Are Canadian charities apathetic and afraid? • Law on cheaper meds proposed, defeated

The Upstream Journal

Canada's magazine on global rights and justice

A story of land, sugar & murder - the Guarani people of Brazil

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GENUINE CANADIAN MAGAZINE

The Guarani use urucum dye of the annatto shrub to paint their faces and bodies during festivities, Brazil. Photo: Fiona Watson/Survival Int'l

The Guarani people of Brazil

Damiana, a Guarani-Kaiow and religious leader of Apyka'y commmunity, by a shack burned down during evictions in Septemeber 2009. Mato Grosso do Sol state, Brazil. Photo: Conselho Indigenista Missionário

Evictions from their lands for biofules and cattle ranching has forced some Guarani people to live on the road side. Photo: Sarah Shenker/Survival

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Cover: Guarani, Brazil. One of the major tribal groups in South America, the Guarani live in Paraguay, Boliva and Argentina. They are a deeply spiritual people. Most communities have a prayer house, and a religious leader, whose authority is based on prestige rather than formal power. Photo: Fiona Watson/Survival

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Social and environmental policy overhaul - has the time come for a human rights policy at the World Bank?

No money? No rights! The SJC wants Canada & the World Bank to stop funding dictatorships

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About this paper:

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Dear readers,

As the world's largest organization for international development, the World Bank has social and environmental policies that are often accepted as the de facto global standard. Unfortunately it lacks comprehensive policies on human rights, and has no commitment to comply with and actively support international human rights law.

Why does the World Bank have no human rights policy? The main difficulty is that international human rights laws are based on the state system, in which the responsibility for respecting those laws is placed on the governments that accept them. The same is true for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is not part of law but does provide a statement of values that is commonly accepted.

Consider the case of Uzbekistan. The country's constitution recogizes the precedence of international law over national law, and it has ratified the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and the UN Convention Against Torture. yet violations are frequent and systemic under a regime that does not tolerate dissent, and the country's court system is incapable of responding to them. (See page 22)

How is it that the World Bank does not take these into consideration? The failure to do so meant the World Bank funded despicable regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt without considering the level of oppression in these countries and the anger of their people, and supporting despised dictatorships.

What will it take to finally get the World Bank to ackowledge it responsibility to stop funding oppression and the violation of human rights laws? The World Bank's formal review of its social policies that it just launched may provide an opportunity, and we cover this briefly on page 20. Unfortunately, human rights policy at the World Bank is not an issue for Canadian development groups, or most human rights advocates. Here at the Social Justice Committee of Montreal (SJC), however, we'll be doing what we can to push for the rights standards that are now completely missing there, and we'll keep you informed in future issues of the Upstream.

In the meantime, I encourage you to check out the World Bank's review of its social policies, which also allow you to have a say! You can find a link to the "Safeguards Policy Review" on the main page of its web site, www.worldbank.org.

As we prepared the story on **Honduras** and the nasty alignment of private and political power that feeds the oppression there, I thought back to a diferent time, when we campaigned on behalf of its government. It wanted international support in its drive to get debt relief and support in dealing with the IMF. We were especially engaged in fighting the IMF requirement that the country cut teachers' salaries. Honduran officials even asked the SJC if we could help set up a meeting between the countries' finance inisters to help with that. (As it happened I was meeting Paul Martin a few days later and passed on the message.)

They got the debt relief, thanks in part to the strong push by our own government for faster debt relief, and the quick response to our call for cancellation of debt to Canada following Hurricane Mitch. But the IMF got its way after the coup in 2009, and education was cut.

Now the country is a human rights nightmare, and a betrayal of the international community's support. Political leaders in Canada and the US ignore the abuse, but we can't. (Story on page 14.)

We also take a look at the current **chill on advocacy** in Canada, where a reliance on government funding has affected what NGOs say and do. Charities are also cautious because of the rules restricting their political activity. The main approach of the SJC - advocating respect for international and domestic human rights laws - is not considered a political activity. But what about asking people to reflect on their morality when it comes to politics? Canadian Mennonite magazine has been told this crosses the line.

As damaging as the current government is to NGOs that criticize its policies, the 'advocacy chill' in the NGO world did not arrive with the Conservatives, but has for years effectively stifled the critical analysis development organizations could bring to debates on Canadian policy. (Story on page 16.)

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

Of land and sugar, murder and ethanol

The continuing plight of Brazil's Guarani people

There are 650,000 Indians in Brazil, in over 200 tribes. They range in size from the Guarani, the largest at 46,000, to the Akuntsu and Kanoê who number only a few dozen. The Guarani are in three groups, the Kaiowa, Nandeva and M'bya. They are impoverished. Malnutrition and poor health have led infant mortality rates to double that of the national average, while Guarani life expectancy is more than twenty years below the national average.

People without land

In the 1960s, much of their ancestral land began to be taken by locals for cattle ranches and sugarcane plantations. Without their own land, some Guarani live by the sides of highways, with little access to clean water, food and medical care.

The government has promised to clearly identify land that is owned by indigenous peoples, but the process has been very slow, and some communities have attempted to occupy land they consider their own, leading to conflicts with plantation owners and ranchers. Tribal leaders have been shot dead, or kidnapped and tortured, for their role in land reoccupation. Death threats are frequent.

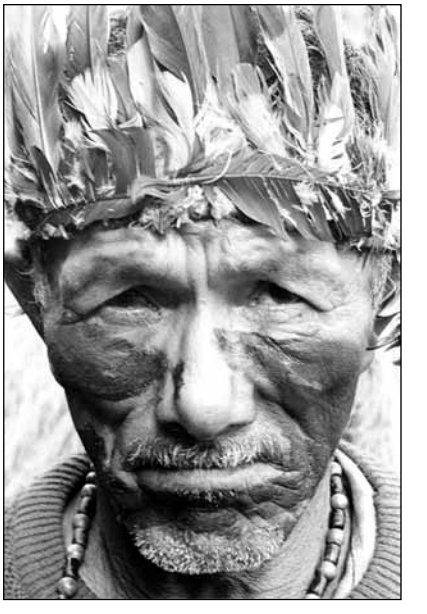
Only recently have there been efforts to bring those responsible to justice.

Guarani tribe leader Marcos Veron, beaten to death in 2003 by gunmen working for a local rancher, was a leader in his community's reoccupation of their stolen ancestral land.

His was the first such case brought to trial. In 2011 the three men accused, employees on a local ranch, were acquitted of homicide but convicted of kidnapping, torture, criminal conspiracy and the attempted homicide of the six other Indians present with Veron when he was murdered. Having served more than four years in prison during the trial, they were granted the right to go free pending an appeal. Jacinto Honorio da Silva Filho, whose ranch occupies the ancestral Guarani territory that Veron's community had attempted to retake, has never been charged in relation to the murder.

Nisio Gomes, 59, was a leader of a Guarani-Kaiowá group that had returned to its land after being evicted by ranchers. According to Amnesty International, about 40 gunmen arrived at the Guarani encampment in November 2011 and shot Gomes several times before abducting three children and dragging his body away. They have not been seen since.

His story was featured in a film by UBC students that brought attention to the case when it was featured on the New York Times website. In June and July 2012 police arrested eighteen people, including six landowners and ten members of a security firm, in connection with the murder.



Guarani leader Marcos Veron, who was beaten to death in 2003 by gunmen working for a local rancher, Brazil. Photo: João Roberto Ripper/Survival int'l

The human cost of ethanol

Brazil has one of the world's most highly developed biofuels industries, with eighty new sugarcane plantations and alcohol distilleries planned for Mato Grosso du Sol alone, many of which will occupy ancestral land claimed by the Guarani. It is estimated that by next

year the demand for ethanol bring a 50% production increase from 2005.

Many Indians cut sugarcane for the ethanol factories occupying their land – hard, low-wage work. Police raids have revealed terrible working conditions. One such raid in 2007 on a sugarcane alcohol distillery found 800 Indians working and living in subhuman conditions. The workers may be apart from their families for extensive periods, leading to the sexually transmitted diseases and alcoholism by returning labourers. More than 625 Guarani have committed suicide in the past 30 years.

There are some efforts to improve the situation. In 2012 the government announced an agreement with the sugar industry to improve working conditions, in response to criticism by European countries about the source of ethanol. Although the agreement sets new health and safety standards, and 300 of 400 producers have signed on, it is not binding and does not set minimum wages.

The venture company, Raizen, owned by Shell and the Brazilian bioenergy giant Cosan, buys large quantities of sugarcane for its yearly production of more than 2.2 billion liters of ethanol. In 2012 Raizen announced it would no longer buy sugarcane from land recognized as indigenous territory by the Ministry of Justice.

For more information, see survivalinternational.org and amnesty.org. The sugarcane industry perspective is available at sugarcane.org.

To respond, write:

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Ambassador, Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 450 Wilbrod Street Ottawa, ON K1N 6M8
Email: brasemb.ottawa@itamaraty.gov.br

Tamkinat Mirza, an Upstream Journal intern in 2011, contributed research for this summary of the situation of Guarani people. Tamkinat also wrote an article about the targetting of youth leaders in Guatemala (see the Summer 2011 issue).

When traditional leaders talk, people listen

Tapping into African tradition to fight HIV/AIDS

By Geralda Bacaj

Traditional leaders have significant power and are respected in their communities in rural areas of southern Africa, where they assume roles of authority such as arbitrating local disputes. So the Southern Africa HIV and Aids Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS) is promoting a new strategic plan to reduce HIV/AIDS that relies more on traditional leadership.

"Traditional leaders are highly respected. They have an immense influence and power over people, and in Africa people listen to traditional leaders. If they tell the community to avoid some of the cultural customs that might have a negative effect on their environment, people listen to them," says Eliezer Wangulu, a writer and editor on health issues who works with SAfAIDS.

The message is that their culture is valued, but certain traditional practices are related to HIV infection. Traditional leaders can be effective in informing their communities about these risks.

"When they give a community this information about how to protect itself, people see them as leaders who care about the community," Wangulu says.

Some traditional leaders are now involved in the SAfAIDS' "Changing the River's Flow" to build healthier cultural practices in South Africa. This includes strengthening gender equity and women's education.

Many women who are infected are in rural areas, with lower educational opportunities, income, and access to resources. The NGO South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) seeks to affect both governmental policy and traditional customs.

SAWID spokesperson Marthe Muller argues that HIV prevention requires women's empowerment. To achieve that, reducing poverty is the main priority, along with more equal resource distribution and political influence. She points to the establishment of a national Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities in 2009 as an indicator of progress at the national level.

Geralda Bacaj is a student of political science and sociology at McGill University. She is interested in the politics of development, especially in South East Asia and Africa.

Traditional leaders at a gathering hosted by the NGO SAFAIDS "to unleash the power of traditional leadership for HIV prevention in Africa." Photo: SAFAIDS

Montreal MP fails to get law to allow cheaper meds with faster delivery for humanitarian needs

34 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide.

10% of them are children.

More than 60% of people living with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa.

There were an estimated 216 million cases of malaria and an estimated 655 000 deaths in 2010.

Most deaths occur among children living in Africa where a child dies every minute from malaria.

In 2004 the Canadian government passed a law that was supposed to allow cheap medication to flow to impoverished countries in need.

This didn't happen. Why not? What needs to change?

A young girl has her blood drawn as part of a malaria trial in Uganda. Malaria is preventable and treatable, yet there are still 250 million cases of malaria and about 800,000 deaths annually, mostly young children, in 35 African countries. Photo courtesy Gates Foundation.

By Emily Savage

The Canadian Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR), adopted in 2004, was expected to allow generic drug companies to export inexpensive medicine to the developing world. Yet the CAMR was used only once, by the generic manufacturer Apotex, to bring a combination antiretroviral drug to HIV/AIDS patients in Rwanda. That process involved lengthy negotiations with patent holders and took three years.

"Apotex found it quite frustrating" said Jim Keon, president of the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association. "They maintained that they would not use the CAMR in the future unless it was improved."

According to Keon, the CAMR is far too restrictive. In accordance with the legislation, once an order is made by a developing country, generic producers can apply for a two-year license to produce a pre-determined amount of medication for a single country.

Recently, humanitarian organizations such as the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the Grandmothers Advocacy Network joined forces with NDP foreign affairs critic Hélène Laverdière to lobby the federal

government to reform the system. "It is clear that the CAMR is just not working," Laverdière said. "The process is backwards".

In March 2012 Laverdière introduced private members bill C-398 on generic drugs for international humanitarian purposes to Parliament. The bill built on the previously-proposed bill C-393, which received unanimous support in the House of Commons in 2011 only to reach the Senate and die on the order paper during the federal election.

It did not get the same unanimous support. All but seven Conservative MPs voted against it in November, and it was defeated.

Laverdière said that Bill C-398 would have made the process of applying for licenses more efficient and given producers more flexibility in terms of filling orders from the developing world. It would also have meant that Canada could provide essential medicines to those in need at no extra cost to Canadian taxpayers, she said. "It is relatively simple to fix the system to make sure it works," she said. "It could have been a win-win situation".

Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, calls the "one licensing solution" the core of the reform to the current CAMR. "If passed, this bill would have permitted granting licenses to Canadian generic producers in advance, which would allow them to respond immediately when medications are needed abroad," he said. "It would have done away with the cumbersome case-by-case, country-by-country approach, and authorized generic producers to export medicines to any country that is already named as an eligible recipient, with no limit on quantity. This would have been much more economically viable for generic manufacturers, and more people could have benefited."

The brand-name pharmaceutical industry lobbied against changes to the current legislation, arguing that Canada isn't doing enough to protect intellectual property laws. "CAMR is only one tool of many that can bring medicines to the developing world," says Shannon MacDonald, a spokesperson for Canada's Research Based Pharmaceutical Companies, the 50-member industry association.

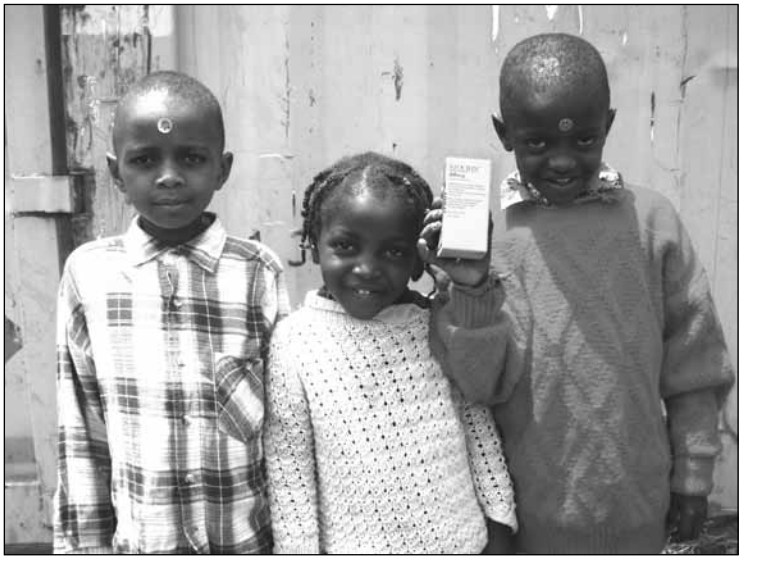
The association points out that its member companies already distribute medicines and vaccines at low cost or no cost for diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria, while funding research aimed at diseases that claim the lives of millions of people in poor countries. "The degree to which we are able to present Canada as an attractive place for pharmaceutical investment is critically important."

Elliott concedes that brand-name pharmaceutical companies do give large charitable donations of drugs each year, but says charity often come with strings attached. "Countries should not be required to rely on the charity of brand-name pharmaceutical companies to develop sustainable treatment programs for HIV/AIDS and other public health problems," he said. "They should be able to harness the power of market competition to achieve more affordable medicine."

The reform to CAMR also has other potential benefits, Elliott says. "Canadian development aid can go further because we can get medicine at lower prices. With the reform, we can return to our status as a global leader in public health."

Eighty per cent of Canadians were behind bill C-398 according to Laverdière. Considering that the last proposed bill received widespread support in Parliament, Laverdière and her team were optimistic that it would have passed this time around and go to the Senate in early 2013.

"Generic competition is the best way to bring down the costs of medications," Jim Keon said. "Canada should have been able to have a simple, clear system that encourages generics to do this."



Children outside a clinic in Nairobi, Kenya holding up AIDS medication. Stocrin (a brand name for efavirenz) is used as part of a combination antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS patients. Sales by efavirenz manufacturer Bristol-Myers Squibb in the second quarter of 2012 was $388 million. Some emerging countries have opted to purchase generics such as Efavir by Cipla (India). Photo by Flickr member "shorty66."

Info on generic meds:

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network www.aidslaw.ca

Grandmothers Advocacy Network, and a petition to support Bill 398 www.grandmothersadvocacy.org

Association of Canada's Research Based Pharmaceutical Companies www.canadapharma.org

Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association www.canadiangenerics.ca

Emily Savage graduated McGill University with a degree in International Development in 2012. A self-described sports fanatic, she hopes to pursue law in the future.

Hélène Laverdière is the Foreign Affairs critic for the New Democrats and the Member of Parliament for Laurier- Sainte Marie, Quebec. She can be contacted at helene.laverdiere@parl.gc.ca

What did the Minister of international Cooperation think of the bill on access to medications? Here is his response on Oct 29, 2012, in the House of Commons:

Hélène Laverdière: "Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the House voted for a bill aimed at fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, but the bill died in the Senate. Now with Bill C-398, we have a new opportunity to help developing countries access the medicines they need.

MPs from all parties will be at a rally on the Hill Thursday in support of access to medicine. Will the Minister of International Cooperation join MPs, the grandmothers and concerned Canadians on Thursday?"

Julian Fantino, Minister of International Cooperation: "Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can say is that the CIDA network of aid and support is well-known and well appreciated. We do an excellent job of helping those in greater need, and we will continue doing that."

Minister Fantino can be contacted at fantij@parl.gc.ca

The cost of poor health and the economics of sanitation

Poor sanitation is related to the management of human excreta. One gram of faeces can contain ten million viruses and one million bacteria.

Diarrhoea is the principal cause of death in countries with poor sanitation. Children under five years old are the most vulnerable to sanitation-related mortality.

Health-related impacts of poor sanitation include premature mortality due to disease, poor-health related productivity loss, and health care costs. These cost:

US$115 million in Laos,
$187 million in Cambodia,
$262 million in Vietnam,
$923 million in the Philippines,
$3.3 billion in Indonesia, and
$38.49 billion in India.

Poor sanitation accounts for **95% of the deaths** in these countries.

- Clare Devereux, with information from The Economics of Sanitation Initiative (2011)

Disability rights in development work

Rebuilding an inclusive Haiti

By Emily Lennon

Before the 2010 earthquake, it is estimated that one in twelve Haitians were disabled. After the earthquake, this rose to one in nine. Yet official statistics under-estimate the actual number of disabled Haitians, meaning that many Haitians do not receive aid, says Elizabeth da Silva, Executive Director at Disabled Peoples' International (DPI).

This is largely because disabled Haitians are labeled cocobai, meaning worthless or good-for-nothing in Creole slang. Haitians often hide away their disabled family members; some forego treatment to conceal their own disability. These efforts to avoid being labeled cocobai mean that many people are missed by aid organizations and left out of official statistics. They become invisible.

Da Silva says that fighting this stigma is one of the main challenges disabled people face in developing countries like Haiti. "People with disabilities are often viewed in Third World countries as worthless. Sometimes they are seen as spawns from the devil and bad omens. They are not viewed as part of society."

There needs to be more attention paid to types of disability that are not immediately visible, says the 2011 DPI-authored policy paper, Reaching the 'cocobai': Reconstruction and persons with disabilities in Haiti. "Children and adults with other types of disabilities that were equally affected by the quake have been largely forgotten."

Less funding, fewer services

Aid organizations are largely unaware of people who are hidden away or experience non-visible challenges such as schizophrenia, visual or hearing impairment, epilepsy, autism, cognitive disability or hydrocephalus. Without needs that are readily apparent, organizations receive less funding and provide fewer services for people with disabilities. DPI estimates that just two percent of disabled people in developing countries benefit from

Photo: JP Theberge

rehabilitation and appropriate health services.

The vulnerability and marginalization of people with disability is not just a problem of access to services or development work, says Christian Champigny, Executive Director of Handicap International in Montreal. "In humanitarian crises, the response and access to emergency relief is not necessarily possible or as easy for people with disabilities, because often they may not be visible enough to have that access to these services. Sometimes, because of a lack of knowledge or a lack of appropriate structures or outreach strategy, people with disabilities will be left aside by NGOs," he says.

Education is essential to promoting general awareness and combating stigma around disability, da Silva says. "When we think about educating people we can't just educate people with disabilities. We need to be inclusive, to mainstream disability for people who do not have disabilities. We need to include NGOs that fight poverty because, as much as we have NGOs doing really wonderful work in Haiti, people with disabilities are still living with the stigma."

Recognizing the world's largest minority

More than one billion people today experience some form of disability. Disabled people make up fifteen percent of the world's population - the largest minority in the world. Yet the first global overview of the status of disability was not until June 2011, when the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank published the World Report on Disability with the first comprehensive statistical estimates in forty years.

Prosthetic legs lined up against a wall in the NGO Handicap International's workshop in central Port au Prince, Haiti. UKaid from the Department for International Development has helped Handicap International to provide assistance to hundreds of people who had to undergo emergency amputations following the earthquake on 12 January 2010. Photo: Department for International Development (UK) / Russell Watkins

The report sends an important message about the prevalence of disability worldwide, according to Steven Estey, Volunteer Chair of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities.

"There are a whole lot of people with disabilities out there. If you're doing poverty alleviation work, or however you want to call it, you simply can't meet your goal if you don't pay attention to this significant portion of the population."

The report recommends mainstreaming disability in health care, rehabilitation, education, employment and support services, and creating inclusive environments for disabled people. This requires not only acknowledging disability issues but also including them in all of these sectors.

Champigny says that the report's release serves as a marker of progress. "What it tells me is that it brings up an issue to the knowledge of the international community. It's something serious with a capital 'S' that can give profile to the issue. It is not something that we can neglect."

Canada lags behind

While the disability rights workers I spoke with were optimistic about the report itself, they were more critical of how it will be realized.

"I think that Canada does not do a good job of including disability issues in all its programming as an international strategy," says Dr. Krassioukova-Enns, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, although she also said that CIDA has supported disability-specific programs. Implementing the report and making disability a cross-cutting issue requires government action, she says. "It is very challenging to actually find disability inclusive initiatives."

Mainstreaming is a tricky concept, Estey says. "Mainstreaming can be used to sweep something off to the side and say, 'we're dealing with it' in our program, and in fact nothing of substance is actually happening."

"The World Report on Disability provides more opportunities to look at how policies and programs could be more inclusive, especially with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities being so rapidly disseminated around the world," Krassioukova-Enns says. "There is

more recognition that all national policies and programs have to be aligned with the Convention." But Canada seems to lag behind in this respect, despite ratifying the Convention in 2010. Countries like New Zealand, Australia, the U.K., the Scandinavian countries and the U.S. enforce national policies on disability. Australia has a ten-year national policy strategy.

These countries also have agencies to survey compliance with the Convention. Canada lacks both a national action plan and official monitoring body.

The lack of government action affects countries that receive Canadian aid, Champigny says. "If donor countries do not have the issue of disability in their international development context high on their agenda, then it's very difficult to expect the recipient countries to really push for real policy or practice changes, be it for mainstreaming or specific services or the involvement of people with disabilities in these processes, etc."

To find out how successfully disability is incorporated as a cross-cutting issue into Canadian aid policy, I wrote to CIDA to speak with a resource person. Its media relations office could not provide anyone to discuss disability issues.

Estey says that the Council of Canadians with Disabilities is calling on the federal government to appoint a disability rights commissioner, and appoint the Canadian Human Rights Commission as an official monitoring body to work within the disability community.

Planning better and building better in Haiti

Rebuilding an accessible Haiti will set an international precedent for mainstreaming disability and enforcing it as a cross-cutting issue, da Silva says. "They are in the process of rebuilding this country, and now is the time for us to say, 'Let's make it available to all people on an equal basis. Let's make it accessible to everyone.' They are in that position now to make Haiti a country that is available and equal to all people."

After the Haitian earthquake Dr. Krassioukova-Enns and the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies sent recommendations to CIDA, insisting that "Canadian money in Haiti should be used to ensure accessibility and universal design." They did not get a response, but Krassioukova-Enns remains optimistic. "This is our chance for Canada to model and demonstrate how we can plan better, how we can build better, and how we can not only address the needs of people with disabilities immediately on the ground but also long term sustainability," she says.

"Every dollar spent on roads, building physical structures, and restoring houses and public buildings should address accessibility."

Steven Este is also hopeful that Haiti will be one of the first disaster relief initiatives to pay attention to disability issues. "By virtue of a whole lot of things coming together, people with disabilities are going to come out of the shadows. The Convention, the Canadian government's ratification of that Convention, and the World Report on Disability are steps in the right direction. I really think that things are coming together, and in the next ten years we are going to see significant advances, even more than we've seen in the last ten."

Emily Lennon is a third year Anthropology Student at McGill University. Her studies focus on Environmental Anthropology, Indigenous ecological knowledge, and resource management issues.

Some bad news...

According to the World Health Organization, there is "a **global human rights emergency in mental health**," with mental and neurological disorders the leading causes of ill health and disability worldwide.

Mental health receives less than 1% of most countries' healthcare budgets.

More than a billion people in the world today experience disability.

Half of disabled people cannot afford health care, compared to a third of non-disabled people. Disabled people are four times more likely to report being treated badly and nearly three times more likely to be denied health care.

Some good news...

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** promotes, protects and ensures the human rights for all people with disabilities. So far, nearly 150 countries and regional integration organizations have signed the Convention, and 100 have ratified it. Japan has provided $40 million to support projects like these:

Guinea, developing inclusive education; India, expanding work on mental disability issues in Tamil Nadu;

Morocco, improving the physical accessibility of people with limited mobility; Peru, mainstreaming inclusive design and university mobility in Lima; and Romania, improving policy-making and the institutional framework for people with disability.

Sources: World Health Organization www.who.int, World Disability Report, The World \Bank

"The Honduran elite is determined to hang on to the privileged position threatened by Zelaya, and is behind the use of force by the army, police and hired thugs whose task is to intimidate and where necessary eliminate their opponents."

Honduras three years after the coup

By John Perry

It is three years since the coup in Honduras which forced President Manuel Zelaya from office and into temporary exile. As well as suffering Latin America's only military coup in the past decade, since then Honduras has gained other unfortunate distinctions. Its murder rate is four times that of Mexico and it has become the world's most dangerous country for journalists, with 23 having been assassinated over the last three years. After well over half of Porfirio Lobo's term in office, the only grounds for optimism in Honduras are offered by the resistance movement which sprang up in response to the coup. However, it faces formidable obstacles in attempting to recreate the space for progressive politics which began to open up under Zelaya, but which led to his downfall.

When Manuel Zelaya was elected in 2006 he was thought to be a safe representative of one of the two traditional ruling parties, who would not question the status quo. But he began to align with left-wing governments elsewhere in Latin America, especially when during the oil crisis his plea for help to George Bush was rejected and instead he was offered subsidised petroleum by Hugo Chavez. When in 2008 he took Honduras into the regional alliance known as ALBA and led by Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba, he earned US displeasure and was quickly branded in Honduras as a communist, even by members of his own party. An attempt to hold a ballot on setting a constitutional assembly to reform the Honduran political process became the excuse for the coup in June 2009. Tanks surrounded his house in the early hours and he was bundled into an aircraft in his pyjamas and sent to Costa Rica.

Supporters of the Lobo government and the status quo ante deny any link between these political events and Honduras' current violence. For example, they claim that the violence is simply gang or drug related, and argue that many of the journalists who have been murdered worked for conventional media or weren't politically active. However, there are two important reasons why it is wrong not to blame political developments for Honduras' disastrous recent record. The first is that the coup and the failure of the Honduran elite or of its allies, the US and Canada, to condemn it has markedly strengthened the hands of the military and of the police. Not only was the army the instrument of the coup, but it continues to receive US aid (justified through the war on drugs) and both the army and police enjoy a large degree of impunity for assassinations and disappearances with which the security forces are regularly associated.

The second reason to blame the political establishment for Honduras's violent record is the repression which it has unleashed against opponents of the coup and against any progressive forces, both urban and rural. The Honduran elite is determined to hang on to the privileged position threatened by Zelaya, and is behind the use of force by the army, police and hired thugs whose task is to intimidate and where necessary eliminate their opponents.

"Law enforcement officials committed widespread human rights violations under the de facto government that took power after the 2009 military coup. Impunity for post-coup abuses remains a serious problem, despite the government's establishment of a truth commission in May 2010 to examine events surrounding the coup, and efforts by prosecutors at the human rights unit in the attorney general's office to investigate abuses.

Journalists, human rights defenders, political activists, and transgender people face violence and threats. Those responsible for these abuses are rarely held to account."

- Human Rights Watch

The north east open for business

Nothing encapsulates Honduras' problems more than recent events in the rural north-east of the country, now a transfer zone for drug traffickers: the US State Department asserts (with suspicious accuracy) that 79% of cocaine smuggling flights from South America land in Honduras, mostly in this region.

It is also the location for several violent disputes in which campesino farmers are struggling to get or hold onto land against the depredations of big landowners.

The biggest of the land disputes is in the Aguan valley, where several communities are struggling to hold on to land in the face of violent repression by the police and private security forces, ranging from the destruction of whole villages to the assassination of community leaders. There have been more than fifty politically related deaths in this area alone.

The main landowner implicated in the violence, Miguel Facussé, was described by the New York Times as 'the octogenarian patriarch of one of the handful of families controlling much of Honduras' economy'. He was also a strong supporter of the coup. In October 2011, Wikileaks released cables from the US embassy which revealed that he had been known to them as a cocaine importer since 2004.

If there is a positive aspect to the history of Honduras since the coup it is provided by the resistance movement which initially focussed on protesting against the illegal government and then led the largely successful boycott of the subsequent elections. In addition to building on the progressive politics which Zelaya had begun to develop, the resistance is active in defending human rights and in campaigning in support of particular groups such as indigenous communities, teachers, university students, journalists and the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender community which have all been persecuted since the coup.

The Obama administration is, of course, on the wrong side in the battle for a more progressive Honduras. If it had joined its neighbours in Latin America in effective action against the coup, the outcome might have been very different. Despite Obama's promise of a fresh start in Latin America after the disaster of the Bush administration's hamfisted engagement with the region (most markedly in a previous coup – that against Chavez in Venezuela in 2002), little has changed. The US administration appears either to be unaware of the repression or – more likely – willing to ignore it in the interests of US business interests and sustaining a regime that has set its face against the progressive politics being pursued in much of Latin America.

The Harper government has also been a strong supporter of the Lobo regime, immediately recognizing its legitimacy and pushing for Honduras' readmission into the OAS. Harper was the first foreign leader to visit the country once it was again part of the OAS, to promote Canadian investment and sign a free trade agreement. It has largely failed to acknowledge the repression and human rights abuse, but promotes the Lobo presidency as a return to democracy while advising the government on a more pro-investor mining law.

The government of Honduras has been collaborating with wealthy landowners in the suppression of small farmers struggling for land rights in the Aguán Valley in the northeast of the country. More than forty-six campesinos have been killed or disappeared, with many of the killings blamed on the private militia of Miguel Facussé, working in cooperation with the Honduran military and police. Wikileaks documents show that the US embassy in Honduras has known since 2004 that Facussé, considered the most powerful businessman in the country, is also a major cocaine importer. Photo source unknown.

THE POLITICS OF ADVOCACY

Are Canadian charities apathetic or afraid?

By Heather Yundt

"Too political."

It's an accusation that's been tossed around by politicians and organizations since the Conservative government announced last March it would set aside $8 million over two years to ensure charities follow the rules around political activities.

The David Suzuki Foundation was among the charities to come under fire, with Ethical Oil, an organization advocating for the Canadian bitumen industry, leading the attack.

"The David Suzuki Foundation is a highly political organization. With the mounting evidence of partisan and political activity, it is time for the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to investigate," Ethical Oil spokesperson Jordan Graham said on the organization's website.

A few weeks later, David Suzuki announced in an open letter on the foundation's website that he had stepped down from the board.

"I want to speak freely without fear that my words will be deemed too political, and harm the organization of which I am so proud," Suzuki wrote.

The response to the budget provision was mixed. Critics called on the government to stop "slandering charities" that are acting within the rules, while supporters of the move argued that taxpayer money should not be put toward political activities.

It is a debate with a long history.

A historical question

The definition of charitable purposes dates back more than four hundred years to what is commonly known as the Statute of Elizabeth in 1601. The document's lengthy preamble laid out a list of purposes that could be considered charitable. Nearly 300 years later, the House of Lords grouped the purposes into four categories, in what is known as Pemsel's case: relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion, and any other purpose for the public benefit.

Historically, charities were free to act politically, and they did. In a 2011 article published in The Charity Law & Practice Review, Australian charity law experts Kerry O'Halloran and Myles McGregor-Lowndes point to the Victorian-era

charities that led the campaign to improve conditions for children working in factories or as chimney sweeps.

As common law developed, so did the definition of a charity. O'Halloran and McGregor-Lowndes write that it was a 1907 judgment that first used the term political in reference to charities. The court ruled that an organization with political purposes could not be a charity because "the law has no way of judging whether a proposed change in the law will or will not be for the public benefit."

In Canada, specific regulations were laid out in the Income Tax Act of 1985. Canadian charities today can generally put 10% of their resources toward non-partisan political activities that further their charitable purposes. Smaller charities can use up to 20% of their resources for political activities. The percentage can be averaged over three years.

A problem of clarity

In May, Prime Minister Stephen Harper defended the increased scrutiny on charities' political activities.

"What is incumbent upon all charities is that they respect the laws regarding political activities. Those laws are clear," Harper said in the House of Commons.

The problem, however, is that for many charities the laws are not clear at all.

"In our view, the 10% rule is badly formulated, poorly understood and potentially highly arbitrary in its application by Revenue Canada," states the authors of the Broadbent Report from 2009.

The 1999 Report of the Joint Tables found that the limit on political activity and the fear of losing charitable status creates an "advocacy chill." Unclear about the line between sharing views and advocating a change of law, many charities avoid all political activities, even those that are allowed and would help their charitable cause.

According to the CRA, advocacy is not necessarily a political activity. Political activities refer to an explicit call to action.

Bob Wyatt, executive director of the Muttart Foundation, says most charities do not come close to meeting the cap on political activity.

"At both a staff level and a board level, the so-called advocacy chill is caused, in my view, in large part because people don't understand what the rules are."

Mark Blumberg, a Toronto-based charity lawyer, agrees. The biggest barrier to charities getting involved in political activities, he says, is not the rules – it's not knowing the rules. Blumberg has calculated, based on charities' reported political activities, that the charitable sector can spend 1,000 times more as a whole before it reaches the 10% limit.

Challenging the rationale

Canadian charities may have more flexibility than many believe, but some charity law experts say any constraints on political activity are a problem.

"I don't see any justification for not allowing charities to pursue political purposes that benefit society," says Alison Dunn, a professor at Newcastle Law School.

There are legal rationales for having some restrictions on charities' political activities: courts cannot determine if a change in law would be in the public benefit and politically active charities might usurp the government. Dunn says these rationales don't hold up.

Matthew Turnour, an Australian charity law expert, says countries that don't use common law, such as European countries, tend to not have constraints on charities' political activities.

Having fewer constraints, he says, benefits society. "It's clearly to the benefit of our society for people to engage in public debate, whatever view they take. It doesn't matter much, so long as they engage."

O'Halloran and McGregor-Lowndes conclude in their 2011 article: "The political constraint rule...represents an archaic use of the law to suppress matters clearly in the public interest and has contributed considerably to a general muting of dissent in the nonprofit sector."

Those strong words come from a jurisdiction that has seen change.

Taking the question to the courts

The changes began in 2006 when Aid/Watch, a registered charity and watchdog of the Australian government's aid programs, lost its charitable status. The Australian Tax Office said political activities had become Aid/Watch's main activities after the organization, among other things, delivered a 60th anniversary birthday cake to the World Bank. According to the Australian Tax Office, these activities were not charitable and did not fur-

ther the organization's charitable purposes.

The case made it to Australia's High Court in late 2010. The court's decision was significant; it ruled that Aid/Watch was acting politically, but that generating public debate was beneficial to the community.

The court's decision ended "a four year gag on free speech for many NGOs," Aid/Watch says on their website.

The ruling doesn't signal changes to other common-law countries like Canada just yet.

Australia's common law on the issue allowed for more flexibility, Dunn says. Australian courts had previously concluded that it would be difficult for courts to determine a public benefit of a change in law. In the United Kingdom and Canada, the courts have taken a much stronger stance – judges cannot determine whether the change in law a charity is advocating would be of public benefit.

No changes yet

Canada is not Russia. But it's also not Australia.

"I don't think in (jurisdictions other than Australia) that there is an appetite to change," Dunn says. "It takes the political will to want to change."

But the recent public attention to the rules regarding charities' political activities could lead to "unintended consequences" as charities understand better what they are allowed to do, says Wyatt.

"I wouldn't be surprised if in two or three or five years there're actually more charities doing (political activities)."

David Suzuki's open letter last April called for just that.

"I am keenly aware that some governments, industries and special interest groups are working hard to silence us. They use threats to the Foundation's charitable status in attempts to mute its powerful voice on issues that matter deeply to you and many other Canadians," the letter said.

"This bullying demonstrates how important it is to speak out."

This article first appeared, in slightly different form, on the CharityVillage web site, "the top Canadian source for Canada non-profit news, non-profit jobs, non-profit funding, non-profit training and more."

Heather Yundt is a freelance print and radio journalist based in Ottawa and a graduate of Carleton's Master of Journalism program. She is particularly interested in the connection between media and international development. She has taken on journalism projects in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Norway. Her work has appeared on rabble.ca, the BarentsObserver, the Christian Science Monitor and in newspapers across Canada.

Canadian Mennonite magazine warned about political activities by the Charities Directorate of Canada Revenue

The magazine editor was reminded of restrictions registered charities must follow. "Under the Act, charities are allowed to engage in some political activities, but are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities."

The magazine's position is that its articles were "not partisan in nature and were not advocating specifics, but rather were done as statements of the Mennonite core belief in non-violence and objection to war as a solution for political conflict."

Articles cited by the Canada Revenue Agency as problematic included:

> An editorial that criticized two Conservative MPs — including Public Safety Minister Vic Toews — for distancing themselves from their Mennonite heritage.
>
> Another editorial commented on the killing of Osama bin Laden by the U.S. military and "the takeover by a militaristic Conservative majority government" in Canada.
>
> A story on the Mennonite Church's concerns about the federal omnibus crime bill.
>
> An article on how the death of NDP leader Jack Layton inspired some young Mennonites to get involved in politics.
>
> An article about Mennonite youth urging the federal government to "spend less money on war" by sending paper airplanes to Ottawa.
>
> A story about the Manitoba election campaign, profiling young Mennonite adults who were thinking about who they would vote for.

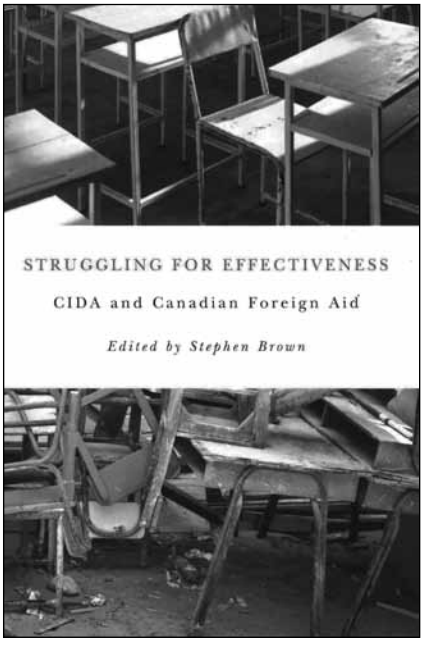
D&P's "politically sensitive" campaign

This fall, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace cancelled a planned campaign on Canadian aid because, according to a letter sent to supporters in September.

"Some of our most important supporters, particularly certain bishops in dioceses across the country" expressed concern that asking the government to better honour the requirements of the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act "might be too politically sensitive and… perceived as overly partisan."

Cautious of offending federal government, NGOs have grown silent

says long-time development expert Ian Smillie in new book, "Struggling for Effectiveness"



Following the CIDA cuts in funding of NGOs that engage in policy analysis, Smillie says in his chapter, major organizations now avoid comment on the Harper government's apparent policy of turning NGOs into service providers out of concern that they will lose funding. Here are some excerpts:

"Watchdogs, of course, are not supposed to bite the hand that feeds, and hand-biting analogies have never been far from the fore in CIDA'S thinking about its support for development education or policy engagement. Organizations like CUSO that failed to understand the sometimes unspoken boundaries found their applications for development education funding refused. Finally, after years of ongoing debate and controversy, in 1995 the Liberal government scrapped CIDA'S public-participation program entirely. NGOS that received multi-year program funding from CIDA were permitted to spend up to 15 per cent of their CIDA contributions on public engagement, but it would take another four years before a wider program of CIDA support would be reintroduced.

During 2009 and 2010, something more dramatic occurred. Stephen Harper's Conservative government began defunding Canadian organizations whose "messages" it did not like. This was not a defunding of their advocacy work, it was a 100 per cent cancellation of all CIDA funding, often without explanation or warning…

This was a totally new phenomenon: cuts not just to a questionable advocacy project, but complete cancellation of all support to entire organizations.

Some of the organizations in question will survive the slash-and burn approach of the Harper government and may be stronger for it. Their voice, now free of funding chill, will be more independent and may express more clearly what they think. However, if they are membership organizations like CCIC, the present situation may do the opposite. It may provide an excuse for member organizations to cut back on their own advocacy, focusing even more attention on service delivery and eschewing even the half-hearted advocacy of previous years…

There is a growing concern that the warning shots of years past have been transformed into a shoot-to-kill policy. This chapter will conclude with a more fundamental concern: a worry that the idea of civil society as an "essential ingredient of democracy, [one that] helps citizens find a voice to be more effective participants in political life," has been transformed by the Harper government into a concept that perceives NGOs as little more than junior service providers, operating at the pleasure - and the behest - of government…

It is much less controversial to "feed the children" or to "save the children" or to "adopt" the children than to deal with the difficult and complex realities that make it impossible for the parents of these children to look after them properly themselves. When faced with a choice between the difficult and the less difficult, between insults and praise, between something that may damage and organization's income and a money spinner, great fortitude is required to take the road less travelled - even occasionally."

"Struggling for Effectiveness – CIDA and Canadian Foreign Aid," edited by Stephen Brown, was published this year by McGill-Queen's University Press.

World Bank starts major overhaul of social and environmental policies

They need to be much better, say NGOs, but could get much worse

NGOs engaged in World Bank reform say the coming review of its social and environmental safeguards is the single most important opportunity in building higher standards for financing economic development.

The World Bank started a comprehensive review of its safeguards policies in the fall of 2012; it expects the process will take two years. The Bank lacks progressive policies in a number of areas, say its critics, and its safeguards have fallen behind other international agencies in breadth and rigor. Critics are also concerned that there may actually be a weakening of environmental and social protection in the new policy.

Areas of concern.

Critics of the World Bank say that:

Marginalization and impoverishment of communities is not occasional and rare, but recurrent and widespread. Impacts are particularly strong on women and on people with disabilities

Over one million people are affected by involuntary resettlement in active World Bank projects, to make room for infrastructure projects, industrial plantations, and mining, oil and gas extractives.

Delays in responding to climate change and restoring ecosystems are strongly impacting the poor.

Existing policies on women, labor standards and the rights of people with disabilities are not applied across the whole range of World Bank activities.

The World Bank does not routinely measure the social and environmental costs or benefits of the operations it supports; supervision of social and environmental impacts is inadequate.

The World Bank may lower environmental and social standards as it competes with other financial institutions for investment opportunities.

What is needed?

NGOs engaged in World Bank reform are asking for these for these changes, among others:

- the recognition and promotion of recognized human rights standards and international law, such as core labour standards and the rights of persons with disabilities, throughout World Bank operations.
- a policy on resettlement that better complies with international human rights law.
- support for greater security of smallholder, indigenous and vulnerable community land rights, and protection from large agricultural land grabs.
- not only 'equality of opportunity,' but also 'equality of outcomes' for women.
- more climate change considerations in environmental and social assessments
- better protection of critical natural habitats.
- no financing of industrial-scale forest harvesting in intact forests.
- updated policies on hydroelectric dams to reflect current knowledge about risks.

NGOs focused on World Bank safeguard policy include Urgewald, Bank Information Center, International Accountability Project, Rights & Resettlement Caucus, The Center for International Environmental Law, Global Witness, International Rivers.

Why is the World Bank funding repressive regimes?

If a country does not respect recognized standards of human rights, it should not be supported by World Bank money. The World Bank itself has no formal policy on human rights. With no standards on human rights and no obligation to abide by recognized international human rights, under Canadian law it should not be supported by Canadian money.

No rights? No money!

Canada is among the top 10 shareholders at the World Bank, having contributed (or committed in callable capital) **US$14.5 billion**. The Minister of Finance is responsible for Canadian policy at, and funding for, the World Bank..

The US opposes or abstains from several votes every month for several reasons, including human rights abuse, in compliance with US law. For example, the US opposed funding to Belarus.

Canada's representative abstained on only one vote in 2011 - to increase World Bank staff compensation. **She has never opposed funding for a repressive regime.**

Under Canadian law, official development assistance may be provided only if it (a) contributes to poverty reduction; (b) takes into account the perspectives of the poor; and (c) **is consistent with international human rights standards**, and shall be defined exclusively with regard to these values. (Official Development Assistance Accountability Act S.C. 2008, c. 17)

The Social Justice Committee of Montreal
Le Comité pour la justice sociale de Montréal

"No rights? No money!" The SJC campaign to have the government respect the law on foreign aid.

$865 million for Belarus as repression grows, rights defenders and journalists imprisoned

The president of Belarus, Aliaxandr Lukashenka

"**The increasingly repressive government of Aliaxandr Lukashenka continues to clamp down on dissent in Belarus.** Human rights defenders, civil society activists, and independent journalists are routinely persecuted for expressing any signs of discontent with the authorities. Hundreds of pro-democracy participants have been punished with administrative or criminal sanctions, frequently in absence of sufficient evidence of an offence having been committed. Violations of detainees' due process rights, including access to defense counsel, are widespread. The authorities enforce new laws further restricting freedoms of association and assembly. Independent media is virtually non-existent with the exception of a small number of online outlets." - Human Rights Watch

Belarus has received $865 million in World Bank funding. Almost US$ 550 million or 60 percent of all loans Belarus received from the World Bank over the last 19 years were approved in 2009-2010. The World Bank is now pushing economic structural adjustment, mainly privatization and market liberalization, and ignoring social aspects. The only rights discussed in World Bank studies of Belarus are those of investors and property owners.

$1.3 billion for Uzbekistan despite "appalling" human rights

The president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov

"**Uzbekistan's human rights record remains appalling.** Torture is endemic in the criminal justice system. Authorities target rights activists, opposition members, and journalists, and persecute religious believers who worship outside strict state controls. Freedom of expression remains severely limited. Government-sponsored forced child labor during the cotton harvest continues. Authorities deny justice for the 2005 Andijan massacre in which government forces shot and killed hundreds of protestors, most of them unarmed." - Human Rights Watch

The World Bank is committing $1.3 billion to Uzbekistan for 2012-15, about $325 million annually. Its focus is on industrialization and competitiveness. The World Bank recognizes that Uzbekistan has problems of "governance." Governance usually means issues of voice and accountability in a political system, but in this case refers only to disclosure of financial data, so as to improve private sector growth. The World Bank's guiding document for the $1.3 billion program refers to rights only once, in reference to the recognition of gender equity in the country's constitution.

Ten years of suffering

Ten years ago I led a delegation of four women from St. Edward the Confessor Mission in Pointe Claire to Guatemala. At the request of the Movement of Campesino Workers (MTC), we went to the small town of Sipacapa in San Marcos. There we met with leaders of the community who explained that they were very upset because of the impending construction of a gold and silver mine. They brought us to the location of the mine and then rather bluntly said "the owners of the mine are Canadian; you too are Canadians. We do not want the mine and we expect you to help us get rid of it."

So it was that the Social Justice Committee of Montreal was introduced to the Marlin Mine, owned by Montana Inc., itself a wholly owned subsidiary of Glamis Gold (now Goldcorp), registered in Canada. For the SJC, it was the beginning of our work in support of those people, primarily indigenous Mayans, opposed to the mine.

At first the reasons for their opposition were largely based on fear. Fear that their rather scarce water resources would dry up because the miners needed much of it. Fear that the water and soil would be contaminated by cyanide, arsenic and heavy metals. Fear of their children developing health problems. Fear that the mine would cause divisions within their communities between those benefitting from the mine and those who were opposed to it. Fear of violence and the cantinas and brothels that would appear. Fear that they would bear heavy costs while the profits would go to investors in Canada and the United States.

They knew that they had already been betrayed. They had the right to decide on any project that would affect them, according to several important laws - the Guatemalan Constitution, the Peace Accords that ended the 36-year long armed conflict, the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 and the United Nations Convention on the rights of indigenous people (both signed and ratified by the government) – but they couldn't. Their "free, prior and informed consent" was supposed to be obtained by their national government, and it wasn't.

Ten years have passed since then. Ten years of resistance. Ten years of suffering as the Mayans found that many of their fears were realized. Ten years during which important public figures such as James Anaya, the United Nations Special Relator on Indigenous Rights, representatives of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, the Guatemalan Human Rights Ombudsman, and others visited them and issue reports in support of the people, even going so far as to call for a moratorium on working the mine. Yet despite everything, the mine continues to produce large quantities of gold and silver. Why have the people's rights not been respected?

I suggest that there are two major reasons, or perhaps one reason which has two faces.

The first has to do with the Guatemalan government. Ever since the Spanish arrived over 500 years ago, the ruling elites have looked down on the Mayan peoples. They continually deprived the Mayan people of the better land and treated them as little more than slaves. The signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 brought the promise of better treatment of the Mayans, a greater respect of their rights and better land on which to farm. For the most part, however, these were just words. Sure the government signed and ratified ILO Convention 169 but they didn't do anything to help implement it. Never have they had any interest in doing so.

The other reason has to do with the work we have done here in Canada. Ever since that delegation returned from Guatemala ten years ago, the SJC and other NGOs have sought to show Canadians how the Mayan people are being treated by Canadian mining

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

interests. We have focused much of our work on the fears I mentioned above – polluted water, environmental destruction, ill health, etc. Yet, it is my opinion that there is really only one thing that counts—according to Guatemalan and international law the indigenous people have the right to "free, prior and informed consent." That's the law, and in relation to the Marlin Mine it has never been respected. The Marlin mine may or may not have polluted the waters; it may or may not have caused destruction of houses; it may or may not have caused animals to die. But what it has done, without dispute, is disregard the law. And when our government supports a company that has broken the law, it shares that company's guilt, and when Canadians invest in that company or buy its gold, we too share the guilt.

Our government loves to present itself as an upholder of law, order and democracy. Canadians as a whole like to see ourselves as a just nation. Tell that to the people of Sipcapa or San Miguel Ixtahuacán.

World Bank starts Burma funding under criticism

Civil society organizations in Burma are not happy with a World Bank decision to grant the country $80 million, saying it was made in haste and that the institution had ignored its own polices in making the move.

Twenty-three groups joined in protesting the lack of transparency in the process, and said that it unclear whether the Bank had taken ethnic conflict and endemic corruption into account.

The funding, for an 18-month "interim strategy" program, was approved by the World Bank's board of directors November 1.

Human Rights Watch sums up the country situation this way:

"Burma showed signs of change in 2012, but the government still failed to seriously address the dire human rights situation in the country. The new government, dominated by the military and former generals, has released hundreds of political prisoners, enacted laws on forming trade unions and freedom of assembly, eased official media censorship, and allowed the opposition to register and contest by-elections.

However, hundreds of political prisoners remain, ethnic civil war and inter-ethnic conflict has escalated, and Burmese security forces continue to use forced labor and commit extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, among other abuses."

The World Bank must improve attention to climate change impacts in project design, says its Independent Evaluation Group

"The Bank Group's new results frameworks for resilience provide **inadequate guidance for, or tracking of, improvements in climate adaptation**. The results frameworks emphasize inputs rather than outcomes and impacts… While potentially useful for tracking attention to climate, it is important not to misinterpret "total spending on adaptation-related projects" as a measure of adaptation effort. For that purpose it is unsatisfactory because it **highlights expenditure rather than results**; mixes incommensurable expenditures (policy loans, investment loans, and technical assistance) that are not proportional to effort; **fails to assess** where there are tradeoffs, and where there are complementarities, with poverty reduction; and **ignores the likely adaptive impact** of rural roads, female education, urban employment, and other interventions that at first glance seem extraneous to climate.

- World Bank Independent Evaluation Group report, *Adapting to Climate Change: Assessing the World Bank Group Experience, Phase III* (2012)

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The Social Justice Committee
Le Comité pour la justice sociale

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, its mission is to engage Canadians in working for a more socially just world.

The SJC has been working to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and repression in the world through our education programs since 1975. As an independent human rights organization, the SJC provides education and advocacy about global poverty and inequality to help individuals and organizations become actively engaged in efforts to create a more just global society.

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THE SJC, AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS GIVEN CANADIANS THE BEST IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, THE MAGAZINE YOU ARE NOW READING, AND FEARLESS ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. OUR MEMBERS KNOW THE SJC AS AN ORGANIZATION THEY ARE PROUD TO BE PART OF. HOW ABOUT YOU, ARE YOU A MEMBER? WE HOPE SO! WITH YOU ON BOARD, WE'RE FEARLESS!

Felix Molina, a Honduran journalist, was brought to Canada this year by the Social Justice Committee of Montreal to share his experiences and perspectives. More than 20 journalists have been murdered under an intolerant and repressive regime took power in the 2009 coup. He is the host of the radio show *Resistencia* on Radio Globo, which has supported resistance and pro-democracy movements since the 2008 coup. While he was here he spoke with Derek MacCuish, the SJC director and editor of this magazine, about his life and his work.

"We are in the resistance, so we don't take a rest. I was with the social movements that were there before the resistance to the current regime.

Radio is my passion. Honduras listens more than it watches, so radio is more important than television. I worry that I will not be able to go to the towns and villages and see the struggles of the people. Eventually I may have to stop being a journalist and, like other people, go into exile.

I don't really think about my safety, but it is in the back of my mind. My family is concerned for my safety, but my wife is a human rights lawyer, my two daughters are in university. They get worried about me, but in a positive way. Since the coup, it's like my family got extended, with people joining from all over the country. And when I get a letter like I did from an MP (Peter Julian), to help with the visa to visit Canada, it also serves to protect me in a way."

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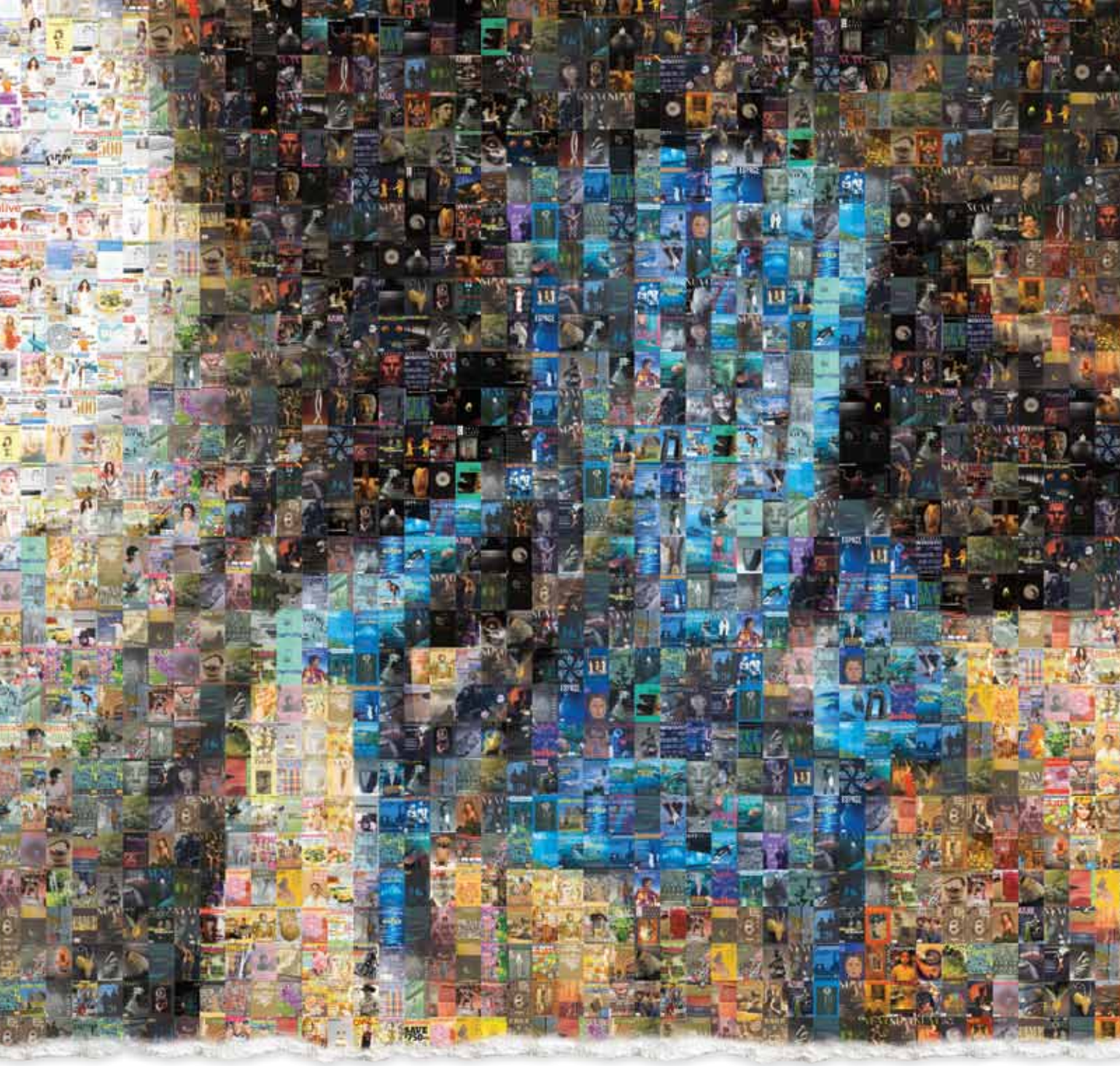

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