services and their basic rights.

Even so, Mr. Parajuli has seen many positive changes over the years, mostly in the expansion of the non-profit sector. When he



began working for the disability movement in Nepal, there was only one organisation concerned with this issue. Today there are over 250. Many of these organisations are directed towards a specific disability, and are run by people with disabilities themselves.

Parajuli also cites increased government attention. In recent years, the government of Nepal created a special education department, and has started to include disabled children in general community education. Notably, Nepal was the first South Asian country to introduce an act in favour of people with disabilities. It has not, however, taken essential steps to ensure that these laws and policies are implemented.

“Government involvement has not changed enough,” Mr. Parajuli



*“Discrimination is highly prevalent in rural areas, where people with disabilities are treated as skeletons in the closet.” - Pashupati Parajuli*

says. "The population of Nepal is 25 million, and 2.4 million have some kind of disability. Among them, forty percent are school age children, but less than 5 percent of those children have the opportunity to gain an education."

Recent progress in educational reforms is partially due to the efforts of the Disabled Human Rights Centre (DHRC), a small organisation with a big vision. It successfully filed a petition to the Supreme Court to require the government to provide free education to all people with disabilities in the country.

**"WE ARE A PIONEER ORGANISATION** working to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Nepal," DHRC General Secretary Maheshwar Ghimire said in an interview with the *Upstream*

*Journal*.

"We believe that every person with a disability in Nepal should be empowered to contribute to the development of our country."

As part of its advocacy campaign, the DHRC produces *Disability Voice*, a monthly magazine with information and news for people with disabilities. The DHRC also has a weekly radio programme broadcast throughout the country via Radio Nepal.

**THE DHRC IS ONE OF THE FEW** nation-wide sources of information available to people with disabilities, and acts as a catalyst for local pressure groups. There are 150 of these local groups demanding the implementation of legal provision for people with disabilities within their communities.

In rural areas, the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme is an awareness-raising project run and financed by NGOs and the government. Representatives from the programme travel to remote villages to talk with families and community

leaders in order to encourage the formation of local development groups.

The CBR programme's positive impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities in rural areas is due, in part, to the ability of people with disabilities to contribute to family income with the help of loans and training aimed at jump-starting income generating activities. This also adds to heightened self-esteem and social recognition.

**THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS INVOLVED** in several successful projects. The main advantage in dealing with the private sector is access to funding, which is a major obstacle for the Nepali disability movement.

"It is very difficult to improve our current situation," Mr. Parajuli said. "We don't have financial support from the government due to the unstable political situation."

The Nanglo Bakery, for example, employs forty deaf staff in its various outlets in the Kathmandu area.

"This is an excellent example of how the private sector here in Nepal can contribute to the disability movement," says Mr. Ghimire. "We are trying to pass this message on to other businesses." ❖



Shushila Dhaki at work at the DHRC [photo courtesy DHRC]

*"Every person with a disability in Nepal should be empowered to contribute to the development of our country." - Maheshwar Ghimire*





# Disability and the World Bank

## How disability issues are taken into consideration by the world's largest development institution

*Interview with Pamela Dudzik, World Bank Disability and Development Team*

**Why does the World Bank have a Disability Team?**

The World Bank is becoming a bit more receptive to the idea of human rights, of the fact that human rights are important to development also. It was President Wolfensohn's challenge to both the World Bank and the rest of the international community to address disability issues.

It is a success that the Disability and Development Advisor position was created. President Wolfensohn is very interested in it; he has worked with the Multiple Sclerosis foundation in the past.

**How large is the Team?**

It's small. Judy Heumann, the Bank's Disability and Development Advisor, has two persons working with her. We have me and a Junior Professional Associate (who is blind) and his assistant, two other semi-senior people and four consultants.

Judy is obviously the most knowledgeable. She has personal experience with disability and she is considered the founder of the Independent Living movement in the US, some say the world. She started up a number of NGOs that dealt with particular issues relating to disability. She has an

incredible amount of expertise and knowledge about the issues, and the ability to really make people listen, which is really important when you're starting a new issue in a place like the Bank.

I have worked on disability issues for a while, off and on. I spent a year at a school in Zimbabwe for disabled refugees and then focused on it throughout the years. I've been at the Bank from fairly early on when the subject of disability was first being addressed.

You need people with deep expertise in a topic like disability to help move the issue forward, and because it is a new issue at the Bank, there is a limited budget that will be allocated to it.

*The Canadian Centre for Disability Studies made recommendations on incorporating disabilities issues into World Bank policy and practice. Where does this stand now?*

It provided ideas, some of them not necessarily feasible, at least at the time. It is a long process to make such a change within a huge bureaucratic organization. We certainly looked at those and of course Judy Heumann, our team leader, had her own ideas. Her strategy was to look at what this report said, and to meet with a lot of people to talk about the best ways to go about incorporating disability into the Bank's work.

We get feedback from all the

**briarpatch**  
magazine

introductory offer

For over 30 years we've been committed to supporting progressive movements working to challenge injustice.

Only \$20 for 8 issues!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

We bring you the real stories without the corporate-press spin and report on actions others are taking to make the world a better place.

Briarpatch  
2138 McIntyre St.  
Regina SK, S4P 2R7  
[www.briarpatchmagazine.com](http://www.briarpatchmagazine.com)

stakeholders, especially the NGOs and the disabled people's organizations. Governments are beginning to open up to it more and Bank staff are bringing up the issue, so a lot of things are happening.

I think that in a year or a couple of years it might be useful to follow up what CCDS did from a baseline assessment to see where the World Bank stands and what are some of the different ways that it can continue to move forward.

## *How is the World Bank opening to disability issues?*

There is receptivity to the issue. We have working groups on disability in each of the regions, and in some of the sectors and the analyses that we have been able to do.

One of the greatest problems when you are trying to address economic issues is the lack of quality data, and people being unwilling to listen because we couldn't show, with good data, the link between disability and poverty, etc. We say to the people that develop and revise the instruments to get disability included. Sometimes there's data that wasn't ever analysed because no one ever thought about disability.

Everybody needs to be educated. The World Bank staff needs to be educated. Governments need to understand that disability is an important issue to understand and to really move it forward economically. Disability NGOs need to understand how to speak the economic language and how to work with the governments and ensure that disability is addressed in the development process.

## *Do you see your work as having empowerment objectives?*

There has to be an element of empowerment in it because part of the way we look at it is that it's not for us to say to a government that you need to address this issue, it's the role of disability organizations in the countries.

Those organizations need to understand how to do it. We have actually done a few trainings with a few disability organizations to talk

about what is economic development, what is the language. It definitely is seen as an important part of the whole equation.

One of the things that really needs to be done is the training of disability NGOs, helping them to become empowered to do things.

We can give reports about the link between disability and poverty, but we can't tell a government that it needs to address disability. The disability NGOs have to convey that. ♦

## **The Upstream Journal asked James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank from 1995 to 2005, about his efforts to bring disabilities issues into the institution**

*UJ: What are you doing for people with disabilities and mainstreaming them into World Bank programs?*

*JW:* First of all, and I'm not proud of it, but I'm doing more than anybody else. Significantly more. Secondly, I've been involved in disabilities issues for thirty years. I chaired the World Multiple Sclerosis Federation for five years, I ran a conference on AIDS for the disabled twenty years ago in Italy, so disabilities is a passion of mine. When I came here I found one person only in a wheelchair, one person who was semi-deaf, and no blind people.

*UJ: Where will the institution go on disabilities now?*

*JW:* First of all, we had a conference last year where we had 150 people running around in wheelchairs. We do all the stuff now with sign language. I've hired three blind people, now working for us. And at every youth conference I have six or seven - at the last conference in Sarajevo I had two blind people, one with Down Syndrome, one deaf guy from Kenya - I'm trying to demonstrate that in everything you do disabilities is not a fringe effort at all.

*UJ: What about in poverty assessments, and the World Bank's Poverty and Social Impact Analysis that is meant to inform programs?*

*JW:* We're moving on that. You should talk to Judy Heumann. Judy is in a wheelchair herself.\*

I'm not proud of what we've yet done, but I'm a hell of a lot prouder than what anybody else has done. I'm committed to the disability issues, and I think that if you ask the people in the disabilities movement, they would tell you that I'm among their best friends.

\* Judy Heumann heads the World Bank's Disability & Development Team

**The Upstream Journal asks Moira Horgan-Jones, Executive Director of Disabled Peoples' International**

## **“How important will the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities be?”**

**W**HEN I'M AT THE UN AND SEE 193 STATES DISCUSSING DISABILITY, THAT'S ALWAYS GOOD. We need a convention, a specific convention to protect the rights of people with disabilities. This is absolutely essential, for the very reason that the existing conventions do not protect our rights.

The involvement of people with disabilities in the development of this convention is unprecedented. We are part of the drafting group, we're allowed into all of the meetings of states, and in the formal sessions we're able to make interventions after the states. The disability community worldwide has coalesced around this and is trying very hard to make sure that this is a very good convention.

Where the whole thing goes sideways is the monitoring. The convention is only as good as how well it's monitored and how well states report. If there is no reporting requirement and no monitoring requirement that's strong, then the convention will only result in a piece of paper that doesn't mean anything.

What we struggle with is trying to make a convention that will be good for fifty years. You have to make it general enough so that when gains are made, that it is broad enough to cover all of those. We need to talk about a process that states can move towards that's realistic, but it also needs to be far-sighted enough that it will cover eventual things that will come up.

The internet is a very good example. People with disabilities are further marginalized by the Internet because where there were materials available in print, they are not available now.

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** are very poor; poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability. If you are poor you are more likely to be disabled through totally preventable diseases. If you are not poor to start off with and you become disabled, you are very likely to become poor because you are not going to



Photo courtesy DPI

be able to get a job and be able to participate in your society.

The poverty part of the whole thing means that you don't have access to the resources to be part of the information technology society, that you are not able to get access to the information and if you don't have that, then you are not going to be able to participate. The power is taken away.



***“Let me tell you very clearly that poverty is not an issue for disabled people just in developing countries.”***

*- Moira Horgan-Jones*



*What is your perspective of World Bank policies and practices?*

We work with them very closely. A few months ago, I did some training in Africa, and we brought the World Bank in to talk about their Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRASP) and the role for people with disabilities. There are some consultations happening with disability organizations, but we are not seeing them reflected in the country plans.

I think the World Bank will be informed by the convention. It has made some good strides over the last few years. We've met with World Bank President Jim Wolfensohn, and I heard and believed he was committed to disability rights. Now he's leaving his post, but he sought ways to try and help us gain alliances that would help us make inroads, and the World Bank is present at all of the negotiations at the UN.

I came back from Tanzania about a month ago and I met with the government there. We had the opportunity to talk about the PRSP there, and they undertook a very good consultation and had our organization there involved in it.

**UNESCO HAS A STRATEGY** that by 2015 all children in the world will have a primary education. But less than 3% of children with disabilities ever see the inside of a classroom. If you don't have specific strategies to get these children into classrooms, this isn't going to happen. And if you don't have an education, you have no chance of getting a job. So if we don't deal

with the education issue, the work issue is a bit far behind.

**BUT LET ME TELL YOU** very clearly that poverty is not an issue for disabled people just in developing countries. They are also poor in developed countries. Look at the instance of disability in Aboriginal communities in Canada. If you go to any poverty sector, you will see more people with disabilities in that sector, because of lack of access

to information, lack of resources to have good nutrition, or through crime and violence.

*How empowering have efforts in recent years been?*

We've made great progress.

The convention is the most important thing we'll do in this generation, and we have to be sure it's a good legacy we leave for future generations of people with disabilities. ❖

## Canadian policy on Africa: Do rights have anything to do with it?

***Looking for the priorities of Ralph Goodale, Canadian Minister of Finance, in African issues, we tracked recent speeches to see how often particular words appear...***

*Remarks on African Development, in advance of the G-7 meeting in London, England, June 2005:*

Rights	0	Trade	11
Democracy	0	Private sector	7
Power or empowerment	1	Economic growth	6
		Investment	5

*"Unleashing Finance and Infrastructure for Africa" speech at a conference organised by the Canadian Council on Africa, April 2005:*

Rights	0	Private sector	11
Democratic development	1	Investment	12
Empowerment	0	Markets:	10
Sustainable progress/development	2	Private investments	2
Justice	1	Capital	6

*Statement prepared for the Development Committee of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, April 2005:*

Rights	0	Trade	11
Public	0	Private sector	5
Democracy	0	Effective or effectiveness	13
Power or empowerment	0	Impact	5
Environment	1	Growth	5

## NIGERIA: Taking down voting barriers

By James D. Morgan

**D**ISABLED NIGERIANS FIND IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE to voice their political opinions. Voting access is barred for the estimated 13 million persons with disabilities in that country. Running for state office is not allowed, and the disabled often find it difficult to access registration and voting stations.

Numerous laws restrict the political liberties of the disabled there, although the experience is not limited to Nigeria. Democracies worldwide place restrictions on the eligible voting population.

In Nigeria, these restrictions can be found in the recent Electoral Act, and in the nation's constitution. The Electoral Act of 2002 provides for exclusion based on mental disability by stating that a person may register to vote only if he or she "is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any laws, rules or regulations in force in Nigeria." Under Nigerian law, the term 'legal incapacity' includes mentally disabled persons, although this is not explicitly defined in the Electoral Act, and registration officials often have the authority to declare a person "unfit" to vote.

Since mental disabilities are often not well understood, this could unnecessarily prevent a person from voting.

However, a visually impaired or otherwise physically disabled person has the right to be accompanied to the voting station, and to receive help marking the ballot, although the assistant is not legally required

to vote the way they are told. There are also accessibility issues. If a disabled person cannot physically access the registration or voting booth, he or she cannot vote. There are no accessibility provisions in Nigeria's election laws. (In Canada, by contrast, disabled voters have the right to vote in the presence of an election official, either in their home or in the election official's office.)

Nigerians with disabilities often find it difficult to learn about elections. Disabled persons of all capacities need voter education materials printed in a proper format, media, and language. Some NGOs work to promote awareness about elections, but the government has not engaged in this type of outreach. The forthcoming UN Convention on the Rights of the Disabled may help put an end to these types of restrictions.

It will require states to assist the disabled by providing the opportunity to vote and run for election, and to vote by secret and assisted ballot. It will try to ensure that voting procedures are easily understood and that facilities are physically accessible.

Moreover, it calls on governments to actively promote an environment that is respectable and inclusive of people with disabilities, while encouraging their participation in public affairs. ❖

Ekaete Umoh, director of Nigeria's Family-Centered Initiative for Challenged Persons, regards poverty as one of the main causes of disability in Nigeria. The inability to provide for basic needs brings malnutrition, poor hygiene, and poor general health – factors that cause disability.

The government is "not insensitive" to disability issues, she says, but questions its level of commitment. She points to the 2003 Nigerians with Disabilities Act, calling it "a step in the right direction." However, the bill has yet to be signed into law.

Umoh is optimistic about the World Bank's involvement with disabled Nigerians.

"The World Bank projects have to some extent impacted positively the disabled community," she notes.

"The Bank has succeeded in raising awareness on the human rights of persons with disabilities, and also presented disability issues as development issues."

On the other hand, Umoh is concerned about the World Bank promotion of privatization as a strategy to stimulate economic growth.

"Privatization will have an impact on disabled people, given that little or no efforts are usually made to include promotion of the rights of disabled people in the plan-



Ekaete Umoh

# New legislation aids disabled Tanzanians

By James D. Morgan

Tanzanians are challenging their government about what it means to be disabled, and are seeking alternative enforcement mechanisms that would force the government to better serve the disabled population.

Activist Gideon Mandesi was involved with writing the both the National and the Zanzibar Disability Policies. Although he recognizes the importance of the push

for legislation, he remains concerned.

"International assistance is highly needed to support these initiatives," he said in a telephone interview.

"From there we will make sure that it reflects the needs of disabled and protects their rights with effective implementation by the government."

He claims that three and a half million people with disabilities are being neglected by the government, many of working age but illiterate and unemployed.

There is a legislative and institutional framework for helping the disabled, but disability matters have been neglected over the years, and made worse by a lack of social spending. Non-governmental and civil society

organizations are lobbying the government to change this, and some progress can be seen.

Mainland Tanzania is considering a bill that would implement the National Disability Policy adopted a year ago, after enacting an Employment and Industrial Relations Act in 2004 that specifically protects the disabled from discrimination in the workplace. However, earlier bills lacked enforcement mechanisms or proper funding by the government to achieve the desired goal.

***"Three and a half million people with disabilities are being neglected by the government"***

The semi-autonomous Zanzibar region has also adopted a disability-related policy, which the legislature plans to translate into law soon, joining the 1997 Labour Code which has provisions to protect the disabled.

A member of the UN Panel of Experts to Promote and Protect the Rights of Disabled Persons, Gideon Mandesi is confident that the forthcoming UN Convention on the Rights of the Disabled will be ratified, but as with the national legislation he is concerned with implementation.

"The problem will remain in the member state or country, like Tanzania, to codify it in its national laws," says Mandesi.

## People with Disabilities Uganda builds literacy program

One of PWDU most promising projects is the building of a library specifically aimed at children and families of the disabled.

"We are promoting a reading centre, and establishing a community library where children and their supporters can always access some information," director Richard Mugisha says, as part of the organization's effort to encourage literacy and education of disabled children.

The reading centre is also meant to provide a resource for families wanting to better understand their children's disabilities.

info: [www.pwd-u.org](http://www.pwd-u.org)

Even so, he is participating in the process of drafting the Convention with the hope that it will force governments to act on disability matters. ❖



# Uganda: Social attitudes need changing

by Marie-Noel St.Hilaire

**S**OMEWHERE IN UGANDA, A CHILD SITS ALONE in his backyard day after day. He is one of many disabled children in the country who do not have access to support like wheelchairs and crutches, and their environment itself poses its own obstacles. They are often denied the opportunity to go to school, and without an education they become the poorest of the poor.

According to Elijah Musenyente of Uganda's Society of Hidden Talents (HITS), Uganda's tradition has it that disability is a curse, bad luck or omen. The disabled are often kept in the backyard for fear of shaming the family. They are denied the right to go to school, marry and hold a job. Even if they escape their family's confinement, it remains difficult to make a living when equipped with very little skills.

HITS works at the community level to teach the disabled as well as the able-bodied life skills and to build their confidence. It is also important to work with the community as a whole. One of the greatest challenges in improving the rights and opportunities for disabled people within society in Uganda is convincing the population at large of the potential and capacities held by the disabled.

"We raise awareness for people to understand that disabled people are also human beings, they are the same as others," Richard Mugisha, director of People With Disabilities Uganda (PWDU), said in an interview with the Upstream Journal.

A change in attitude is needed at all levels of society, he argues, perhaps most importantly at the government level, where the disabled are often not considered when economic opportunities arise.

The PWDU works throughout Uganda to change the fate of many children who, aside from growing up in a poverty stricken nation, face even greater obstacles due to their disabilities.

**MR. MUGISHA'S ORGANIZATION IS WORKING TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES** while simultaneously trying to address economic issues which force families to make diffi-

providing information that may help families with disabled children better understand their child's disability. It makes sure that the children's needs are met in terms of health care, clothing and food, trying to fill the social services gap left by the government.

Unfortunately, they can not reach everyone. In rural areas, for example, that do not have access to support and are (in Mr. Mugisha's words) "less enlightened," there is a persistent problem of infanticide. Elijah Musenyente, chairman of HITS has also collected information about the discrimination and torture that the disabled are some-



*The Society of Hidden Talents seeks recognition of basic rights to water and sanitation*

cult choices. The government does not view disabilities as a priority, and so does not provide services or financial support to people with disabilities or their families.

Aside from lobbying the government, PWDU also works with communities, raising awareness and

times subjected to. Organizations such as PWDU and HITS are essential in bringing about a change in these practices.

Underlying these social attitudes is a more complex economic situation that can not be resolved through handouts. In order for dis-

abled people to obtain a degree of independence, they need a source of income.

"Disabled people go on the streets begging. That's their work, their job. They beg," Mugisha says.

Some are lucky enough to encounter an organization like PWDU working to provide micro-employment opportunities, such as pig and chicken rearing. The organization also tries to teach life skills and emphasizes activities that promote sustainable living. The key word for the PWDU is sustainable.



**FOR A DISABLED CHILD TO HAVE A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING** and access to education, one must not only look at the child but also at the problems faced by the family supporting that child, and how that family is forced to make a living.

Without the proper emphasis on the family unit and changing the opportunities available for disabled family members, solutions remain superficial and short term.

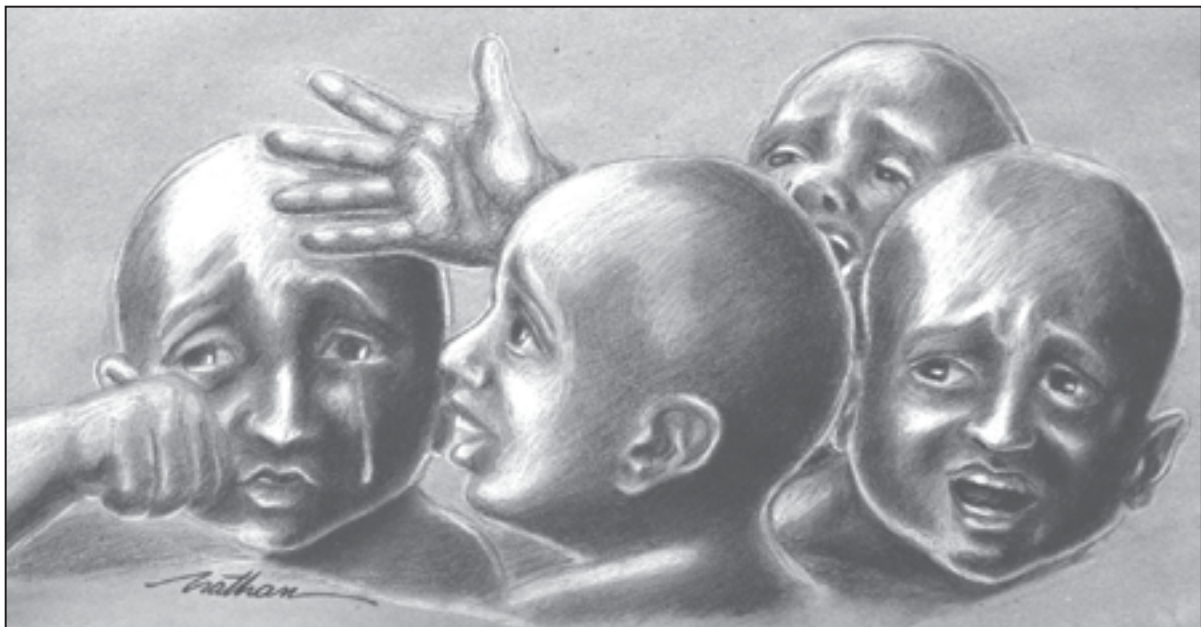
*Hidden Talents agitates for rights using drama, education workshops* [photos HITS]

Asked what role the international community has in this issue, Mugisha said, "The international community needs to provide some support for these communities, support in terms of looking at the whole puzzle in terms of equal opportunities and services."

Organizations such as PWDU and HITS need technical, monetary and material support in order

to properly carry out their activities. They aren't only asking for donations, but also that the problem be looked at from a broad perspective.

More than anything, long term solutions are needed. Attempting to improve disabled people's position in society involves changing long standing cultural characteristics and economic factors such as poverty alleviation. ❖



Drawing by "Nathan," Brazil

# La paix est loin d'avoir été achevée

*Un conflit armé a secoué fortement le Guatemala de 1960 à 1996. Cette période a été marquée par la violence d'État et elle a coûté la vie à 200 000 victimes dont 83% étaient des Autochtones mayas. Au début des années 1980, les gouvernements de Lucas Garcia et de Rios Montt ont mis en place une politique génocidaire qui aura pour conséquence le massacre de plus de 600 villages autochtones et le déplacement interne et externe de plus d'un million d'habitants. Des accords de paix ont été signés en 1996, entre l'Union révolutionnaire nationale guatémaltèque et le président de la république. Pourtant, près de 10 ans après cet événement, la paix est loin d'avoir été achevée dans ce pays où les droits humains continuent d'être violés et les Autochtones discriminés.*

*Le Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala envoie des observateurs sur le terrain depuis 1992, pour accompagner les Autochtones qui ont décidé de livrer leur témoignage afin que justice soit faite. Se sentant isolés et menacés, ces gens ont demandé notre présence dans leur communauté.*

par Marie-Soleil Martineau

**S**AMEDI MATIN, ÇA SENTAIT LA FÉBRILITÉ dans le cimetière numéro 2 de Rabinal. Plus d'une centaine d'Autochtones achis se sont réunis dans ce lieu sacré où reposent leurs êtres aimés, victimes des 28 massacres qui ont eu lieu dans la région. Ces morts ont enfin pu être enterrés dignement, après avoir été sortis des fosses communes.

Au plus fort du conflit, les soldats et les patrouilleurs d'autodéfense civile (PAC), c'est-à-dire des civils armés par l'État, ont commis plusieurs massacres dans les villages autochtones. Après avoir commis ceux-ci, ils enterraient les victimes dans des "cimetières clandestins". En vérité, les survivants des massacres savaient très bien où se trouvaient leurs morts, sans toutefois pouvoir s'y rendre pour prier, pleurer ou se recueillir. Grâce à la mobilisation des veuves qui voulaient retrouver et enterrer dignement les membres de leur famille, les exhumations ont commencé à se dérouler un peu partout dans le pays quelques années avant la signature des Accords

de paix. Plusieurs exhumations ont eu lieu à Rabinal et les corps ont été enterrés dans un nouveau cimetière où ont été construits des monuments commémoratifs.

Samedi matin donc, les survivants des massacres sont venus depuis leur aldea (un hameau) pour réclamer leur dignité et celle des victimes. Avec l'aide du Centre d'action légal pour les droits humains (CALDH), ils ont conçu d'énormes courte-pointes. Après avoir brodé le nom, la date et l'endroit où a été tué leur mari, leur mère, leur fille ou leur grand-père, les femmes ont cousu ces pièces l'une à l'autre pour former en tout sept courte-pointes provenant de plusieurs régions du pays. Tous ensemble, nous avons enligné ces œuvres d'art symboliques une derrière l'autre, puis les Autochtones achis les ont agrippées et promenées à travers les rues de Rabinal.

**L'ANNÉE DERNIÈRE, LA PRÉSENTATION** n'a pas pu avoir lieu, car quelques habitants s'étaient montrés hostiles face à cette activité, des menaces avaient été formulées. Le



projet avait dû être avorté. Enfin, il a bel et bien pris forme et de façon magnifique. Les gens suivaient sous un soleil de plomb, mais transportaient la courte-pointe de façon solennelle. Quelques-uns pleuraient, quelques autres souriaient, mais tous avaient cette fierté dans le regard. Parmi les marcheurs, se trouvaient plusieurs veuves dont quelques-unes portant une énorme bannière où était écrit en lettre rouge: ¡SÍ HUBO GENOCIDIO! Oui, il y a eu un génocide. C'est important de le répéter, car le gouvernement guatémaltèque refuse encore et toujours cette vérité.

Un prêtre maya conduisait la marche avec un encensoir rempli de copal pom qui laissait s'échapper une odeur de sacré. Derrière lui, cette foule de femmes et d'hommes, de personnes âgées et d'enfants marchaient au son de la marimba. Du haut-parleur sortait aussi un



message important: “La commission d’éclaircissement historique effectuée par l’ONU à la suite de la signature des Accords de paix a proposé qu’il faille organiser des activités favorisant la réconciliation. Cette marche sert à rappeler la mémoire historique. Ces courte-pointes portent les noms de toutes les victimes des massacres effectués durant l’époque de violence.”

Les rabinalenses sont sortis sur le trottoir pour les regarder défiler. Quelques-uns par solidarité et d’autres par curiosité, j’imagine. Pour ma part, j’ai marché avec eux depuis le cimetière jusqu’à la place centrale devant l’église. Je me sentais privilégiée de pouvoir participer à cette marche honorant les morts, célébrant la dignité et la mémoire.

Une mémoire collective qui n’a pas été transformée par l’État, mais qui est plutôt formée par l’expérience de chacune de ces personnes qui ont passé à travers une période des plus traumatisantes. ❖

**Auteur Marie-Soleil Martineau**

[photo Nicholas Bergeron]



## Development through sport

*“Sport can play a role in improving the lives of individuals, not only individuals, I might add, but whole communities. I am convinced that the time is right to build on that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly those live in the midst of poverty, disease and conflict.” - Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General*

by Jennifer Ebermann

**N**ORBERT RABEMANANJARA, A PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER, coaches the National Senior Basketball Team of Madagascar in competitions like the African Basketball Championships. He believes that physical activity strengthens the mind and body of individuals, and can therefore help encouraging people living in communities that suffer from unemployment and poverty.

“Training the youth of a country leads to more stability and lays a fundamental base for sustainable development,” he says.

Victor Tamba, also a physi-

cal education teacher, coaches the Congo Brazzaville national team in 200-800 metre competition at events like the African Athletics Championships. The founder of a sports club in Brazzaville, he argues that sporting events foster a sense of national coherence and create role models that are important for young people in countries like the Congo.

He also feels that the inclusion of women and girls in sports activities, and support for their integration in the sporting system, can lead to new employment opportunities, better self esteem, and a new understanding of their health and bodies.

The young men were in Canada recently as part of the training provided by the *Programme d’appui international au sport africain et des caraïbes* (PAISAC), which encourages the development and self-sufficiency of sports in Africa and the Caribbean.

Guy-Emmanuel Girukwishaka, a physical education teacher and coach of the Burundi Cycling Federation, went through the PAISAC program in 2003.

Burundi is still haunted by the spectre of genocide, and remains destabilized by the history of violence between different ethnic groups, the Tutsis, Hutus and Ganywas. Some 200,000 people have

been killed in ethnic violence since Burundi's first democratically elected president was assassinated in October 1993.

Girukwishaka chose Gihanga, a small community badly affected by war, for his sports activities, with three objectives:

- to use sport as method of peace education through the notion of fair play, and as a factor for social reintegration in the communities,
- to bring the communities together for a joint activity, and
- to introduce different existing socio-professional categories by means of sport.

One activity he organized was a soccer tournament with teams from different socio-professional groups (hair dressers, unemployed people, butchers, farmers etc.). He also set up cycling races for the youth of various villages of the area.

The outcomes of these events were promising. People from different social and ethnic groups made contact with each other and exchanged their views on the difficulties they encounter in every day's life. This brought a better understanding of one another and in many cases led to the beginning of new friendships and partnerships.

These are examples of how sport can be used to solve racial conflicts and to foster peace by proposing social activities that bring people together and furthers communication. Children, especially those in regions exposed to war and poverty, can be introduced to playing activities through which they will learn to interact in new ways and to build up confidence by learning new skills and attitudes. ❖

## Social Justice Committee hosts panel discussion on controversial mine in Guatemala

The SJC invited representatives of Glamis Gold Ltd., the World Bank, and Friends of the Earth Canada to join Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini of San Marcos, Guatemala to share their perspectives. The discussion was moderated by the SJC's Derek MacCuish.

The 2 1/2 hour discussion took place at Concordia University, Montreal, June 1 as part of the university's Peace and Conflict Resolution Series, with a full audience of 175 people.

Here are brief excerpts. The full discussion is available on-line at <http://peace.concordia.ca>



Bishop Ramazzini and James Schenck (Glamis Gold)

**Bishop Ramazzini:** "It is not just the idea of consulting the people, but rather the idea is that the people themselves would be directly involved in the process that is presented to them as being a developmental process. We have a concept of development which is much more holistic and humane, where the person is the focus of the development."

**Michael Swetye (IFC/World Bank):** This has been such a controversial project and there hasn't been enough of an opportunity to really have a dialogue and get out the truth and the facts and have an exchange of ideas."

"Sustainable mining development can be a key



Michael Swetye (IFC, World Bank) and Graham Saul (Friends of the Earth Canada)

**Graham Saul FOE-Canada):** "Large oil, mining and gas projects often exacerbate conflict. They go into situations characterized by social tension and make things worse."

"The World Bank [is] essentially taking this concept of free, prior and informed *consent* and turning it into free, prior, and informed *consultation*."

**James Schenck (Glamis):** "The land is not available for everybody to be a farmer, so we need to look at what the opportunities are for rural and non-farm labour for development."  
"We believe that when we leave the area it will be in better shape than it currently is. We are meeting all the national and international

# Tsunami aid relief in Thailand and Indonesia

## *Via Campesina organizations want long-term, locally-driven development*

by Charlotte Cordier

**W**HEN DECEMBER'S TSUNAMI HIT, leaders of the Aceh Peasant Association (PERMATA) ran eight kilometres to escape the wave that wiped out their office in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, and killed two-thirds of local fisherfolk. Despite the horror of their experience, the organization has joined members of the Indonesian Federation of Peasant Movements (FSPI) in mobilizing relief efforts, and formed a Humanitarian Solidarity Team for the Tsunami Disaster in Aceh and North Sumatra (KSKBA).

The Team's concern is that relief efforts focus on getting local people back on their feet. It emphasizes the importance of long-term rehabilitation and strengthening of local communities, by buying food aid within Indonesia for example.

This reflects the approach of the international *Via Campesina* movement, of which the FSPI is a member. *Via Campesina* is a global alliance of peasant, family farmer, farm worker, indigenous and landless peoples' organizations, and other rural movements. Among other things, it campaigns for small-scale family farm and peasant agriculture

As far back as Dutch colonialism and the struggle for independence, Aceh has long been a conflict zone. In 1989, the Indonesian government enforced a Military Operational Zone in Aceh. This marked the start of the period of most brutal repression in that region. As a result, separatist groups emerged like called the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front and the Free Aceh Movement.

based on the sustainable use of local resources for the production of quality food for local consumption.

Working together in these networks of new and established partnerships, local organizations have set up six aid centres in the Aceh districts demolished by the tsunami. With the help of 350 volunteers from the coalition helping out in Aceh, the coalition is distributing locally-donated basic goods, such as clothes, milk, rice, and vegetables.

The tsunami also devastated Thailand's Andaman coastal communities. The massive waves affected 186 fishing villages along the Andaman Coast, killing almost 700 small-scale fisherfolk. Early surveys estimated losses of 4,900 people killed and 6,000 people missing.

Tens of thousands of different types of fishing gear, such as nets, cages and floats, have been lost, robbing fishing communities of their livelihoods. More than 2,000 small-scale fishing vessels are thought to be ruined. The damage of marine fisheries is estimated to be \$16.6 million.

Local organizations responded by forming new networks that co-operate in rebuilding communities while emphasizing the challenges faced by marginalized groups such as small-scale fishermen.

For example, in January the Assembly of the Poor, an NGO in Thailand, led a "From the Poor to the Poor" convoy providing rice from peasant members of the assembly in each region, and local carpenters to repair the boats.

The networks also want to provide "a direction for government relief policies that are conducive of communities' needs."

This approach focuses on organizing the communities. According to organizers, it's an important part of reconstruction because if the fisherfolk are no longer "standing alone", they can better seek help from the government, and build or reinforce their own solidarity. Through programs such as replanting mangroves, re-establishing fish sanctuaries and installing artificial reefs, the networks are trying to help communities determine "the directions and approaches that are best suited to local circumstances."

**Indonesia:** Overall, the fishing industry makes an important contribution to the national diet, providing nearly two-thirds of the supply of animal protein. Over 5 million people are directly involved in fishing and fish farming. Exports of fishery products have increased considerably since the 1960s; in 1998 the value of fishery exports were US\$ 1 628.5 million.

**Thailand:** The fishing industry contributes significantly to the socio-economy of Thailand. Fish is the primary accessible animal protein food for most people. Seafood is one of the top industries that generate major income for Thailand. The main export items are frozen shrimp and canned tuna. In 1999, seafood exports were worth US\$ 4 100 million.



# Indigenous people want power to veto World Bank plans

by Haider Rizvi, InterPress Service

**I**NDIGENOUS GROUPS ARE DEMANDING that the World Bank seek their consent -- not just consult them -- before carrying out development programmes on their ancestral lands.

Representatives of native communities came away from U.N.-sponsored talks here that ended last Friday criticising the global lender for, in their view, making cosmetic changes in its development policies, which they said continue to undermine native interests.

Canadian aboriginal activist Arthur Manual summarised the concern bluntly.

"Consultation sounds good, but does nothing," he said. "It's a mechanism to allow for the ultimate theft of our indigenous propriety interests free of charge. Prior informed consent is recognition of our land, culture, and way of life."

By seeking to negotiate with groups within a given indigenous community under the rubric of consultation, rather than simply submitting plans for each commu-

nity to discuss and decide upon internally, the bank would be "dividing our communities," added Nilo Cayuqueo of Abya Yala Nexus, an indigenous group based in California.

They referred to the bank's new policy on indigenous peoples' development introduced earlier this month.

The bank capped seven years of consultations with indigenous communities, experts, and government officials when it unveiled its new policy, which it said calls for "free, prior, and informed consultations" with communities.

**BUT INDIGENOUS LEADERS**, in comments at the conference's end and in interviews with IPS on Tuesday, said they were demanding that the bank recognise their communities' rights to their ancestral territories and natural resources.

"The correct terminology for us is free, prior, and informed consent," said Michael Dodson, an aboriginal activist from Australia. To him and other activists, "consent" has entirely different meanings than "consultations."



"Of course, implicit in the term is the right to say no to development or to projects," he added.

The bank said the revised policy was aimed at preventing community dissatisfaction with development efforts in the first place.

**"WE MOVED TOWARD A PRO-ACTIVE** approach and a strategic shift," a bank spokesman told IPS on condition he not be named.

***"We want the bank to abandon this policy of consultation"***

According to this revised policy, the bank will provide development financing only when a process of free, prior, and informed consultation results in broad community support."

For activists, however, the new policy remains too vague.

"The only safeguard in the bank's approach is the need, they say, for broad community support," said Dodson. "But what broad community support means is not defined in the policy. Does that mean 51 percent? Is that broad community support? Or is it 70 percent? It's because of this sort of uncertainty that we want the bank to abandon this policy of consultation."

The new bank policy is set to take effect in July. ❖

# “Building Global Justice in the Classroom”

## SJC produces new resource for educators on development, globalization

The Social Justice Committee has just developed teacher guides for Secondary One and Two (Grades 7 and 8), to help students explore what it means to be a global citizen and to provide them with a better understanding of global development issues.

The teacher guides propose a set of learning activities particularly suited for the new **Geography** and **History And Citizenship** education courses. They present a variety of resources and approaches to encourage and develop students' varied skills and interests. Learning activities feature teamwork, project work, and cooperative learning.

The original curriculum modules relate to cross-curricular competency encouraged by the new Quebec Education Program. The guides present a wide variety of activities that will make it easy for teachers to integrate material into other courses aside from **Geography** and **History And Citizenship** education courses.

The **Geography** module explores differences and similarities in ways of living between Canadian citizens and citizens from developing countries. Topics include:

- Poverty & Basic Human Needs
- Hunger and Food Security
- Health & HIV/AIDS
- Environment & Water

The **History and Citizenship Education** module explores the theme of globalization from a historical perspective. Topics include:

- Migration
- Trade
- International Financial Institutions
- Multinational Corporations
- Alternatives/Responses to globalization

The guides will be published in English and French this summer.

**Educators** - check the SJC web site ([www.s-j-c.net](http://www.s-j-c.net)) for updates and information on how to order the guides, or write or call (1-514-933-6797) and we'll send you information as it becomes available.

The SJC is working on this project in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency, the Leading English Education and Resource Network (L.E.A.R.N.), the English Montreal School Board, John Paul I High School, Laurier Macdonald High School and Marymount Academy.



## Opinion

# The difference between aid, exploitation & justice

Lost in the recent parliamentary shenanigans was one of the items that the NDP pushed on the Liberals as a condition for its support of the budget - an increase in Canada's foreign aid above what had already been proposed. In fact, it has been quite some time since Canada's foreign aid, other than disaster relief, has been discussed. I think it is now time to do so.

About forty years ago, Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was instrumental in setting a standard for the amount of foreign aid western countries should give to poorer ones: 0.7% of the donor's gross national product. Universally acclaimed, this target has been reached by only a few countries - certainly not by Canada.

In the 1970s many NGOs (including the SJC) put pressure on Ottawa on this, but to no avail. Then other issues took precedence - respect for human rights, debt relief and fair trade terms.

In fact, when we saw how donor countries used foreign aid to supply arms, buy governments and support their own corporations, and how recipient government leaders often used it to line their own pockets, we began to downplay government foreign aid altogether. We preferred to leave the transfer of funds to the poor countries in the hands of the non-governmental sector - aid and development organizations that gather money from both the public and federal government.

Traditionally, Canadians have considered foreign aid to be a type of charity. Thanks to an abundant supply of natural resources, hard work, and sound economic and political policies, Canada is a wealthy country. Clearly, there are many countries not quite so fortunate. In fact, some are very poor. So we share some of our wealth with these countries, much as we do with the victims of domestic poverty. When there is a horrible tragedy, such as last year's tsunami, we can be very generous.

On the other hand, when we believe that the poor are responsible for their own poverty, we are less so. After all, we work hard for our money and we don't want to see it misused.

However, many of us disagree strongly with this type of thinking. We may well agree that Canada and other wealthy countries are blessed with natural resources, know-how, and hard work but there is more to it than that. Unfair trade practices, support of dictators and corrupt governments, and money loaned on usurious terms continues to drain billions of dollars from Africa, parts of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Much of Western society continues to be built on the backs of the poor.

Moreover, this exploitation is growing worse as it becomes more entrenched in a global political and economic system that promotes the rights of capital at the expense of people. This wealth is not really ours - it belongs to the people from whom it was taken.

We must revise our approach to foreign aid. We can no longer see it as charity. Rather, it is reparation. It is the return of money to the poor from whom it was taken.

*“When the poor ask for more help, they have justice on their side”*

(Actually, there is a more radical Christian tradition that says that those who have more than they need actually owe that excess, however it was attained, to those who have not).

This being the case, many of the excuses for not increasing the amount of our reparations are not tenable. Saying that our economy is not doing well means nothing to those who are much worse off. And saying that we are doing too well and it would be too much if we were to give the magical 0.7% - an argument that has been being offered - is just miserly.

When the poor ask for more help, they have justice on their side. It is up to countries like Canada to see that it is served.

First and foremost, it means intensifying the struggle for a more just global socio-economic order. The current one, now being imposed throughout the world, is structuralizing this injustice. We must stop taking what is not ours.

Second, it means increasing our reparations to those from whom wealth has been taken. Certainly we have to find ways for it to go to the people and not to local thieves. Can we be sure that every cent will go to the poor? Of course not, any more than we can say that there is no corruption among our own political and economic leaders.

The responsibility to act justly lies with all of us. We know that our political and economic leaders will not remedy the situation themselves. It requires a strong vocal citizenry to make its voices heard.

So, let's get to work.





**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 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.*

**Contact us:**

**Email:** editor@upstreamjournal.org

**Telephone:** 1-514-933-6797

**Toll free:** 1-866-RIGHTS-2

Visit our web site: **www.upstreamjournal.org**

C

The Social Justice Committee  
1857 deMaisonneuve ouest, Suite 320  
Montreal QC H3H 1J9



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Yes, I support the mission of the Social Justice Committee and would like to become a member. My contribution is enclosed. For credit card donations, call toll-free 1-866-RIGHTS-2
- ☐ I am unable to make a contribution at this time, but I would like to receive the Upstream Journal.

**Revenue Canada Charity Registration 88797 3048 RR0001**

**Change of address? Let us know!**

Telephone 1-514-933-6797  
Toll free in US & Canada  
1-866-RIGHTS-2

E-mail: sjc@web.net

**"The Little Book of Archbishop Oscar Romero"**

The words of Archbishop Romero on topics such as martyrdom, the duty of the Church, and social justice. 4" x 3" An excellent gift for anyone who is interested in social justice, the El Salvadorean struggle, and the writings and thoughts of Archbishop Romero.

\$5 from the SJC

The **Upstream Journal** is published by the **Social Justice Committee, Montreal**. The Upstream Journal focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue.

Subscription to the Upstream Journal is by donation, which goes to support a range of SJC educational projects. The journal is published five times a year, at irregular intervals between September and June.

Views expressed in the Upstream Journal are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Social Justice Committee. We welcome the submission of illustrations and articles on aspects of international development and human rights.

All articles or other content credited to IPS is copyrighted. All rights reserved, IPS – Inter Press Service 2004. Total or partial publication, retransmission or sale forbidden.

Unless otherwise indicated, non-IPS articles are available for free reprint. Advance permission is not required, but we ask that you credit the Upstream Journal for use of original articles, and let us know if you use our material.