

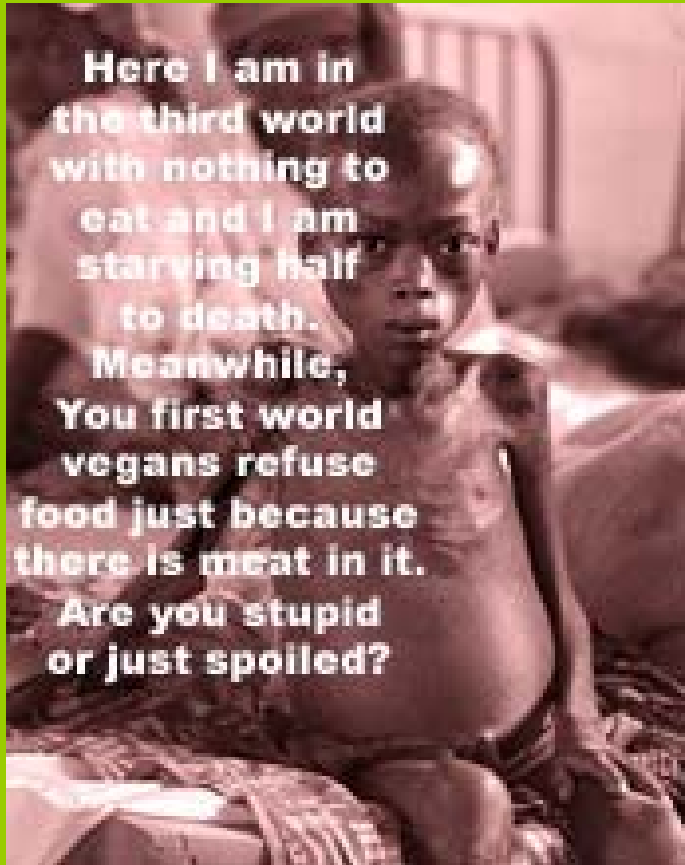
The South through the Northern Eye

Ethics & Images



- **eth·ic** (th k) *n.*
 - a. A set of principles of right conduct.
 - b. A theory or a system of moral values: “An ethic of service is at war with a craving for gain” (Gregg Easterbrook).
- 1. **ethics** (*used with a sing. verb*) The study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person; moral philosophy.

Statement of the Problem:



- Despite the progress, the “*Starving Baby Appeal*” (Fine, 1990) is still with us
 - Partial, simplistic and emotionally laden representations
- A public with little understanding of the issues, urgencies and realities of development (Earnscliffe 2000)
- A societal attitude marked by guilt, helplessness, charity, paternalism and even racism (Mohanty, Escobar, Rutherford)

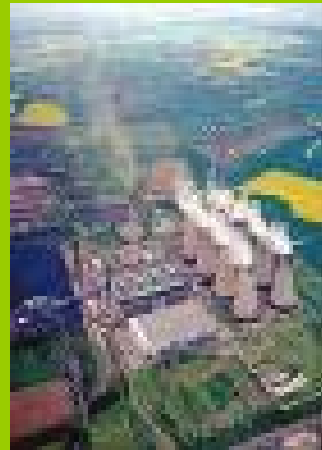
Janice Nathanson, 2004

SOME FACTS:

- ✓ Canadians believe we have an obligation to provide foreign assistance - Polling indicates that a strong majority of Canadians support international aid. A May 2000 Earnscliffe poll revealed that **66% of Canadians** thought that we were spending either the right amount or not enough on aid. When told the actual expenditure, this percentage increased to 73%. (CCIC)
- ✓ But, Canadians don't know what's going on... Less than half are familiar with government foreign aid policies; less than one quarter are familiar with CIDA; (Earnscliffe 2000); Canadians don't necessarily see the connection between international development and issues that face Canada (Environics, 1995)

What Leaders Should Pay Attention to (Earnscliffe, 2000)

- 85% health care
- **80% Canadian poverty**
- 76% crime
- 71% personal taxes
- 74% national debt
- 69% rising tuition fees
- 66% greenhouse gas emissions
- 64% early childhood development
- 50% native living conditions
- **41% world poverty**
- 45% infrastructure
- **36% quality of life in poor countries**
- 27% Canadian arts



PERCEPTIONS:



Canadian perceptions of
international development:
HOPELESSNESS

No aid can make a difference

Problems are *unsolvable*, and
solutions are not apparent

(Nathanson, 2005)

More Perceptions:



When asked “when I say to you developing or third world, what comes to mind?”

- **80% responded with words such as war, famine, disaster, starvation and corruption**



“A poor Dominican- Haitian boy cries in Barahona, Dominican Republic”

VSO Study: The Live Aid Legacy: The Developing World through British Eyes – a research Report

Which leads to.....



- **Us and Them** (no interconnectedness; no common experience)
- **Superiority** of the West/North
- **Noblesse oblige** (charitable paternalism; maintenance of the status quo)
- The can't help themselves
- Select imagery that promotes guilt and hopelessness

(Nathanson, 2005)

CCIC CODE of ETHICS:

3.5 Communications to the Public

3.5.3 Any and all communications to the public by the Organization shall respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of the people supported by its programs. In particular the Organization shall avoid the following:

- Images/messages that generalize and mask the diversity of situations;
- Images/messages that fuel prejudice;
- Images/messages that foster a sense of Northern superiority; and
- Images/messages that show people as hopeless objects for our pity, rather than as equal partners in action and development.[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), Code of Ethics, ratified by members in May 2004.

The South through the Northern Eye.....



ACIC will collaborate with member organizations, media and community groups to develop long-term strategies for increasing public awareness of **international cooperation** and **poverty issues**. This will lead to **increased awareness** about issues of **stereotypes, objectification** and the **dichotomy between the North and South** and will create a better understanding of why we should avoid using images that do not respect the dignity of people within them.

Ultimately, this will lead to increased awareness about some of the issues impacting citizens in developing countries, and **stronger support for increasing development aid**.

FORMAT:

- **Workshops** for members, non-member, students, general public
- **Photography Competition**
- **Travelling Photography Exhibit**



Goals of the Project

1. To **build knowledge of partnerships** between Canadians and Southern partners around issues related to poverty alleviation, making sure to focus on positive examples of imagery and ethical images;
2. To engage stakeholders in the **Atlantic Canadian media industry**, to understand issues surrounding poverty and ethical images and to present alternatives to the current portrayal of the ‘south’ in the news;
3. To continue developing **new models of collaboration on public engagement**: ACIC with members/public, and multi-sectored partnerships at the local and regional level;

Goals Continued...

4. To **build the knowledge and capacity of ACIC members** and other groups to stimulate public engagement on issues of poverty and ethical images;
5. To build awareness of poverty issues, making sure to **create linkages between local and global**; and
6. To **increase awareness** of Atlantic Canadians of international development issues.

TARGET GROUPS:

- ACIC membership and the larger NGO Community (50 + members)
- Atlantic Canadian Media (media representatives from each Atlantic Canadian province)
- General Public (including students, trade unions, faith groups, aboriginal groups, community leaders etc.)

Alternatives:

PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE...

creating a vision that galvanizes

PROGRESS IS HAPPENING... demonstrating that change is happening – not just in individual cases, but on the macro level as well

PROGRESS HAS HAPPENED....

demonstrate that a difference has been made, that lives/social conditions have been transformed

Public Engagement:

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

- **A way of understanding** (how the world works; understanding of links between our own lives and those of people throughout the world)

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP CONTINUED...

- **A way of seeing** (attitudes & values – social justice & equity; sense of empathy, respect for diversity; interconnectedness; a belief that people can make a difference)
- **A way of acting** (behaviours – exercising political rights; set of skills – critical thinking, challenging injustice etc.)

Something to think about....

“Despite considerable efforts to be accurate and timely, both the media and relief organizations unintentionally contribute to distorted images of the developing world because both focus on the unusual, the extraordinary, the dramatic. Yet western viewers and readers perceive this information with a context or a background of information of experience against which to evaluate its significance.” [1]

[1] *Fred H. Cate, Media, Disaster Relief and Images of the Developing World.*