

CHINA Submerged communities • HIV/AIDS activists targetted • **FARMS & FOOD** Industrial agriculture and land grabs
• Are trees a solution to world hunger? • Kenyans angered by GMO corn • **WORLD BANK** funds giant coal plant
• **"ILL DEFINED"** Canada's new aid policy • **PROFILE** Dexter X - a life of direct action protest

The
Upstream
Journal
Canadian perspectives on global justice



NEW FEATURE SECTION:

YOUR LIFE IN THE WORLD

- Getting a career in diplomatic service
- Why you need an internship

www.upstreamjournal.org Retail display until 20 Feb 2011

\$3.95



Fall/Winter 2010 Vol. 23 No. 4 PM 41141008



"The Garden"

Migrant labourers from Chongqing city. Workers came to the dam site from from the country in the hopes of earning a fortune. Chen Qiulin believes this is a dream that may appear unreal, similar to the flowers, which she sees as so beautiful that they don't seem real. Even so, her images convey that people still have dreams, that Wanxian is seen as a place of opportunity. The film follows two workers as they carry the bright flowers through the dark, hazy city.

Story on page 5. Photos courtesy of Chen Qiulin and the Max Protetch Gallery.

The Upstream Journal is published 4 times a year, in digital format and on 100% recycled paper with a high post-consumer content.

Our thanks to our volunteer and intern writers, and to the photographers who contributed their work. Special thanks to Shannon Kiely for her assistance in editing and preparing the articles. Shannon is a masters student at Dalhousie University in International Development Studies. In Montreal for the summer of 2010 doing field research on the live-in caregiver program and media for her thesis project, she interned at the *Upstream Journal*.

In this issue:

Displaced

5

An artist's works reflect her response to losing her childhood home to floodwaters as China builds a massive dam.

Health advocates targetted

8

Government harassment of HIV/AIDS health workers in China continues despite official policy

Land grabbing

11

Increasing demand for agricultural land means eviction, conflict for many

The future of farming is... trees?

13

Going beyond two-dimensional farming

No GMOs, please, we're Kenyan

15

Corn shipment sparks protests

Eye on the World Bank and IMF

17

World Bank provides \$3.75 billion for giant coal-burning plant despite climate change concerns

Eye on Ottawa

21

New Canadian government policy in international development - less accountability and dialogue, fewer partnerships

New feature section!

Working for a better world

The internship - do you really have to work for free to kick-start your career?

26

Foreign Service as a career

28

Profile: Dexter X's world of protest

30

Ernie Schibli's Opinion *Corporate responsibility bill defeat in perspective*

33



Dear readers,

Most of the work on the *Upstream Journal*, and on the other programs of the Social Justice Committee of Montreal, is done by volunteers, and most of them are students. They often discuss their career plans – the options they have and the difficulties they face in choosing and preparing for their work lives.

So we've decided to try a new section in the magazine, where we'll explore some of those options.

Actually, the idea for this section came out of a conversation with one of our interns, a recent university graduate who didn't feel that her program had really prepared her for a career. Her education was fine as an academic process, but had no practical component. How, then was she going to find work in her field? What did she need to add to her academic credentials to make her more valuable as an employee?

We realized there are many others like her, who want to get engaged in the world and do something to make it better, hopefully in a career.

This new section is for those people. We've started with two articles, one on the dynamics of getting work in the Foreign Service, the other looking at the role of internships in building experience. Articles to come will look at career options in development and human rights.

Most of the articles for this section will be aimed at young people at the start of their careers, but we'll also have some for people approaching retirement. What are the options for them, if they're still highly capable and eager to bring their experience and abilities in a new direction?

It's a new thing for us, and we're open to suggestions on how to make it work.

Another thing that's pretty new is our appearance on newsstands across the country. Magazines Canada has done a great job getting us into independent retail shops. We are also participating, for the first time, in a Magazines Canada promotion that we expect will boost our subscription base.

The ad on the back cover gives you the low-down. Buy 3 magazines, pay for 2. It's a good deal, and an excellent way to support Canadian magazine publishing. I hope you'll take advantage of the offer.

Finally, I'd like to invite you to let us know how we're doing. Even if you have a bone to pick with us! (See the letter on page 32, for example.) We want the magazine to be better with every edition, and to meet your expectations, whatever they are. Help us do that.



Derek MacCuish 1-514-933-9517 editor@upstreamjournal.org

Fairness, honesty and accuracy

Upstream Journal articles are as fair as we can make them. Each one is thoroughly researched, and writers conduct interviews with key people to get the most informed insights we can. The stories take about three months to prepare. Every quote, unless otherwise identified, is from an interview conducted by the author. We try hard to avoid secondary information, and get it "from the horse's mouth."



Displaced

An artist responds
as her community
disappears below
the waters of the
Three Gorges Dam

BY FATIMA ARKIN

Chen Qiulin watched as half of her hometown, the ancient city of Wanxian, was submerged in water by the creation of China's Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest electricity-generating plant. She has memories of her childhood home in a large residential compound and of the old harbour she once played in with friends after school, both gone now. "It became a new city with very many high buildings. I hardly recognize it anymore," she said.

For five years, Chen's life was consumed by the drastic changes around her. Motivated to document the transformation of her surroundings, this contemporary artist created four videos corresponding with the four phases of construction. *Rhapsody on Farewell* (2002), *River, River* (2005), *Color Lines* (2006) and *The Garden* (2007) are

Photo: *Colour Lines* was shot in Zhongxian County, the last place to be submerged. While Chen is depicted wearing an angelic dress, Wu Hung notes that in the video Chen doesn't feel angelical at all. Rather it seems as though she is revisiting a historical environment to which she is intimately connected.

part of *Displacement: The Three Gorges Dam and Contemporary Chinese Art* exhibition shown at the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago in 2009 and more recently at the Nasher Museum of Art in North Carolina.

The main theme running through the four videos is displacement. Smart Museum Consulting Curator and expert in East Asian art Wu Hung described *Rhapsody on Farewell* as depicting the resulting irritation and powerlessness. In writing about the exhibition, he said that Chen conveys these feelings through distorted self-portraits, first dressed up as a tragic figure from the ancient story *Farewell My Concubine*, Consort Yu, twirling amid broken houses and then in black and white as a young girl running across the screen.

Conflicting feelings about the past and the future largely disappear in *River, River*, in which rapid urbanization occurs as a flood of water covers the land. Contemporary high rises are built, pro-

viding people hope for a better future.

Uncertainty returns in *Colour Lines*. Of particular significance is the scene where Chen appears as the spirit of an old building that is about to be destroyed. Her decision to remain in the broken city highlights two competing emotions: the natural tendency to hold on to the past and the desire for a fresh start.

The fourth video, *The Garden*, brings hope for renewal. Migrant labourers carry huge bouquets of peonies around the city. Life has largely returned to normal and has arguably even improved. However, as the ghosts of a historical couple from the legend of *The Romance of the White Snake* appear and quickly depart, there is an air of melancholy as it becomes clear that the ghosts represent the history of the city.

The Three Gorges Dam is controversial. The elevated water of the reservoir reportedly improved navigation along the Yangtze River, which

comprises of 80% of China's inland shipping, but critics argue that silt and sediment accumulation upstream will render the Yangtze impassable, clog ports and intensify flooding. Up to five million people were displaced by the project, and critics say that the energy produced will not be harnessed efficiently because of engineering limitations, but the dam has helped control flooding.

"The Three Gorges Dam project on the Yangtze River has withstood its biggest flood-control test," the People's Daily Online English Edition reported in July. "It has managed to contain the raging flood waters as the Yangtze River rose to levels not seen in over a decade. The inflow volume is 20,000 cubic meters greater than during the catastrophic Yangtze floods of 1998 when 4150 people died and 18 million were evacuated."

"I cannot really say if the huge change caused by the rapid urbanization is good or bad," Chen said. "My point of view is to always be faithful to what I feel, from the sadness in my early works to the calmness in my work now."

Of the four artists in the exhibition, Chen is the only one directly affected

by the Three Gorges Project. Her ability to present a personal perspective is what she feels makes her work unique. "Their works analyzed the conception of urbanization after what happened. I lived in one of the small towns that were affected, so I was able to record the changes I saw and what I felt. Maybe in the far future, children will say 'So that is how our city used to look, that is how the elder generation used to live,' when they see my work."

Instead of harbouring an activist agenda, Chen assumes the role of an artist. Guo-Juin Hong, of the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, noted that spectators at the Nasher Museum attempted to label her as somewhat of a witness to an environmental catastrophe, which wasn't her goal. "For her things are happening that she cannot stop, but her role as an artist was to be a part of it. That's a very important distinction to note."

Is it possible for her art to not be political? Lian Duan, Coordinator of Chinese Programs at Concordia University, admits this question is tricky. "To me, her work is, in a way, political although she herself may not accept this idea. Today, environmental issues

The Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest resettlement project, with 13 cities, 140 towns and 1,350 villages flooded.



are very political.”

The Chinese government has itself remained largely silent about her work. As China continues to rise to superpower status, the international media keeps a watchful eye on human rights abuses, Guo-Juin Hong said. Permitting a certain degree of criticism is a smart way to manage public opinion, particularly with regard to those with an international reputation, and presents the government in a positive light.

Despite media attention and growing recognition, Chen says that she knows little about how her work is being received internationally. “I am just a normal person making art in China.”

Fatima Arkin recently completed her Bachelor's degree at McGill University in history, international development and religion.



Rhapsody on Farewell

Originally created for another exhibition, *Rhapsody on Farewell* was made using Chen's family's video camera. It is the most intense film of the four, as Chen recalls being overcome with sadness and anger as the home of her childhood memories was destroyed. The sadness reminded her of the tragic opera, *Farewell My Concubine*, which she incorporated into the film by dressing up as Concubine Yuji, depicted above.

River, River (below)

In contrast to *Rhapsody*, *River, River* is more positive, and accepting of change. Even so, there is still the nostalgia for the past, reflected in the juxtapositioning of modern and traditional images. Photos courtesy of Chen Qiulin and the Max Protetch Gallery.



Chinese authorities target HIV/AIDS activists

BY PORTIA CROWE

Chinese HIV/AIDS activist Wan Yanhai has followed the spread of HIV/AIDS across his country since graduating from medical school in 1988. He was working with AIDS patients long before the government acknowledged China's epidemic as a legitimate concern. He launched China's first HIV/AIDS telephone hotline in 1992, while working as a public health official, to provide information and explain the risks of unprotected sex. Two years later, fired from his public health position, he founded China's largest HIV/AIDS organization, the Beijing Aizhixing Institute.

Wan endured years of government harassment from the public security department, the state security department, the propaganda department and even the fire department. He was repeatedly detained, for days or weeks at a time.

The Beijing Aizhixing Institute has also been subjected to harassment. In 2006, the organization's Blood Safety and Legal Human Rights Conference was banned. In 2008, at the time of the Beijing Olympics, Aizhixing staff faced constant police inquiry and had to carry identification with them at all times. At times the Institute has been unable to receive overseas remittances—a major source of its funding.

The difficulties intensified in 2010. In March, Wan received visits at work from the Taxation Bureau and the Commercial Bureau, claiming that his organization was unregistered. He was banned from lecturing at a university in Guangzhou and at all universities in the area. For two weeks he was

continually watched by a police car parked outside his home.

Following dozens of phone calls and visits from government authorities in April, Wan finally fled to the United States with his wife and daughter. They left their home in Beijing, but complications arose with his daughter's visa. They then hid for two weeks, first with friends in Guangzhou, then in Hong Kong, before catching a flight to Philadelphia in May.

The harassment of the Aizhixing institute continues. In July, for example, security forces cancelled the screening of a documentary about Tian Xi, an HIV/AIDS victim who was infected when receiving healthcare as a child.

Wan and his NGO are not unique in being targeted. "We've seen the repression of and crack-down on human rights activists in China for a long time," said Lindsay Mossman, a campaigner with



"The AIDS epidemic is very much concentrated among marginalized populations, and those are groups that are distrustful of the government generally, that have experienced discrimination by the government, and that are hard to reach. The best and most effective way to reach them is through peers, civil society groups."

- Joe Amon, Human Rights Watch

Photos courtesy of Wan Yanhai and Gao Yaojie.

Amnesty International Canada. "There's been a long-term and very worrying series of this kind of action in terms of civil society organizations and individual activists, including arbitrary detentions, searches, and censorship of publications of materials on websites."

Wan said that what happened to him and the institute is "symptomatic of the broader discrimination, harassment and oppression which civil society NGOs experience generally in China."

Dr. Gao Yaojie is an 83-year old cancer expert from Henan province who has devoted the last two decades of her life to helping HIV/AIDS victims. Since her first encounter with an AIDS patient in 1996, she has continually come head to head with authorities. Now living in the US, she communicated with me by email for this article.

"The Chinese government tries hard to cover the truth; people living in China don't know the truth, and people who tell the truth are being oppressed."

Gao played a key role in uncovering China's blood scandal in the 1990s, in which state-run and private blood donation clinics were set up throughout rural China. Authorities encouraged villagers to sell their blood repeatedly. However, remote and understaffed clinics regularly carried out the procedures with unsanitary equipment, and often, once the plasma was extracted, clinics would re-infuse donors with blood from an untested, pooled source, with the intention of speeding their recovery so that they could donate again.

This led to a massive spread

of HIV/AIDS across the Chinese countryside. The impact was most deeply felt in rural Henan province, where there were more than 200 state-owned blood stations, and even more private ones, and an estimated 500,000 HIV cases.

Gao was unfamiliar with AIDS symptoms when she first encountered them. She was bewildered when patients' HIV tests came back positive, and her search for the source of the infection narrowed down to blood transfusions. Her sympathy went out to the victims, "Many of them are not educated. They don't know how to write or how to speak. They are poor and sick. The only thing they know is to cry."

Gao reported her findings to the government, but was frustrated by its lack of response. "Their attitudes were very bad and completely denied the fact that there was an AIDS epidemic in the villages."

Although the government now acknowledges the HIV/AIDS crisis as an epidemic and has adopted official policies to hinder its spread, Gao believes the problem has not yet been resolved. There is an underground blood market and so the spread of HIV contaminated blood continues.

Gao's campaigning to raise awareness about the continued blood and plasma infections, and to educate local people got no support from the government. "Afraid of losing face, the government doesn't admit that blood contamination is the major reason for HIV/AIDS dissemination in China; instead, they insist that drug and sex are," Gao wrote.

Awarded the Jonathan Mann Award for Health and Human Rights in 2001, and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 2003, she was not allowed to travel to receive her prizes.

In 2007 she was awarded the "Global Leadership Award, Women Changing Our World" by the Vital Voices Global Partnership. This time she was put under house arrest and monitored by more than 50 police officers. Her daughter was arrested for attempting to bring her food. After significant international intervention—including



Gao now lives in New York as a visiting professor at Columbia University, and plans to complete the three manuscripts she has been writing. "My purpose is to write, revise and publish these books, to reveal the truth of China's AIDS epidemic, and to let the whole world know."

Wan, who lives in Philadelphia, also accepts that his time in China has ended for now, although he wishes he could bring his family back there. "I knew I had to relocate and find a new base from where I could fight back," but added that "we are relaxed and happy in the USA."

ing from Senator Clinton, a co-chair of Vital Voices—Chinese authorities allowed her to accept the award in Washington, D.C.

“The only reason why the government was so afraid of letting me go outside of the country is because they are afraid of me telling the truth of HIV/AIDS epidemic in China.”

Wan, too, played a central role in uncovering the Henan blood scandal. “I was detained for four weeks by the State Security Department because of my role in investigating and exposing the blood scandal in Henan Province,” he wrote in a testimony for the Equal Rights Review.

His arrest came a week after he made public a classified report from the Henan Health Department that detailed the reasons for the epidemic and the Health Department response. (He had received the document anonymously by email.)

Joe Amon, director of Human Rights Watch’s Health and Human Rights division and former head of its HIV/AIDS program, says there is a disconnect between those who give the orders and those who carry them out. “For a long time there has been some conflict between national policies that are developed in Beijing, which might have progressive elements

to them, and the reality on the ground.”

He says the harassment that the activists have endured is political. “While the government may be truly concerned about HIV, the issue of civil society participation is really the heart of democracy, which is a threat to the Chinese government as it’s now conceptualized.”

Wan agrees. “HIV/AIDS is a public health concern, which the Chinese government also cares about,” he wrote in a testimony for the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

He believes that democracy is the key to progress. “They’re not happy with the independence and the social activities of activists. By tolerating a strong civil society, the Chinese government would become stronger. By accepting political competition, the Chinese Communist Party would build up its capacity to manage in a changing and challenging era.”

Amnesty’s Lindsay Mossman says that the best thing Canadians can do is to “send a strong message to our government that, in any relationship it has with China, human rights should be at the center of all of its dealings. Holding the government to account, and building a strong civil society in China are really fundamental to upholding human rights in China.”

Joe Amon says the government of China cares very much about its international reputation. “Canadians can tell their elected representatives that they want these issues to be on the table, that they want there to be dialogue on human rights with the government of China.”

For more information:

www.aizhi.net/en

www.avert.org/aidschina

The Aizhixing institute

(“Aizhixing” means “Love, Knowledge, Action”)

The Aizhixing Institute advocates for the rights of HIV/AIDS victims to health care and other social services. It also provides education and community outreach to drug users, recovering addicts, sex workers, migrants, ethnic minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

Portia Crowe is a student in International Development Studies and is on the executive of the Journalists for Human Rights student group at McGill university.

Please consider supporting the Social Justice Committee as a “sustaining donor.”

Making automated monthly donations spreads out the cost for you, provides us a reliable income, and helps us plan more effectively. (And it’s tax deductible!)

It’s easy.

- Do-it-yourself. Click on the “donate” button on our web site - www.sjc-cjs.org.

or

- We can set it up with you, using your credit card. Just give us a call at 514-933-6797

AIDS activists Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan are well-known bloggers on environmental and democratic issues. After several stints under house arrest, Hu was detained in December 2007 on charges of “incitement to subvert state power,” and later sentenced to imprisonment until June 2011. Zeng continues to live under house arrest with their four-year-old daughter.

Evicted for profit

Tracing the human costs of the global land grab

Global fuel and food demand has set off a wave of land grabbing – large companies acquiring large areas of land - in the developing world to grow export crops. The Gulf States want food for their countries, while European and American companies want land for biofuel production.

More than half of the public land in Nairobi has been subject to land grabbing. Jack Makau, a representative from Slum/Shack Dwellers International, says that many people subject to land grabbing are forced into slums.

“Nairobi has about four million people, and more than half of them live in slums. We have about 180 slums, where people don’t own the land where they live in very poor living conditions. More than half of this land was originally public land that was allocated to private developers by the state.”

Olivier DeSchutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, says that the global food crisis, the financial crisis and global warming all contribute to the upsurge in land grabbing worldwide in an effort to produce more food.

“The demand for agricultural commodity has been rising significantly as a result of bio fuels production, as a result of demographic growths and as a result also of changing diets – people shifting to diets that are richer in animal proteins,” DeSchutter said in a telephone interview. “There is an increasing pressure on farmland to produce more so these organizations believe that developing large scale plantations can be one way to respond to this challenge.”

DEVELOPMENT OR EXPLOITATION?

The World Bank and its private sector branch, the International Financial Corporation (IFC), have played significant roles in facilitating the global land grab.

“The international financial institutions pave the way for land grabs,” says Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute, a US policy think tank and editor of the 2010 report (Mis)investment in agriculture: The role of the International Finance Corporation in the global land grab. “They have told poor nations to change their laws to make themselves attractive for agricultural investment.”

The World Bank and other large companies justify land grabs by claiming that foreign investment will eventually be profitable to the poor countries by boosting their economies, she says.

BY EMMA QUAIL



In Mali the government has approved long-term leases for outside investors to develop more than 160,000 hectares of land. Government officials say the country could not develop its cultivable land otherwise, but local farmers say they fear being pushed out. Photo: Phuong Tran/IRIN

SOCIAL TENSION, LOSS OF SECURITY

DeSchutter says that depriving people of their land, and marginalizing communities that are dependent on local resources, is a misguided effort in the fight against hunger. Land grabbing compromises local people's right to cultivate land and their right to food.

"It's not enough just to boost production by developing large scale plantations. Doing this creates relatively little employment and deprives people who are already very poor and food-insecure from access to land and water, both of which they depend on for their livelihoods," he said.

Land grabbing in Sierra Leone, for example, is increasing social unrest, Baxter said. "There is a great deal of tension in the villages because people are

dissatisfied with their compensation packages. In the short term there can be really terrible social disruption and tension, leading to conflict."

Tension in Ethiopia is also high, says Lazar Konforti, a researcher at Équiterre, a Montreal-based environment group. "An anti-government armed group in Oromo province has declared that all land deals on their territory will be treated as acts of war. The Oromo Liberation Front's long struggle against the Ethiopian government is often centered on the exploitation of resources and the encroachment of global capitalism on traditional lands."

WEAK LAWS, NO RECOURSE

Companies often justify land grabbing by claiming that the land is stagnant or not in use.

Joan Baxter, a Canadian anthropologist who has lived in Africa for twenty years as a journalist and researcher for the World Agroforestry Center, explains that this stems from a deep misunderstanding about African land practices.

"The investors and the African governments like to say that the land is degraded and marginal," she said. "They understand very little about population patterns in Africa and about how people live. There is hardly any part of Africa where people are not using the vegetation."

Land grabbing is facilitated by the fact that much of the land in question is not officially owned by local people themselves.

"Investors are going to places where there is so-called 'weak land governance,'" says Devlin Kuyek, a researcher with GRAIN, an NGO that works to support community-controlled and biodiversity-based farming. "This is where people are on the land and using it, but their rights are not recognized or respected formally in law. Ninety percent of Africa is under customary land practices."

DeSchutter agrees. "Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where most of this land grabbing is developing now, the people who depend on the land have no legally recognized title to it. If they are driven out, there is no remedy they can use, there is no complaint they can file, and there is no compensation they can seek. There is nothing."

Emma Quail studies history and Middle East studies at McGill University



Nairobi slum. "While there is a perception that land is abundant in certain countries, these claims need to be treated with caution. In many cases land is already being used or claimed – yet existing land uses and claims go unrecognised because land users are marginalised from formal land rights and access to the law and institutions." (2009 FAO report *Land grab or development opportunity?*) Photo: Angela Sevin

Tree revolution

The global food crisis, and thinking beyond two dimensional farming

BY KAITLYN SHANNON

75 % of the world's poor live in rural areas and are involved in farming. Proponents of agroforestry - an indigenous farming technique - believe it is an affordable way to improve food security for individual farmers without creating dependency on large corporations for farming inputs.

Now finding its way into more development strategists' toolkits, agroforestry can increase crop yields and livestock health on farms sustainably and inexpensively. It could make it easier for impoverished farmers in the third world to improve their livelihoods, gain food security, health benefits and increased incomes.

Agroforestry involves deliberately incorporating trees and shrubs into fields of other "low or medium-storey" crops. Certain types of trees replenish soil, while others produce fruit or animal fodder (coarse food for livestock composed of entire plants).

"The abundance of nature, when humans know how to work with it, is free and very low labour-input, compared with the kind of slavery that we create for ourselves through agriculture," said Douglas Jack, project coordinator of the Sustainable Development Corporation.

His organization encourages the developed world to increase its own food production capacity through indigenous agroforestry

models. According to Jack, most indigenous populations in Canada and around the world used natural agroforestry systems until the spread of colonialism and an emphasis on forest-clearing and monocropping.

Farmers practicing agroforestry have more control over the types of crops they grow, allowing them to better respond to changes in commodity prices. Planting trees allows crop diversification, reducing farmers' dependency on volatile international markets.

Producing many kinds of crops produces a "buffering effect." When the price of one good decreases, a farmer still has other crops for income, reducing dependency on a particular commodity. Diversification is a risk-manage-



Farming in Rwanda. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization says that global food security will be uncertain for the next two years if wheat and maize production do not rise substantially. Wheat and maize prices have shot past their 2009 highs, cereal stocks have declined by 7%, and food import costs could surpass one trillion US dollars this year. Photo courtesy of the World Agroforestry Centre.

ment strategy that ensures that, even when some markets are unfavourable, farmers do not go hungry and do not fall back into poverty.

Jack hopes that communities around the world will regain their agroforestry food capacities, and agricultural trade relationships between first and third world countries will become less exploitative and extractive.

“As long as we’re dependent on other societies, we don’t have a sustainable earth” he said, hoping that the wealthy countries will “get off the backs of the third world.”

THE FUTURE OF FOREST FARMS

Dennis Garrity, director general of the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, has no doubt that agroforestry will soon be the normal system of agriculture, replacing traditional systems that rely on clearing trees and monocropping. International organizations and national governments are now recognizing the importance of agroforestry in targeting the most impoverished rural farmers, he says.

Garrity thinks that the World Bank was slow to recognize the potential of this system of agriculture, but that it now “understands the value of agroforestry as a means of investment. And country governments are becoming more receptive to investments in agroforestry as well.”

Prior to 2002, the World

Bank barely invested in agroforestry at all, ignoring numerous opportunities to help the low-income communities that would have benefited from this system of farming. Then the Bank revised its policy to focus on the role of forests in poverty alleviation and economic growth.

John Spears, a World Bank forest policy consultant, says that the Bank is now aware of the benefits of agroforestry to low-income and impoverished people,

“The primary purpose of the Bank is to address poverty alleviation and to raise incomes. I think if some of these projects we’re talking about come to fruition, the primary beneficiaries will be low-income people and indigenous people who depend on forests.” Spears feels that, at this point, agroforestry still has enormous untapped potential. “Frankly, very little has been done in the agroforestry field,” he said. “I suspect that there are a lot of opportunities for the Bank if it uses its influence in the right way.”

The biggest barrier to full implementation of agroforestry policies is national governments.

“One of the reasons why agroforestry hasn’t taken off is because it falls between the cracks,” Spears said. “It’s not pure forestry and it’s not pure agriculture. So, at the national level, there’s often a very weak capacity for pulling these ideas together and making them work.”

And the private sector has little incentive to provide seedlings to farmers. Agroforestry technologies are cheap. Instead, the public sector needs to be a major player in distributing agroforestry technology on a

large scale.

“The big challenge here is that public sector institutions are not stepping up with the investment levels that are minimally required to get the technologies out to farmers and stimulate the demand,” Garrity says.

International experts are trying to address some of the problems of underinvestment in agroforestry. On the agenda of the June 2010 meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, for example, were two surveys conducted by the World Bank – one on how agroforestry benefits the rural poor in Mozambique and Southern Africa and another on the investment opportunities in agroforestry.

Canada has played a key role in the promotion of agroforestry, and in fact spearheaded the creation of the World Agroforestry Centre in the mid 1970s. The Centre continues to receive funding each year from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Both in Canada and around the world, agroforestry systems have the potential to combat hunger and poverty, improving the health and well-being of rural farmers. The World Bank hopes to see one billion low-income people benefitting from farm forestry by 2050.

For more information:

www.worldagroforestrycentre.org

www.sustainabledevelopmentcorp.com

www.worldbank.org

Fertilizer trees

By naturally replenishing the soil by increasing its nitrogen content, fertilizer trees can help get crop yields two or three times larger than when fertilizer is not used. Because tree seedlings are inexpensive and sustainable, even the poorest families can have access to their own soil fertility mechanism.

Kaitlyn Shannon is a political science and International Development Studies student at McGill university. She was an Upstream Journal intern in the summer of 2010.

GMO corn shipment stirs concern and anger in Kenya

BY KAITLYN SHANNON

Kenyan civil society groups and small-scale farmers are outraged at the arrival of 40,000 tonnes of South African genetically modified (GMO) maize into Kenya through the Port of Mombassa earlier this year.

The Kenyan Biodiversity Coalition represents more than 65 civil society groups whose main objective is to ensure public awareness on issues concerning the environment, agriculture and biodiversity. It considers the entry of such a massive quantity of imported maize to be suspect, since Kenya had a bumper harvest this year, producing a surplus of maize.

"Farmers' maize is rotting and developing fungal aflatoxins in farms, yet the government is pumping billions to purchase contaminated maize," said coalition spokesperson Anne Maina. "These GMO varieties pose serious health concerns to children and those whose immune systems are compromised like people living with HIV/AIDS. Why are we allowing them in Kenya?"

SEEDS FOR CHANGE

Jaswinder Singh, professor of Plant Science at McGill University, believes genetically modified foods are more helpful than harmful. "In my view, everything

is GMO," because of cross-breeding and natural methods of modifying food. While the natural method of cross-breeding plants to make them more resistant to drought or disease has been used for centuries, genetic engineering involves inserting a gene from a non-plant species into the genetic makeup another plant.

Singh says that GMO technology can be used to make improvements in farming and food security, and GM foods can relieve hunger because of their resistance to drought and disease.

He believes that countries experiencing food shortages should be especially accepting of genetically modified food, as a substantial body of research points to the safety of consuming GMOs. "If we are expanding technology for useful purposes, I think there is no harm."

Singh predicted that it is only a matter of time before GMOs are accepted by all countries.

CONTAMINATION AND OTHER CONCERNS

"Because Kenya is a large exporter of baby corn, or maize, serious issues will be raised if we embrace biotechnology, as it will present risks of contamination," Maina said. She is concerned that the entry of GMO crops into the Kenyan ecosystem could damage existing crops through cross-fertilization and contamination.

The shipment also could seri-

ously compromise an economic partnership agreement between Kenya and the European Union (EU) that is in the process of being negotiated. The EU has outlawed the specific genetically modified organisms that the maize shipment into Mombassa contained due to safety, health and environmental concerns.

GMO LEGISLATION AND LOOPHOLES

On February 12, 2009 Kenya passed the Biosafety Bill, which regulates the movements of GMOs, in an effort to open the door to the commercial production of GM crops. This bill also established the National Biosafety Authority, a committee in charge of addressing the health and safety issues arising from GMOs.

Although the Biosafety Act states that a person shall not import GMOs into Kenya without the written approval of the National Biosafety Authority,

GDP growth from agriculture benefits the income of the poor 2-4 times more than non-agriculture.

140 000 smallholders in Malawi have planted a variety of fertilizer trees systems since 2007.

Maize harvest in Malawi: 1.3 tons/hectare without fertilizer trees, 4.1 tons/ha with fertilizer trees (2007-8).

Fruit income contributed to 17% of household crop/tree income in Kenya (2004).

In rural Cameroon, about 120 group nurseries produce quality high-value germplasm and seedlings for use and sale.

the Authority did not start operations until April 2010, three months after the imports entered the country. Kenya has not imported any genetically modified foods since that date. Harrison Macharia, Chief Executive Officer of the National Biosafety Authority said, “as far as this office is concerned, Kenya has not yet started business on GMOs.”

Under the Biosafety Act, as well as the Cartagena Protocol (an international agreement on the transportation of GMOs, of which Kenya is a signatory), the government is obligated to alert the public of the presence of GMOs before they enter the country. “In Kenya, this unfortunately never happened,” Maina said. “Most people don’t know about the genetically modified maize.”

Current farm policies are a recipe for disaster, says Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

“The provision of chemical fertilizers, the greater mechanisation of production or the expansion of irrigation seem far away from the professed commitment to fight climate change and to support small-scale, family agriculture. In reality, these “solutions” will mostly benefit the larger plantations. And it is their industrial model that is expanding.

If we were to stick to this approach, this would be a recipe for disaster, threatening the ability for our children’s children to feed themselves. Agriculture is already directly responsible for 14 percent of man-made greenhouse gas emissions – and up to one third if we include the carbon dioxide produced by deforestation for the expansion of cultivation or pastures.

As a result of temperature changes, the yields in certain regions of Sub-Saharan Africa are expected to fall by 50 percent by 2020 in comparison to 2000 levels, and conservative estimates locate the global agricultural capacity in 2080 between 10 and 25 percent below the current levels.”

AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONVENTIONAL MECHANIZED FARMING

Farmer Field Schools (FFS) have been around as a concept, if not in name, for thirty years. First championed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the FFS method is now used by many NGOs and governments to create healthy communities in developing nations - a reversal of the mechanized conventional model of large scale agriculture.

Conventional agriculture relies on inputs of genetically modified seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, using heavy machinery. Brought by western development agencies to less developed countries, this model takes power from small scale agriculturalists and places it in the hands of a few corporations and lending institutions, while eroding local knowledge of agricultural ecosystems.

The heavy use of pesticides meant that beneficial predators of pests were nearly eradicated. Pests themselves became increasingly resistant. The cost of inputs increased while crop yields decreased. Soil and water became contaminated, resulting in problems for community health.

The FAO developed the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) curriculum to help reduce pesticide use. It used a participatory learning framework where the farmers would be asked to share their knowledge and experiences of pest control. Through farmer-lead field experiments they were able to reduce pesticide use, increase crop yields, and increase farmers’ capacity.

The Farmer Field Schools came from this experience.

Its methodology is simple yet dynamic. First, local people are chosen to be instructed as trainers. They then teach other locals to be group facilitators. Groups of 15 to 30 participants meet during the growing season, sharing their experience. Once the group of farmers is sufficiently autonomous, the facilitator moves on to a new group.

For example, FFSs have helped people in Indonesia build strong networks and create the first farmers union, enabling them to act politically on behalf of themselves and other farmers. CARE Bangladesh has begun implementing the FFS model into many of its projects, including women empowerment projects.

- Jean-Sebastien Roussy



World Bank gives South Africa massive loan to burn coal

Says renewable energy is not a viable alternative

BY SABA MORSHED

In April the World Bank approved a US\$ 3.75 billion loan for the South African Electricity Supply Commissions (Eskom), to fund what will become the fourth largest coal-fired power plant in the world. The decision was not unanimous. The United States, the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands abstained over environmental concerns, since coal is the world's single largest contributor to carbon dioxide emissions.

The World Bank faces a difficult challenge: to meet the need for energy in low-income countries while simultaneously building the foundations of a low-carbon future as emissions increase and global warming becomes a reality. While many third world countries are left with little choice but to use coal for development – it is inexpensive compared to other energy

sources – it remains the most environmentally destructive source of energy on the planet.

Sustainable development may be the ideal solution, but according to Chris Neal, Senior Communications Officer for Energy, Water and Transport at the World Bank, renewable energy is extremely expensive. “In some countries - Botswana and South Africa for example - and under some circumstances, there is no viable near-term alternative to fossil fuel development.”

In an Eskom Project Fact Sheet, the World Bank describes the importance of energy for developing countries. “Without energy, countries face very little or no economic growth; factories and businesses cannot function efficiently; hospitals and schools cannot operate fully or safely; basic services that people in rich countries take for granted cannot be offered.”

“These are unusual circumstances, and we are responding to specific needs,” according to a World Bank issue brief on energy

financing.

In December 2007, South Africa was hit by an energy crisis that, along with the global financial crisis, exposed the country's vulnerability to energy shocks. The World Bank position is that short-term environmental trade-offs are necessary in South Africa, and tapping into all of the country's energy sources, including coal reserves, is the only way to meet its energy requirements.

Energy stability is also central for its neighbouring countries, six of which depend on South Africa as their primary source of energy.

WORLD BANK PROMISES

The Medupi plant, to be constructed in the Limpopo province, will produce 4800MW of power that will, it is hoped, alleviate power shortages, ensure energy security, and allow for stable economic growth. This in turn is to encourage job creation and increased electrification for poor communities.

While poverty alleviation is

the World Bank's primary mandate, the Bank insists that it is doing whatever it can to promote sustainable energy and minimize carbon emissions and other forms of environmental damage. It stresses that the Medupi power plant will be the first African coal plant to use the cleaner 'super-critical' coal technology used in many OECD countries.

Furthermore, US\$ 485 million of the loan will be used to improve energy efficiency by building a railway system that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation of coal. US\$ 260 million will be allocated to jumpstart the development of wind and solar power, which will lead to the construction of one of the largest solar power projects in the world. The World Bank believes this will help South Africa achieve the ambitious long-term carbon mitigation targets it made at Copenhagen.

THE DIRT ON COAL

The loan has generated fierce opposition from a spectrum of local and international actors including churches, NGOs, environmental groups, academic institutions and trade unions. These groups feel that neither the environment nor the benefit of the South African people is the Bank's primary concern.

Environmental activists do not see the project as short-term, and entirely disagree with the Bank's claim that it is a 'down payment for a greener future.' Rather, they see this as the newest development in a series of dirty loans, which will lock South Africa and other developing countries into high-carbon infrastructures, leaving no hope for future carbon mitigation.

The Medupi plant alone will emit up to 30 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year for up to 50 years, making it one of world's largest sources of green-

house gas pollution. This, along with other coal plants across both the developed and developing world, will exacerbate global warming, which can ultimately have catastrophic ramifications for the poor, undoing years of poverty alleviation.

The World Bank itself has stressed that it is the world's poor who are most vulnerable to climate change. On its website the Bank states that the effects of global warming "pose risks for agriculture, food, and water supplies. At stake are recent gains in the fight against poverty, hunger and disease, and the lives and livelihoods of billions of people in developing countries."

CORPORATE INTERESTS AT HEART?

The environmental organization groundWork South Africa (an affiliate of Friends of the Earth) questions the motives of the plant and doubts it is designed to deliver electricity to impoverished South Africans.



Eskom's Arnot power station produces 2400 megawatts of electricity. The Medupi plant will have twice that capacity. Photo: Gerhard Roux

The Bank Information Center, a US NGO, said that "the **World Bank Group's finance for fossil fuels had climbed higher than ever, to \$4.7 billion** in the first ten months of financial year 2010. This represents a major leap from the previous record of \$3.1 billion in the whole of 2008."

The World Bank committed \$3.6 billion for low-carbon energy in 2010 - almost as much as it provided the Medupi coal plant alone. This included \$1.6 billion for renewable energy, \$1.7 billion for energy efficiency, and \$284 million for large hydro projects, according to the World Bank web site.

"The Medupi project was a reaction to the power cuts in South Africa that affected the mining industry," Sunita Dubey, coordinator of groundWork, said. "There was a point where big mining corporations said that they would leave the country because they were not assured of power. It is very important to see that basically this plant was designed to give electricity to big mining corporations."

Dubey also stressed that the World Bank's cost calculations of coal are highly inaccurate because they do not consider the 'hidden costs' or the 'shadow pricing' such as health concerns caused by air or water pollution, as well as the costs of global warming. If these costs were considered, renewable energy such as wind and solar power would be revealed as less expensive than coal.

"Who is taking into account the extra burden?" Dubey asks. "Mercury emission is going to increase tenfold in the area and nobody is talking about that."

Ultimately, is the poor who

pay for the delivery of electricity to their neighbourhoods, she says. "South African energy regulators were increasing the tariffs on the household electricity bearers, whereas protecting the big mining corporations like BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, who are sometimes even paying below the cost of production."

Members of the local community have taken these concerns to the World Bank Inspection Panel, which can investigate claims of environmental or social damage from a project. Local residents criticize the plant for catering to large foreign-owned contractors, and begrudge paying higher electricity prices – up to three times the amount – in order to repay the bank loan. They are also concerned about water shortages and sulphur emissions in the area.

Some Western governments are also critical of energy strategies that involve burning coal – a stance made clear by the four abstentions at the World Bank vote on the Medupi Plant.

Voting against loans is a rare occurrence at the World Bank, and countries that would have opposed the project may have acquiesced in order to maintain friendly diplomatically relations with South Africa.

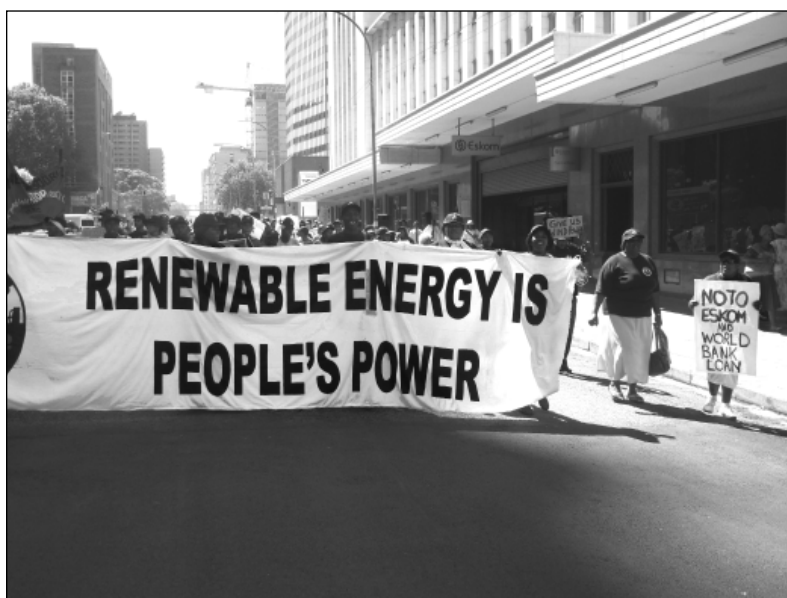
In a statement explaining the US abstention, the Treasury Department highlighted the uncertainty surrounding future carbon mitigation, "Without actions to offset the carbon emissions of the Medupi plant, the project is incompatible with the World Bank's strategy to help countries pursue economic growth and poverty reduction in ways that are environmentally sustainable."

When the loan was approved, Canada's representative argued that projects like this are necessary, given the demands for power, and the best way forward is to fund them but make coal plants as clean as possible.

ENTITLED TO POLLUTE

Many proponents of the loan have highlighted that it is not only the World Bank that is guilty of hypocrisy. Western nations may express their anger over loans for coal plants in the developing world, but depend on fossil fuels for the majority of their own energy. The US, for example, is the second largest polluter of carbon dioxide, and relies on coal for over 50% of its electricity production.

India and China have been particularly vocal of their belief that current emissions levels are a product of Western industrialization, and that developing nations should not have



Anti-Eskom protest in South Africa. Photo courtesy groundWork

to pay the price by having their development restricted by present-day environmental concerns.

When asked if the US was in a position to criticize the World Bank, Dubey replied, "The US or any other country, which abstained on this loan has the right to do so, as you can build coal power plants with private money but not with tax payer money." Further, she explained that while the US may not be at the forefront of CO₂ emission reduction, "there are many more coal power plants, which have been stopped in the US, due to public pressure."

As the World Bank vies for more funding at Copenhagen and seeks to become a leader in environmental governance, critics say that the Bank has significantly undermined its validity by its decision to loan money for the Medupi plant. Many now question whether the World Bank is genuinely committed to carbon emissions reduction.

The Bank is currently undertaking a wide-ranging consultation on its energy strategy, which will be concluded in early 2011. With its credibility on environmental matters battered and the fallout from the Eskom loan still fresh, it remains to be seen whether the Bank will adopt a stricter policy towards fossil fuels.

Canada is represented on the World Bank Board of Directors by newly-appointed Executive Director Marie-Lucie Morin, eds07@worldbank.org and (202) 477-4155.

Saba Morshed studies political science and economics at Wellesley College. She completed an Upstream Journal internship in 2010.

Keep the Upstream Journal coming - right to your mailbox

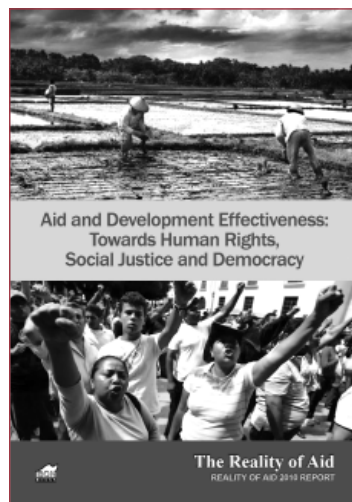
Your subscription, for only \$12 (\$20 outside Canada), gets you "Canadian perspectives on global justice" delivered to you four times a year.

Add on a tax-deductible donation to the Social Justice Committee, and you support the *Upstream Journal* and all our other education and advocacy programs.

It's easy. Use Visa, Mastercard or cheque, by phone, mail or on-line.

514-933-6797

www.upstreamjournal.org



Development policy needs to better champion human rights, change in power dynamics, experts say

The 2010 Reality of Aid network report provides an analysis of the current state of international aid through the lens of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The report aims to increase aid effectiveness by focusing on successful development results. The CSOs in the report analyse how aid has been ineffective and how, through practical solutions, it can be streamlined to be effective.

The report argues that poor people should be better enlisted to help dictate how the aid programs be constructed in order to improve success. The document highlights the need for a "transformation in development cooperation to achieve poverty reduction, human rights, social justice and sustainable development."

"Development effectiveness is centred on shifting power and enabling rights. Rather than aid being provided as a charitable contribution to the well-being of others, it should be a formal commitment to empower poor and vulnerable communities to claim their rights. Rather than depend on voluntary principles, Reality of Aid calls for an affirmative action approach where stronger parties commit to provide support to weaker ones. Only when development cooperation is recast as a relationship of committed solidarity in the fight against inequality can it lead to social and environmental justice."

A free publication, at www.realityofaid.org



How we give

A portrait of Canada's development aid now

BY SARAH BABBAGE

Targeted, effective, accountable. These are the seemingly notable goals behind the dramatic reforms made in the last two years to the way Canada finances development assistance. The changes follow decades of calls from domestic and international think tanks to reform the old system, which gave a little slice of the pie to almost anyone who asked.

In the 1990s, Canada was operating in over 135 countries on a wide variety of issues, making it hard to gauge effectiveness or achieve large-scale results.

"All of the reforms are consistent with what the donor and NGO community have been telling CIDA for years - that it was too scattered and too top heavy," says Stephen Baranyi, an associate professor at the University of Ottawa's School of International Development and Global Studies. So why is that same donor and NGO community up in arms over the results?

The trouble is that not only was

the community not consulted on the new program, the program itself has effectively been designed to shut out the community. The result is an ill-defined new aid scheme that enhances the power of the CIDA minister and PMO while reducing their accountability to the Canadian public. The changes have the potential to revolutionize the way Canada is seen by the world, but they've gone on largely out of the public eye.

"Occasionally moments come along in Canadian history that are defining to us as a nation," said Liberal International Cooperation Critic Glen Pearson. "I think the way CIDA has been changed in the last two years is one of those moments."

FROM AFRICA TO PARTISANSHIP

The Official Development Assistance (ODA) revolution was carried out in three steps, starting in February 2009 when CIDA announced that it would be concentrating 80% of Canada's ODA into 20 countries. Eight African recipient countries were dropped, while a new focus was placed on Latin America, where the Conserv-

ative government has been trying to enhance its trade partnerships. It later announced that it was closing several African embassies.

Critics chastised the government for putting trade ahead of benevolence. "It was a major move away from Canada's long-standing tradition of directing aid toward the poorest of the poor," NDP International Cooperation and CIDA Critic John Rafferty said recently, reflecting on the change. Partners like Rwanda, which formerly had close ties to CIDA, can now only hope to qualify for the 20% of CIDA funds set aside for emergency relief.

CIDA has not disguised its adoption of a more partisan aid model.

"We chose those 20 countries based on their real needs, their capacity to benefit from aid, and their alignment with Canadian foreign policy priorities," CIDA Minister Bev Oda said when announcing the new countries of focus. Later announcements would continue to stress compliance with Canadian foreign policy objectives as a key criterion in funding decisions.

But as a government-funded initiative, was the government wrong to

try to advance its foreign policy through aid?

Pearson blames the system, not politics. "CIDA has always been part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, so it has to be driven by foreign affairs," he remarked. "It has to go to Afghanistan and it has to work with Canadian businesses on their trade objectives even when those objectives aren't CIDA priorities."

Indeed, CIDA existed for almost 30 years before being granted its first minister in 1995, and the current minister still reports to the Foreign Affairs Minister. Pearson says the only way CIDA will ever be able to act independently of Canadian foreign policy is if it is divorced from its parent ministry, making it an autonomous agency with its own cabinet minister and

government mandate. A similar model is used in Britain.

The Canadian International Council (CIC), an international affairs think tank chaired by Research in Motion co-founder Jim Balsillie, recently released a report called "Open Canada" which charts a path for Canadian international affairs based on suggestions from academics, businesspeople and media figures. The report cites situations like post-communist Eastern Europe or post-apartheid South Africa as examples of when the government was justified in advancing its political interests through aid.

The report argues, however, that aid in such politically motivated situations shouldn't come from the regular aid budget. Some aid can be partisan, it says, but it must be explicitly so.

Specific countries aside, CIDA might still be biting off more than it can chew by aiding 20 countries. The CIC said that even 20 are too many for Canada to be truly effective. Pearson countered that it is not the number of countries or the money spent but the efficacy of the program.

"CIDA was in 135 countries in 1995, then narrowed down to 50, then 35 and now 20. Yet it is less effective now. It was more effective with a budget of \$2 billion than it is now with \$5 billion."

Holding the middle ground, development expert Baranyi said it made sense to concentrate in certain countries in order to track resources and get a better understanding of their needs, but it's too early to say whether it's more effective. "The results aren't in yet," he said, and with-

out improved reporting measures, he worries those results may never be known. The solution, it seems, may lie deeper than numbers and figures.

BRINGING FOCUS, LOSING FRIENDS

The second change came with the September 2009 announcement of three new areas of program focus. CIDA would now limit 80% of NGO partner funding to those with projects that either increase food security, secure the future of children and youth, or stimulate sustainable economic growth. The announcement was short and development experts were left wondering exactly how they would be implemented.

Baranyi said it was particularly unclear where excluded themes, such as gender and development, would fit in the new scheme. "Minister Oda just said excluded themes would be cross-cutting priorities," he said, providing an example of the oblique wording the ministry has come to favour. He suspects the themes will just lead to programming on the ground being relabeled – essentially partners adopting their own oblique language.

Many development projects cover multiple themes, noted Brian Tomlinson, Senior Policy Analyst at the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) in a report critiquing the aid effectiveness measures. Would NGOs now be required to break up big projects into small focus areas and submit them individually for funding? CIDA's guidelines provided no answer.

As any follower of CIDA policy will attest, the agency's

SJC keeps name, adopts new mission

Members voted at our annual meeting in September to adopt a new mission statement that more clearly identifies what we do and why we do it.

Still the Social Justice Committee of Montreal

After a year of discussion, the Board of Directors offered two choices of a new name for the organization to the general membership, but while both got support, neither got the two-thirds majority vote the Board sought, and so our name remains unchanged.

The new mission statement:

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal is an independent Canadian organization working in international solidarity. Conscious that many of the world's impoverished peoples are victims of social injustice, and inspired by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, our mission is to engage Canadians in working for a more socially just world.

priorities shift frequently. If new projects have to be constantly created to meet new priorities, long-term, sustainable development is put at risk. "Groups get into three to five year funding streams then come out and find their projects are no longer within the government's area of focus," Pearson said, a frustrating situation that undermines their relationship with CIDA.

DEVELOPMENT GROUPS LOSE FUNDING, CIDA LOSES THEIR TRUST

The latest shift in priorities appears to provide CIDA an excuse to suspend ties with many long-time partners, most of whom argued their projects did in fact pertain to the focus areas. Partner NGOs grew increasingly insecure about their relationship with CIDA over the last two years as they experienced increasing delays in getting their projects approved. A senior CIDA staff member has traditionally had the authority to approve funding requests, but it became clear to anxiously waiting NGOs that their projects were now being routed through the minister's office.

It isn't uncommon for NGOs to remain in limbo for months or years waiting for a response on the status of their projects, often without bridge funds to tide them over. "These delays have a more pervasive impact than some of the funding cuts that have received more attention in the media," said Tomlinson in an interview.

Long-standing partners were shocked when CIDA announced in November 2009 that it wouldn't be renewing funding to KAIROS, an ecumenical development organization that,

along with its predecessors, had worked with CIDA for 35 years. Documents made public from an Access to Information request show the project was approved at every level of the department, but when it reached the minister's office, Minister Oda claimed the project didn't fit within the three areas of focus, although KAIROS vehemently countered that it did. Several weeks later, Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, told audiences in Israel that KAIROS had been stripped of its funding because of its views on Israel, making observers suspect the government was trying to advance a partisan agenda not just through the countries it funds, but through its partner agencies as well. Montreal-based Alternatives and several other NGOs accused of having controversial viewpoints on the Middle East also lost funding. Whether the cuts came because their programs no longer

fit within CIDA's areas of focus, as it claimed, or because they no longer fit within Canada's foreign policy, remains unclear.

The biggest blow to the NGO community came at the end of May 2010 when the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, a coalition that links and represents about 90 Canadian civil society organizations, also had its funding cut off. The cut marked the end of a 42-year relationship between CIDA, the Council, and by extension, the very core of the Canadian international development community, which the Council represents.

CIDA meanwhile loses access to an important source of information, expertise and feedback. "It makes no sense to shut civil society out when you have that kind of expertise at your fingertips," said Rafferty.

Partners who were cut off from funding were left without much recourse. CIDA refused

Aid to China

China recently became the world's second largest economy. It spent an estimated \$100 billion last year equipping and training the world's largest army and holds \$2.5 trillion in foreign reserves. It provided around \$1.4 billion in aid to Africa last year, and pledged an additional \$200 million to flood-hit Pakistan.

Yet it gets more than \$2.5 billion a year in foreign government aid - \$1.2 billion a year from Japan, followed by Germany at about half that amount, then France and Britain. The World Bank provides about \$1.5 billion a year.

Why would China still need foreign aid? 200 million poor people and big environmental and energy challenges. Although China is second only to the US in the world's most billionaires, average income was just \$3,600 last year.

Donors are starting to reconsider aid to China. Germany and Britain are reducing their aid, while Japan, China's biggest donor, halted new low-interest loans in 2008. (Jean-

Canada provided \$82 million to China in 2008-09

"CIDA's 2008-2009 disbursements for projects and initiatives were used to provide Canadian expertise to Chinese organizations." (CIDA web site)

to elaborate on its decisions or meet with the NGOs. Affected organizations were forced to end programs and lay off staff. They can resubmit proposals, but it's a long process with no signs of getting shorter.

Pearson says he has been working with between forty and fifty NGOs who have had their funding cut. They have given up, he says, not because they have lost hope but because they have lost trust in CIDA.

UNACCOUNTABLE AND PIECEMEAL

The third and final piece of the aid reform came in July this year as CIDA introduced a new Partners for Development Program, a series of policies that it said would make its relationships with NGOs more effective. Scant details were offered but the announcement promised more streamlined and transparent processes in partnership decisions. CIDA also introduced a new Global Citizens Program (GCP), which aims to educate and involve Canadians, particularly youth, in development issues.

Development experts took issue with the announcement's plans to focus on "the most meritorious proposals put forward by Canadian organizations." In a critique of the announcement, Tomlinson said it sounded like a return to a competitive bidding environment, which can favour disruptive and unsustainable projects.

The most serious problem, however, is that the plan leaves little room for civil society funding, and without it, there is no one to hold the government accountable. Without funding, organizations like the CCIC

won't be able to observe, measure and evaluate the government's performance on development.

Even before these changes, CIDA was not a particularly accountable agency. It has only reported regularly on two countries - Afghanistan and Haiti - and Baranyi says even that isn't detailed enough, although weaknesses in host country governments are partly to blame. Otherwise, he says the general report that CIDA submits to parliament annually is insufficient. "The data is two to three years out of date and the language is convoluted."

If NGOs have no way to access and evaluate government effectiveness, they won't be able to critique it, which Rafferty believes is the government's ultimate goal in making the funding cuts. "Groups are being told, 'Heap praise on this government or lose your funding,'" he said.

He alludes to changes to the long-form census as another example of a major policy shift carried out without a scientific argument to support it, and whose ultimate goal is to limit access to information. "Both changes are a way of reducing the government's accountability and cutting elected representatives, NGOs and citizens out of the debate," he said. Ultimately, without funding to these organizations, the government is free to do as it likes, without citizens critiquing it or even being aware of it.

Baranyi sees the GCP as an attempt by CIDA to internalize the citizen engagement initiatives that were the former domain of NGOs like the CCIC. The program will still offer some opportunities for Canadians to

participate in development, but without the critical edge present in independent organizations.

"The program is an attempt to institutionalize the marginalization of NGOs that do their own development education," Baranyi said.

He is also critical of the government's focus on youth in development strategy. "Sending 25-year-olds to Haiti is foolish and counterproductive and destructive," he said, as similar programs have already shown.

CIDA used to have a well-developed public education infrastructure, Tomlinson said, but that was lost to restructuring in 1995. "Now CIDA just launches one-off engagement programs every few years," he said.

There is no clear plan or programming behind the GCP, Rafferty added, calling it yet another plan announced by the government to appeal to certain segments of the population, "without any plan of how they are going to do it."

DOING MORE WITH LESS?

CIDA had better hope its plans to be more effective are successful, because it's going to have a lot less to work with in coming years. As part of the response to the financial crisis last year, the Canadian government froze aid spending for the foreseeable future. The freeze capped off ten years of laudable growth in the aid budget, bringing total spending to 0.3% of GDP. It's a far cry from the famous 0.7% goal OECD countries set themselves, but at least it puts Canada near the average for donor countries.

The freeze could, however, quickly draw Canada to below

that average. Pearson noted that many countries are now stepping up their aid efforts to prevent development from backsliding in recipient countries as result of the economic downturn.

Baranyi said that even attempts to make the aid we give more effective wouldn't be enough. "With the exception of a few big recipient countries, such as Haiti and Afghanistan, we're going to become too small a player, even in countries where we concentrate aid, to make a difference."

Pearson noted that the 2010-2011 budget was more than a freeze - it was a broken promise. The government had previously committed to an 8% annual increase and, according to Pearson, partner countries had planned programming based on that figure. "Foreign ministers were stunned" at meetings in advance of the June G8 and G20 summits, Pearson said. "The government is calling it an aid freeze but it amounts to a \$4.2 billion cut."

Giving less aid to fewer countries and focusing on fewer issues may be a questionable strategy, but there is also less capacity to critique it or measure the results.

For more information: www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

A familiar contributor to the Eye on Ottawa section, former intern Sarah Babbage is now pursuing more journalism experience in Washington DC.

A Rights-Based Approach to Development includes:

- 1) accountability (duty-holders)
- 2) participation & empowerment (rights claimers)
- 3) non-discrimination, and attention to vulnerable groups

According to the UN, the following elements are necessary, specific, and unique to a human rights-based approach:

- a) Assessment and analysis in order to identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes of the non-realization of rights.
- b) Programmes assess the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights, and of dutybearers to fulfill their obligations. They then develop strategies to build these capacities.
- c) Programmes monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes guided by human rights standards and principles.
- d) Programming is informed by the recommendations of international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

Social Justice Committee says Department of Finance has failed to comply with law on foreign aid

In a press release in October, the SJC stated its position that there is no evidence that the Department of Finance has complied with a recent law on foreign aid.

"The Official Development Assistance Accountability Act came into force in June, 2008, requiring the Department of Finance to ensure that funds provided to the World Bank are used not only seek to fight poverty but also to promote human rights.

The 10% of Canadian foreign aid that is given to the World Bank is the responsibility of the Department of Finance. The department has made no effort to ensure this money serves to promote human rights. Canada has not supported human rights initiatives at the World Bank, which does not have any comprehensive policy on human rights.

Neither the Department of Finance nor Canada's office at the World Bank has any staff with training on rights-based development or international rights law. The Department of finance annual report on activities at the World Bank and IMF shows no activity to protect human rights, and does not mention rights in future areas of focus. While the US representative at the World Bank is prohibited by law from supporting projects where there is potential human rights abuse, there are no such restrictions on the vote of the Executive Director for Canada.

The Social Justice Committee has repeatedly asked for evidence that the Department of Finance is complying with the human rights requirement of the ODA Accountability Act, without success, and therefore concludes that the department is not abiding by the law."

The press release noted that the Finance Minister, in his statements to the World Bank and IMF at their annual policy meetings, had yet to even mention human rights. In his speech to the meetings shortly after the SJC statement, Finance Minister Flaherty finally did: "It is becoming increasingly clear, as well, that a key prerequisite to sustained development is good governance and strong institutions that protect and promote human rights and facilitate desired development outcomes."



Working for a better world

How young people can prepare for a life in international development

Good work for no pay Why unpaid internships are the norm

Internships can be key to your career development. They allow you to experience a new type of work, learn skills, network with people who matter in your field and build a killer resume. But in organizations working in human rights, social justice and development sectors, internships are rarely paid. Are internships just free labour, or are they necessary and rewarding additions to your university experience?

To find out what an internship at a nongovernmental organization might mean, I spoke with three specialists: Sylvain Schetagne, a labour market economist at Canadian Labor Congress; Iris Unger, the Executive Director of YES Montreal (Youth Employment Services); and Jessica Lockhart, Programs Administrator for Youth Challenge International (YCI).

Nonprofits and charities use volunteer power and modestly-paid professionals to undertake most development, human rights and social justice work. The notion of an internship – especially an unpaid one – is considered normal by most students and recent graduates in those fields. Interns may accept meager or no pay because they know compensation in the nonprofit sector is typically lower than the for-profit sector. And NGOs pursue goals that attract young university graduates who forego compensation for the chance to work on social issues they feel are important.

“In NGOs the level of compensation is lower because they are dependent on federal and provincial government revenues, donations, and memberships, to survive” said labour market specialist Sylvain Schetagne. “NGOs also tend to use more of their resources on achieving their goals than on compensating their workers.”

Iris Unger of YES Montreal says that the unpaid internship trend might also be due to a generational shift, with young people more interested in philanthropy and helping the world than in their

BY LAURIE DRAKE

level of income.

While attractive goals and philanthropic ideals might be reasons why many students and university graduates accept unpaid work, their employers usually ask their interns to work for free simply because they lack the means to do otherwise.

“A lot of nonprofit organizations do not have the resources they need, and there are a lot of people who want to work in these areas,” Unger says. “Unpaid internships become the solution.”

She also linked the phenomenon of unpaid internships to the gap between the number of interested applicants and the number of paid positions in human rights, social justice and international development. “It’s the result of a need and a want that isn’t financially supported.”

Jessica Lockhart of Youth Challenge International agrees that the NGO job market has difficulty absorbing the high numbers of interested applicants. “We see a huge influx of graduates from international development programs who

are having difficulty finding paid placements or employment.”

Defining the internship

Traditionally, an internship was a practical learning experience associated with a student’s education, but Schetagne is concerned about the use of the term “internship” in the current labor market. “It’s important to debate what constitutes an internship and what has been a tendency to overuse the term to gain access to cheap or forced labor.”

According to him, an internship should be defined by the student’s ability to receive recognized credit from an educational institution for the work they are doing. “Everything else after that becomes a work related program or volunteering.”

Unger agrees. “Once a student leaves this defined experience, it becomes volunteerism,” she said.

To make the most of an internship experience, students should remember that the goal of an internship is to integrate it into their education, Schetagne says. “There seems to be a growing number of students doing internships in order to gain work related experience, and that’s good. Expecting students to do an internship after they graduate, to integrate into the labor market, is problematic.”

Incentives for unpaid work

To help relieve the burden of unpaid internships, more schools are offering academic credit and recognition for participation in work-related programs. “We’ve seen an increase in the number of students applying for co-op credit through their experience here at YCI,” Lockhart said.

She thinks that universities are recognizing that there are a number of unpaid internships out there, and she has noticed new incentives to encourage students to incorporate practical experiences into their academic degree. Even so, she believes that students don’t know about the many free government services that help people find internships at low or minimal costs.

Students should also consider government and scholarship programs within their local or university communities. “If I was still a student, I would explore options within my university. And these can usually also be accessed as an alumnus,” she said.

Unger thinks a lack of funding in nonprofits

is a concern. “Theoretically there should be more money for these organizations so that they can afford to pay people to be in those fields,” she said. But even in the absence of funding, internships are valuable, Unger says. “Organizations and companies can use internship programs as a means to help people gain experience, get a foot in the door, and put something concrete on their resume.”

Tips on finding an internship

1. Find out what your school offers. Most universities have an internship office that helps students find placements and scholarships to help offset the costs.

2. Check on-line resources:

Federal Student Work Experience Program

jobs-emplois.gc.ca

International Youth Internship Program

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/internships

International Scholarships www.scholarships.gc.ca

Department of Heritage www.pch.gc.ca

Job Bank Canada www.jobbank.gc.ca

Youth Employment Strategy www.youth.gc.ca

Laurie Drake studies International Development and History at McGill University.

World economic crisis causes record increase in youth unemployment

Global youth unemployment has reached its highest level on record, and is expected to increase through 2010, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The ILO report *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2010* says that of some 620 million economically active youth aged 15 to 24 years, 81 million were unemployed at the end of 2009 – the highest number ever. This is 7.8 million more than the global number in 2007. The youth unemployment rate increased from 11.9 percent in 2007 to 13.0 percent in 2009.

These trends will have “significant consequences for young people as upcoming cohorts of new entrants join the ranks of the already unemployed” and warns of the “risk of a crisis legacy of a ‘lost generation’ comprised of young people who have dropped out of the labour market, having lost all hope of being able to work for a decent living.”

Foreign Service

What it takes to represent Canada abroad

My interest in Canadian Foreign Services was sparked by a presentation last spring by Canadian diplomat Ariel Delouya, the Canadian Ambassador in Tunisia. Like him, I am a Canadian who loves to travel and is interested in politics. But what else does it take to become involved in international affairs? Is this the career path for me, and for other students like me? Ariel Delouya's presentation left out one important thing: how hard he had to work to get to where he was.

BY KAITLYN SHANNON

In the recruitment campaign in Fall 2009, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) interviewed 800 of the 9,500 applicants. Of these, about 200 were hired.

The first stage in the application process involves taking three tests to examine proficiency in writing, reasoning skills, problem solving, and judgment in work-related situations. An assessment board of two or three people, including a hiring manager, an expert in the field, and a human resources representative, interviews those that pass.

Applicants choose between one of two streams: the Commercial/Economic Stream, which focuses on investment and trade policy, or the Political Economic Stream, which addresses foreign policy issues generally, including security, disarmament or human rights.

Those selected by DFAIT will then spend three years in Ottawa undergoing training and, if necessary, taking language classes. When the training is done, Foreign Service officers must agree to serve at any location in Canada or elsewhere as determined by DFAIT, an employment condi-

tion called "rotationality" in the field. Typically, Foreign Service officers move every two to four years.

GAINING EXPERIENCE

David Carment, Professor of International Affairs at Carleton University, said that the traditional formal recruitment route to becoming a Foreign Service officer is not necessarily the only, or even the best, route to a career in international affairs. "I know a lot of people who've moved up the ladder by perseverance and contract work. Eventually they find themselves taking on full-time employment and greater responsibility."

Many recent graduates are willing to take on short-term contracts in a related field that can help them get their foot in the door at DFAIT.

"Almost every federal department, and for that matter, provincial level departments have some international exposure and are looking for generalists, as opposed to specialists, who can work in the field of international affairs."

Carment said that Carleton's Co-op Program, available to both undergrads and graduates, prepares students for work in international affairs by exposing them to responsibilities they

might take on full-time after graduation. "The Co-op Program is an opportunity for students to determine whether or not this is the kind of career path they want to take. It is also an opportunity for the employer to get a better sense of the skills and capabilities of that individual."

Exposure to the Foreign Service sector at an undergraduate or graduate level allows students to find employment without having to go through the formal recruitment process, Carment said. "Almost every university these days has some placement program that would allow students to get some exposure to these initiatives. The experience at Carleton is replicated at probably every university across Canada in varying degrees. Ultimately, it comes down to the student's drive and determination, these things are not going to fall into your lap."

LIVING THE FOREIGN SERVICE LIFE

Jennie Chen, an experienced Foreign Service Officer, is the head of media relations and spokesperson for the Canadian embassy in Washington, DC. Enthusiastic about her work in Foreign Service, Chen says she was drawn to it by her love of travel and thirst for constant change.

“Having a stable, long-term career prospect that could allow me to travel, see the world and meet different people really appealed to me.”

After interning at the Canadian embassy in Bangkok, Chen worked in Shanghai, Beijing and Kandahar before moving to Washington. She has a BA degree in International Relations and Asian Studies and an MA in East Asian Studies.

Chen says that working in the Foreign Service has made her a prouder Canadian, as she sees first-hand Canada’s positive reputation around the world. Representing her country is very appealing to her.

However, Chen warns that the rotationality of work in the Foreign Services, while stimulating, can also be exhausting.

“It takes a toll on families and friends, because of the constant movement. You have to be comfortable with yourself and with solitude.”

She herself considers rotationality a positive aspect of her career, and enjoys the process of creating a new niche and social network each time she moves.

Chen says she isn’t sure that there is a perfect university degree out there that will unlock

the door to the Foreign Service for students. Her colleagues have diverse backgrounds ranging from sociology to engineering, and she insists that personality, communication skills, judgment and enthusiasm about representing Canada are most important. People working in Foreign Services should have perspective and be able to see the big picture, she said. They should be open-minded and curious about different cultures.

Chen adds that keeping up with current events, having experience working in groups or with student government never hurts. It’s also helpful if you speak another language besides English and French. Most importantly, Chen encourages people to travel. As for the exams, she says the best thing to do to prepare is to have a good night’s sleep.

“I’m really enjoying my career,” she says. “I feel very lucky. No regrets.”

Kaitlyn is in her third year at McGill University, studying Political Science and International Development Studies. She interned at the Upstream Journal in the summer of 2010.

The Foreign Service personality

To be successful in Foreign Service, it helps to be:

- Flexible
- Analytical
- Service-oriented
- An effective communicator both orally and in writing
- Attentive to details and take pride in your work
- A self-starter, showing initiative and the ability to take action under pressure
- An active listener, respectful and open to the opinions of others
- Sound of judgment when analyzing problems
- Cooperative, enjoying being part of a team

Recovery from financial crisis still leaves labour market recession

A report by the research arm of the International Labour Organization (ILO) says a long “labour market recession” is worsening the social outlook in many countries.

The new study entitled “World of Work Report 2010 – from one crisis to the next?” acknowledges that three years into the crisis, the global economy has resumed growing, with some countries witnessing encouraging signs of employment recovery – significantly in emerging economies in Asia and Latin America.

However, the report by the ILO’s International Institute for Labour Studies also warns that “despite these significant gains... new clouds have emerged on the employment horizon and the prospects have worsened significantly in many countries”.

The ILO study says that, if current policies persist, a recovery in employment to pre-crisis levels will be delayed until 2015 in advanced economies, instead of 2013 as it projected one year ago.

At the same time, the report says, while employment in the emerging and developing countries has resumed growing, over 8 million new jobs are still needed to return to pre-crisis levels in those countries.

Source: ILO

Profile of a life of dissent Activist Dexter X

BY JULIA PYPER

Growing up in Winnipeg, Dexter X felt that the people who created change throughout history, such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, were just historical abstractions. Myths even.

“It took a leap for me to realize those were real human beings and real social problems,” he said. “They made an effort and there were real changes.”

Once he realized that this kind of change was still taking place, he made the decision to devote himself to political activism. It was difficult for Dexter to pinpoint the moment he got involved with advocacy because as he describes it, activism is more than just an extra-curricular activity – it’s a way of life.

While speaking with Dexter it was almost impossible to keep track of how many groups he has been involved with. The list includes Hands Off Mother Earth, Fruit Nut Bombs, Act Up, and Ruckus, to name a few. Dexter is a film editor by trade, but outside workplace he has protested at events in Quebec City, Copenhagen, parts of Italy and elsewhere around the world. He has also DJ’d for a 30,000 person demonstration, scaled buildings to hang banners (once in 40° below), been arrested over two dozen times and been the victim of police brutality.

A pacifist, he frequently quotes Ghandi, emphasizing that everyone should live by his *ahimsa* maxim – the ethic of non-violence.

“The basic rule should be ‘do no harm,’” he said. “We should cooperate with each other and try and help each other actualize our potential as human beings on this planet, as creative and special people.”

Dexter acknowledges that not all activists live by the same principles, however. When asked if activists ever violate the rule of non-violence he replied, “Oh, all the time.”

Unfortunately, that is not the only inconsistency within the activist community. For instance, Dexter points out that there is a disagreement over the meaning of “direct action”. Most people con-

sider the term to be about giant publicity stunts, where the goal is to get a message to a decision maker, Dexter said, but he doesn’t see it that way. For him, the definition of direct action is more in line with social justice leader Judi Bari’s concept of physical intervention at the point of production.

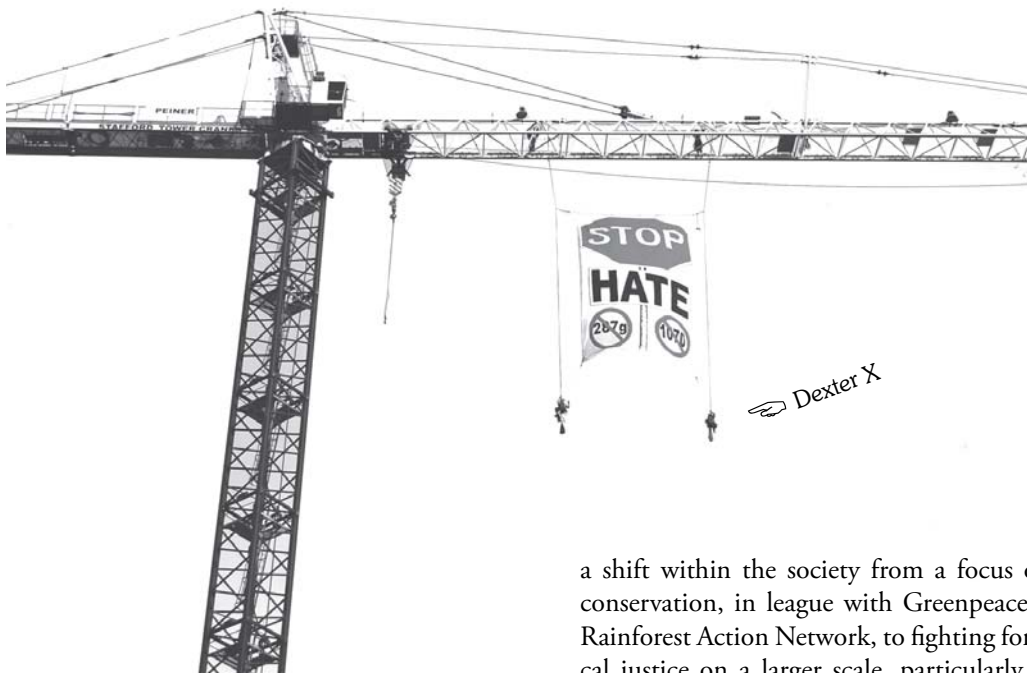
“It’s to be acting without an intermediary,” he said, “so it’s direct. And it’s acting, not discussing.”

Another discrepancy Dexter identified in the progressive movement is that activist groups and non-governmental organizations often have conflicting aims and practices.

“It’s one of the reasons we don’t have as many comprehensive successes, Certain organizations have these contradictions within them. Sexist organizations, racist organizations, authoritarian organizations. It’s as big a problem as any other.”

For Dexter, most global issues are fundamentally about power and poverty, and are linked to a lack of democracy and an unjust economic system. This is why so many people speak out against established norms – they feel they don’t have a say in fundamental aspects of their lives. And that is





why Toronto had so many protestors on its streets during G8 and G20 Summits.

Humans are not valued equally, he said, and until there is proportional decision-making power and a political voice given to all people, society cannot move forward.

When taking part in a cause, Dexter believes that the most important thing is to find out who is suffering the most and to ask them what they think needs to be done. The process should be very ground – up. The next step is to find out who controls decision making.

“In any given situation you have to research and figure out what the interests are, Who the beneficiaries are, what’s going on behind the scenes, where are their vulnerabilities, and where they are susceptible.”

The organization Dexter currently works with, The Ruckus Society, focuses on is how to make sure organizations convey their message in the most effective way. Ruckus thinks of itself as a toolbox of experience, training, and skills where organizations and individuals can find non-violent direct action tools to help advance their respective campaigns.

Dexter teaches climbing, blockades, banner hanging, media communications and a new stream called art and activism. He has also been a part of

a shift within the society from a focus on forest conservation, in league with Greenpeace and the Rainforest Action Network, to fighting for ecological justice on a larger scale, particularly in communities that are the most undermined.

Ruckus has been very busy as of late. In the month of June 2010 alone Ruckus was involved in nine trainings and actions, including facilitating and participating in the U.S. Social Forum held in Detroit. But Dexter will admit that Ruckus doesn’t pay the rent.

When asked if he is bothered by the slow progress of activism, he said, “I don’t find the necessity to fight for something frustrating.” He add that “it’s not the first thing one would want to do with their life.”

So why go on? Dexter referred to Frederick Douglass statement that “power concedes nothing without a demand.”

“To be concerned about people’s suffering, or animals suffering, or the state of the planet, is to find it natural to do something about it. Nothing is ever won without a struggle.”

Julia Pyper, 23, studies magazine writing and digital media at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City.

Dexter’s ambiguous last initial, X, represents a rejection of the colonial and patriarchal history his legal name carries. “At one time I hoped it would be a place-holder until I found a name that felt more ‘authentic.’ My family is from Sri Lanka and the nationalism, bigotry and violence that have torn that country apart left me wary of that kind of essentialism. For now the X remains an open question, an unknown, a sign that the search is still on.”

Feedback

Dear Editor,

One of the reasons I turn to alternative news sources like the *Upstream Journal* is to escape the sensationalism and superficiality of mainstream commercial news sources. This is particularly so when I'm seeking information about Africa, which for far too long has been maligned by racist stereotypes of violence, corruption, superstition, famine and exoticism.

So it was with great disappointment that I read "The 'walking dead'" in your Summer 2010 issue. The article focuses on an obscure and headline grabbing issue, and feeds precisely into long-held myths of Africa as the dark and savage continent. This kind of writing befits a tabloid, where shock value sells, not a credible human rights publication that usually seeks to foster a greater understanding of the world by focusing on the structural and global underpinnings of poverty and human rights violations.

There is so much work to be done to turn around the negative stereotypes about Africa and to help Canadians understand this continent, not only in terms of the underlying causes of its many difficult challenges, but with respect to all the inspiring people and movements there that are striving to make profound change.

I am always thrilled when the *Upstream Journal* turns its attention to Africa and I hope you will continue to do so regularly. But when assessing the relevance of an issue, I urge you to reflect on the greater context of the racism that has defined the West's relationship with Africa for centuries. From that perspective, a feature on the trading of albino body parts does little to promote a just and fair-minded portrayal of the continent and, instead, simply reinforces the fear and racism that informs most coverage and most people's understanding of Africa.

Sincerely,
Gwendolyn Schulman

Reporters Without Borders rates press freedom in the Americas in 2010

Brazil is doing better in terms of press freedom, with a decline in incidents of serious violence, pledges to fight impunity, and legislation related to access to information and editorial freedom. Brazil can now be added to the countries with improved rankings already observed in the South Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

El Salvador and Guatemala also improved. Efforts undertaken by the Salvadoran government against impunity and the absence of any aggression or serious acts of censorship put this reputedly dangerous country into an enviable position. A positive trend is also emerging in Guatemala, where no journalist killed this year. Costa Rica is again the highest-ranked Latin American countries. The US and Canada still occupy the continent's best positions, but they lag behind some twenty other countries.

Honduras brings up the rear in Central America, with a track record comparable to that of Mexico, because of consequences of the coup d'état. It is followed by Colombia, where havoc caused by the country's Administrative Department of Security was accompanied by two murders of journalists.

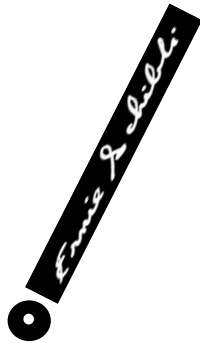
In Panama, the situation is deteriorating because of harsh treatment and threats against journalists due to the increasing tension between the media and the authorities. The situation is still tense in the Dominican Republic, where it is not healthy to be investigating corruption or drug trafficking. Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela also lost ground because of violent acts and censorship,

Cuba improved after the wave of dissident releases. Five journalists remain imprisoned in the continent's only state which does not recognise any independent media.

Journalists in prison at highest level in 14 years

The Committee to Protect Journalists says that China's brutal suppression of ethnic journalism and Iran's sustained crackdown on critical voices have pushed the number of journalists imprisoned worldwide to its highest level since 1996. It identified 145 reporters, editors, and photojournalists behind bars on December 1, an increase of nine from the 2009 tally.

With 34 imprisoned journalists apiece, China and Iran are responsible for nearly half of the worldwide total. Eritrea with 17, Burma with 13, and Uzbekistan with six, round out the five worst jailers from among the 28 nations that imprison journalists. At least 64 freelance journalists were behind bars worldwide, a figure consistent with the 2009 census.



A battle is lost, another will begin

The evening of Wednesday, October 29, was not a happy time for us at the SJC and the many individuals and organizations who have been working in support of people around the world who are adversely affected by the activities of Canadian-owned mining companies. We'd had an honest and realizable hope that John McKay's private member's bill C-300 - a minor step in reforming the conduct of some mining companies - would pass in parliament. Whether the Senate would also have passed it is a question that will never be answered. That it lost by such a close vote of 140 – 134 was, at first, hard to take.

Yet there are a number of positive aspects of this whole campaign. One would be the press coverage, often favourable. More Canadians now have a better understanding of how some mining companies behave and what that behaviour means for communities living near the mine sites.

A second plus would be how the bill continued the process of bringing together people working in solidarity with Africans, Latin Americans and Asians. A few days before the vote, I spoke with a clergyman who has been working in solidarity with the people of the Philippines for quite some time. He told me that in recent months his time has been devoted to bill C-300.

Central America is the focus of my work, the Philippines, his. Yet we were working in the same struggle.

When one considers that the Conservatives' position was completely against the bill, that the Liberal leadership was at best lukewarm in its support and that the mining industry engaged in an extensive lobbying and media campaign, a loss by six votes is not bad at all.

And, to use a sports analogy, we might have lost the first period but the game is far from over.

In the days before and after the vote, I got quite a few email messages that described people coming together in other ways in a common endeavour to protect their environment and rights.

A message from Central America informed us that Guatemalans and Salvadorans have joined in their opposition to the Cerro Blanco gold and silver mine in southeastern Guatemala on the border with El Salvador, owned by Goldcorp. Another message said that, in a local referendum, people in El Quiché department, Guatemala, voted against mining, hydro-electric, and other mega-projects. A third spoke of teenagers in the Dominican Republic setting out in a march to the country's capital to denounce yet another Canadian mining project.

These few messages remind us that we must put the vote on bill C-300 into perspective. As hard as many people worked, this bill was not the be-all and end-all. It was but one part of a global movement for environmental and social justice. Our efforts to bring about change in Canada, whether with governments, corporations, or even individuals, are only part of a greater whole.

Nelly Rivera, a Salvadoran who met with us on our summer delegation to Central America, told me she regretted the vote outcome but was quick to note that it showed that many of our parliamentarians are in favour of justice. She encouraged us not to let our work die, but to reflect on what has succeeded and failed, and then continue the struggle.

Let's get ready. The second period is about to begin.

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC, and one of our most popular workshop animators. Contact: ernie@s-j-c.net

Why not subscribe online?

Only **\$12** a year!

It's quick, easy & secure
www.upstreamjournal.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.

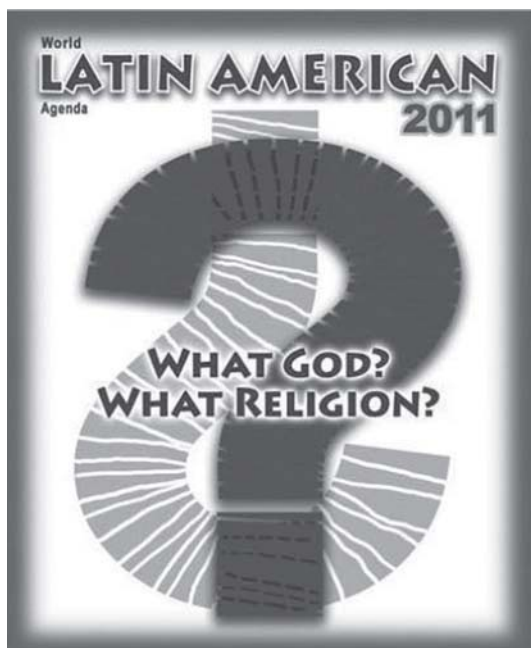
We invite you to donate today, and become a member by supporting the efforts of the Social Justice Committee to:

- 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, 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.

Most articles are produced in the SJC office by volunteers and interns who are in training in journalism, with guidance and content input from the editor.

Printed on recycled paper with a high level of post-consumer content.



The 2011 edition of the Latin America Agenda

This edition explores themes of religion and spirituality, the meaning of life, the challenges of fundamentalism, dynamics of power and wealth, and consumerism.

Available from Dunamis Publishers,
6295 rue Alma, Montreal QC H2S 2W2
dunamis@live.com

In Canada, CAN\$20, in the US, US\$23
(postage included)

For the digital version, visit latinoamericana.org/
English

The Upstream Journal is seeking volunteers and interns in writing, design or magazine development.

Writing a story will introduce you to important issues of human rights efforts. You'll research the issues, talk with the people who are key to getting the full picture, and learn how to write as a journalist.

Working in design will give you experience in using photos and graphics in magazine layout.

Magazine development is the big picture - what kind of magazine do readers want? How can we improve the content, the design, the marketing?

For more information, please contact the editor.

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, MasterCard 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 or www.canadahelps.org

The *Upstream Journal* focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue. We try to go "upstream" to examine root causes of poverty and injustice.

Subscription to the *Upstream Journal* is only \$12 a year in Canada, \$20 outside. It is published four times a year.

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 images and articles on aspects of international development and human rights.

Connect

with the *Upstream Journal*:

Email: editor@upstreamjournal.org

Telephone: 1-514-933-6797

Toll free: 1-877-933-6797

www.upstreamjournal.org

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.

- ☐ Cheque enclosed
☐ Visa, MasterCard or Amex
Number:

Expiry: _____

Total: \$ _____

Signature:

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



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____

☐ I would like to receive the *Upstream Journal* (\$12/year in Canada, \$20 outside, non-tax deductible).

☐ I support the mission of the Social Justice Committee and would like to become a member.
My tax-deductible contribution is enclosed.

Revenue Canada Charity Registration 88797 3048 RR0001

As Canadian as...

Two-four

Hoser Pogey

Double-double

Eh?

Loonies

Poutine

Dutchies

Saskatoons

Subscribe to any 3
Canadian magazines
and pay for only 2!

ORDER TODAY

nearly 200 titles to choose from

– including the one in your hands *right now!*



BUY 2, GET 1 FREE.

To discover the magazines that match *your* interests
go online to **www.1free.magazinescanada.ca**
or phone toll-free **1-866-289-8162**

SPECIAL OFFER CODE: PAEY

Makes a great gift idea too!