

Rendez-Vous

Special Edition - International Development Week
Édition Spéciale—Semaine du Développement International

February 2002
Février 2002

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK EDITION OF RENDEZ-VOUS!

Sarah Shima, Coordinator

International Development Week (IDW), held each year during the first week of February, provides Canadians with an opportunity to learn more about life in developing countries and increase their awareness of the role that Canadians play in the field of international development.

This year's IDW takes place from
February 3 to 9, 2002.



The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has declared the theme of this year's IDW: *Canadians Reaching Out to the World*.

Canadians impact the entire world everyday; politically, socially, environmentally, and economically. Our impact is sometimes positive, sometimes negative:

- Dr. Sima Samar, one of two women on Afghanistan's interim government, commented on the necessary role of our Peace Keepers in a recent presentation in Fredericton.
- Canadians are the third highest per capita emitters, in the world, of greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.

Economically, Canadians' global impact is also positive and negative. While we consume huge quantities of goods and services, we also spend large amounts aiding "developing" countries. There are many accepted goals in the international cooperation community and one of these is the alleviation of poverty.

In the interests of creating the opportunity to discuss what we mean by "poverty" and to critically look at the prevalent paradigm of poverty alleviation in our community, this Special Edition of Rendez-Vous looks at how we measure wealth, what progress means, and whether we should be working toward poverty alleviation or wealth alleviation; the latter article challenges us with a significant paradigm shift.

I look forward to receiving any comments you have on these articles and starting a crucial dialogue on the fundamental values of our work.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a thoughtful quote from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"I am afraid that many among you are more concerned about making a living than making a life. You are prone to judge the success of your profession by the index of your salary and the size of the wheel base on your automobile, rather than the quality of your service to humanity."

How does your work improve quality of life, globally, and how do you measure that?

ÉDITION SPÉCIALE DU RENDEZ-VOUS POUR LA SEMAINE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Sarah Shima, Coordinatrice

La Semaine du développement international (SDI), qui a lieu à chaque année durant la première semaine de février, offre aux Canadiens l'occasion d'en savoir plus sur la vie dans les pays en développement et de se sensibiliser quant au rôle que les Canadiens peuvent jouer en matière de développement international. La SDI de cette année aura lieu du 3 au 9 février, 2002.

L'Agence canadienne du développement international (ACDI) a choisi le thème pour la SDI de cette année: Des Canadiens tournés vers le monde
(*se continue à la prochaine page...*)

INSIDE/A L'INTERIEUR

Page 3:

Is this Progress?

Page 4:

Measuring Real Progress

Page 6:

Websites/Sites Internet

Page 7:

Wealth Alleviation

Page 8:

Le Soulagement de la Richesse

Page 10:

La Pauvreté et la Faim dans le Monde

Page 10:

Housing Co-operatives in Philippines

**Atlantic Council for International Cooperation
Conseil Atlantique pour la Coopération Internationale**

Rendez-vous

Special Edition/Édition Spéciale
February/février 2002

Le bulletin Rendez-vous est publié par le Conseil Atlantique pour la Coopération Internationale et financé par l'Agence Canadienne de Développement International.



La politique en matière du bilinguisme du CACI consiste à utiliser les deux langues officielles sans traduction dans le bulletin d'information. Your comments on this formula are welcome.

Editing and Layout:

Marcelle Thibodeau



Atlantic Council for International Cooperation-Conseil Atlantique pour la Coopération Internationale.

125 chemin South Knowlesville Road

Knowlesville, N.-B./NB
E7L 1B1

Ph/Tél: (506)-375-4795

Fax: (506)-375-4221

Email: info@acic-caci.org

Website: www.acic-caci.org

The views expressed by the publication are not necessarily those of ACIC or its members.

À chaque jour, les Canadiens ont un impact sur l'ensemble de la planète; politiquement, socialement, écologiquement et économiquement. Notre impact est parfois positif, parfois négatif.

- Dr. Sima Samar, l'une des deux femmes qui font partie du gouvernement intérimaire de l'Afghanistan, soulignait le rôle nécessaire de nos Casques bleus lors d'une présentation récente à Fredericton.
- À l'échelle mondiale, les Canadiens sont les troisièmes plus gros émetteurs par habitant de gaz à effet de serre qui contribuent au réchauffement de la planète.

Du point de vue économique, l'impact mondial des Canadiens est également positif et négatif. Bien que nous consommons de grandes quantités de biens et de services, nous dépensons également de gros montants à aider les pays "en développement". Il y a plusieurs buts acceptés dans la communauté de la coopération internationale et l'un de ceux-ci est le soulagement de la pauvreté.

Afin de créer une occasion de discuter ce que l'on veut dire par "pauvreté" et afin de jeter un coup d'oeil critique au paradigme courant quant au soulagement de la pauvreté dans notre communauté, cette Édition Spéciale de Rendez-Vous va examiner comment nous mesurons la

richesse, ce que le progrès signifie, et si nous devrions oeuvrer pour le soulagement de la pauvreté, ou bien pour le soulagement de la richesse; le dernier article nous propose le défi d'un changement de paradigme.

J'ai hâte de recevoir tous les commentaires que vous pourriez avoir concernant ces articles, ainsi que l'occasion d'entamer un dialogue crucial sur les valeurs fondamentales de notre travail.

En terminant, j'aimerais vous laisser avec cette réflexion du Rév. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"Je crains que plusieurs d'entre-vous sont plus préoccupés par le fait de gagner leur vie, au lieu de se faire une vie. Vous avez tendance à juger le succès de votre profession selon le niveau de votre salaire et la dimension de l'empatement de votre automobile au lieu de juger la qualité de votre service à l'humanité."

Comment votre travail améliore-t-il la qualité de vie, à l'échelle mondiale, et comment peut-on mesurer tout cela?



ACIC Board of Directors Conseil d'Administration du CACI

Neil Tilley, Chair & Nfld/Lab Representative (Extension Community Development Cooperative)

Jean Arnold, Treasurer & NB Representative (Falls Brook Centre)

Peggy Cameron, NS Representative (Clean Nova Scotia)

Marian White, PEI Representative (CUSO)

Maureen MacLean, Member-at-Large (Canadian Cooperative Association)

Sarah Shima, Ex officio, Coordinator

IS THIS PROGRESS?

The time has come to re-examine our ideas of progress. The thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi can help.

By Kamla Chowdhry

In the last 200 years science and technology have changed the face of the Earth. Armed by the Industrial Revolution, European countries conquered continents, established colonial empires, had access to raw materials and markets and used their power to control much of the world.

Modern technology propelled by the forces of the market and politics has enhanced the power of Western nations beyond anything known or even dreamt of before. It is power over matter, over life on Earth, and power over nations and millions of people. Its unfettered exercise over two centuries has raised living standards of these Western nations to unbelievable levels of consumption. As Hans Jonas points out, "Not even the ravages of two world wars — themselves children of that overbrimming power — could slow the upward surge for long; it even gained from the spin-off of the hectic technological war effort in its aftermath. The decades after World War II may well denote the high water mark of technologic economic ebullience."

Today, faith in technology and progress is unabated. The dark side of technology is ignored and pushed aside, and more technology is generated to deal with the problems of earlier technologies. We live in a world which has obsessive preoccupation with growth and unlimited confidence in new technological developments to add to our lifestyles.

But this growth and lifestyle are by no means shared by all. Forbes magazine has estimated that 225 individuals, the richest in the world, have a combined wealth of more than \$1 trillion, a figure that approaches the combined annual income of the poorest one half of humanity. The assets of the three richest individuals exceed the combined annual economic output of forty-eight poor countries!

Is this a measure of progress?

The Western economic model — the fossil-fuel based, automobile-centred, throw-away economy — is the model that is being promoted and eagerly copied by the "developing" countries. The result is some economic growth, but the divide between the rich and the poor has become larger, with cities where more than half the population live in unbelievable slums. Also our



The giant Narmada Dam sweeps away small farmers with their dwellings. Photo: Ian Berry/Magnum

economic and technological progress has been achieved by disappearing forests, disappearing rivers and wetlands, disappearing cropland for more and more cities, disappearing biodiversity, and disappearing fossil and mineral wealth and increasing wastelands.

Should such happenings not jolt us to re-examine our ideas of progress?

In India we have increased our GNP by 5% to 6% or maybe 7%, but at the same time we have millions who go hungry and are homeless. Is this progress? No society can truly be called civilized if it has hunger and homelessness within its communities.

In 1916 Mahatma Gandhi gave a lecture to students of Allahabad University and asked the question "Is economic progress real progress?" In discussing the subject, Gandhi said, "I take it by economic progress we mean material advancement without limit — and by real progress we mean moral progress." The economists point out that there can be no moral progress, unless there is economic progress, so that the poor

can satisfy their daily needs. Gandhi's reply to this argument was that of course no one has even suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation, that all human beings have a right to live decently and therefore must find the means to feed, clothe and house themselves. But for this simple performance, Gandhi adds, "we need no assistance from economics or their laws."

Gandhi, continuing his lecture, made the point, "I venture to think the religious scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on the laws of economics, than many of the modern economic text-books." And he added, "I believe that Jesus was the greatest economist of his time." Gandhi tells his audience that persons who have exercised great influence on their lives and molded the lives of millions were people like Jesus and the Buddha who deliberately embraced poverty — Mahavir, Mohammed, Nanak, Kabir, Shankara, Vivekanand, Ramakrishna, St. Francis: they all embraced poverty. And, he adds, the world has been made richer for their having lived in it.

Gandhi made the point that in his view modern civilization poses a greater threat than colonialism did. He urged that worldly pursuits should give way to ethical and moral living. Gandhi's great ambition was to show India the way for its moral regeneration. He redefined the scope of dharma and included Western notions of liberty, equality, fraternity and mutual help. Gandhi gave an updated version of dharma that would fit life in the modern world.

The World Bank too seems to be inching its way towards Gandhi's thinking as to what is economic progress. President James Wolfensohn said in a public meeting, "The World Bank's central mission is to weld economic assistance with spiritual, ethical and moral development. It is in this context that we need to measure our progress and relate to the groups with whom we are dealing. At the Bank we are trying to find ways to measure ourselves not by dollar value but by the impact and effectiveness of our programmes in terms that relate to the development of the society." Echoes of Gandhi's concerns.

(continued on next page...)

(Is this progress? Continued...)

Modern society has always assumed that growth is progress, that you grow or die. And we continue to delude ourselves into believing that more and more technology is progress and an answer to our problems.

Within the framework of Gandhi's concerns about the poor, about the need for dignity and respect in manual work, he promoted the spinning wheel — as a symbol of solidarity between the rich and poor, of the unity of humankind, of economic freedom and equality. In everything that Gandhi did there was a spiritual message together with a deep concern for the poor.

If we want real progress, equitable and sustainable progress, then the starting point is the self. Going back to a simpler life, as Gandhi advocated, is not a step backward; rather the simpler lifestyle may allow us to regain our dignity, our spirituality and our contact with nature. The return to simplicity will also be fulfilling for our soul.

Kamla Chowdhry is an environmental activist in India and also visiting professor at the Harvard Business School in the USA.

First published in Resurgence magazine, a journal of ecology, art and spirituality. For a free sample copy contact: <ed@resurge.demon.do.uk> or phone + 44 1237 441293.



MEASURING REAL PROGRESS

By Ron Colman, GPI Atlantic



There is a remarkable consensus across all political divisions on the fundamental principles of a decent society and on the benchmarks that would signify genuine progress. We all want to live in a peaceful and safe society without crime. We all value a clean environment with healthy forests, soils, lakes and oceans. We need good health, strong communities, and time to relax and develop our potential. We want economic security and less poverty.

No political party officially favors greater insecurity, a degraded environment, or more stress, crime, poverty, and inequality. Why then do we see policies that promote those very outcomes? Why have we been unable to create the kind of society we genuinely want to inhabit? Why have we not ordered our policies and priorities in accord with our shared values and human needs?

One reason is that we have all been getting the wrong message from our current measures of progress, which are based primarily on economic growth statistics as measured by changes in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). All of us—politicians, economists, journalists, and the general public – have been completely hooked on the illusion that equates economic growth with well-being and prosperity. This was not the intent of those who created the GDP. Simon Kuznets, its principal architect, warned 40 years ago:

“The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income...Goals for “more” growth should specify of what and for what.”

GDP growth statistics were never meant to be used as a measure of progress, as they are today. In fact, activities that degrade our quality of life, like crime, pollution, and addictive gambling, all make

the economy grow. The more fish we sell and the more trees we cut down, the more the economy grown. Working longer hours makes the economy grow. And the economy can grow even if inequality and poverty increase.

Engines of growth

Toxic pollution, sickness, stress, and war all make the economy grow. The Exxon Valdez contributed more to the Alaska economy by spilling its oil than if it had delivered the oil safely to port, because the entire cleanup costs, lawsuits, and media coverage added to the growth statistics. The Yugoslav war stimulated the economies of the NATO countries to the tune of \$60 million a day, and our economies will benefit even more by rebuilding what we have destroyed.

Our growth statistics make no distinction between economic activity that contributes to well-being and that which causes harm. Growth is simply a quantitative increase in the physical scale of the economy, and it tells us nothing about our actual well-being.

What we count is what we value in society

The things we measure and count- quite literally- tell us what we value as a society. If we do not count non-monetary and non-material assets, we effectively discount and devalue them. And what we don't measure and value in our central accounting mechanism will be effectively sidelined in the policy arena. We may pay pious public homage to environmental quality and to social and spiritual values, but if we count their degradation as progress in our growth measures, and do not count their preservation or improvements as assets, we will continue to send misleading signals to policy makers and public alike. The result will be to blunt effective remedial action, and to distort policy priorities.

Until we explicitly assign economic value to our free time, voluntary community service, parental time with children, and natural resource wealth, they will never receive adequate attention on the public

policy agenda. Similarly, until we assign explicit value to equity in our growth measures, we will continue to give little policy attention to the fact that here in Nova Scotia the poorest 40% of households have lost 20% of their real income after taxes and transfers since 1990.

A better way to measure progress

The obsession with economic growth and its confusion with quality of life have led us down a dangerous and self-destructive path. It is doubtful that we will leave our children a better legacy until we stop gauging our well-being and prosperity by how fast the economy is growing, and until we stop misusing the GDP as a measure of progress.

What is urgently, indeed desperately, needed are measures of well-being, prosperity, and progress that explicitly value the non-material assets that are the true basis of our wealth, including the strength of our communities, our free time, the quality of our environment, the health of our natural resources, and our concern for others. The means to do so exist.

In fact, tremendous progress has been made in the last 20 years in natural resource accounting, and in developing good social indicators, time use surveys, environmental quality measures, and other means of assessing well-being and quality of life. We are now completely capable of measuring our progress in a better way that accords with our shared values and lets us know whether we are moving towards the society we want to create.

After three California researchers developed a Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) in 1995, incorporating 26 social, economic, and environmental variables, 400 leading economists, including Nobel laureates, jointly stated:

Since the GDP measures only the quantity of market activity without accounting for the social and ecological costs involved, it is both inadequate and misleading as a measure of true prosperity. Policy-makers, economists, the media, and international agencies should cease using the GDP as a measure of

progress and publicly acknowledge its shortcomings. New indicators of progress are urgently needed to guide our society... The GPI is an important step in this direction.

GPI Atlantic is developing a Genuine Progress Index as a pilot project for Canada

Here in Nova Scotia *GPI Atlantic*, a non-profit research group, is developing a Genuine Progress Index as a pilot for the country, with advice and support from experts in Statistics Canada. We hope to have it ready for use before the end of the year 2002. It is designed as a practical policy-relevant tool that is easy to maintain and replicate, that can accurately measure sustainable development, and that can provide much-needed information to policy makers about issues that are currently hidden and even invisible in our market statistics.

The Nova Scotia GPI assigns explicit values to natural resources, including soils, forests, fisheries, and non-renewable energy sources and assesses the sustainability of harvesting practices, consumption habits, and transportation systems. It measures and values unpaid voluntary and household work, and it counts crime, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, road accidents, and other liabilities as economic costs – not gains, as the GDP does.

The index goes up if our society is becoming more equal, if we have more free time and if our quality of life is improving. It counts our health, educational attainments, and economic security. It attempts, in short, to measure “that which makes life worthwhile.” It is common-sense economics that corresponds with the realities of our daily lives as we actually experience them.

Costs and benefits

Unlike the GDP, the GPI distinguishes economic activities that produce benefit from those that cause harm. Having a more peaceful society may actually show up as a disadvantage in the GDP and growth statistics.

By contrast, the GPI regards a peaceful and secure society as a profound social asset, with higher crime rates a sign of depreciation in the value of that asset. Unlike the GDP, lower crime rates make the GPI go up, and crime costs are subtracted rather than added in assessments of prosperity.

By incorporating “external” costs directly into the economic accounting structure, the “full cost accounting” mechanisms in the GPI can also help policy makers to identify investments that produce lower social and environmental costs to society. Gambling, clear-cutting, and other growth industries might receive less government support, if social costs were counted, and sustainable practices might receive more encouragement.

For example, GPI Atlantic recently found that a 10% shift from truck to rail freight would save Nova Scotians taxpayers \$11 million a year when the costs of greenhouse gas emissions, road accidents, and road maintenance costs are included. Telecommuting two days per week would save \$2,200 annually per employee when travel time, fuel, parking, accident, air pollution, and other environmental and social costs are included.

Valuing our natural resources

Valuing both natural resources and time provides an accounting framework that recognizes inherent limits to our economic activity and values balance and equilibrium. In the Genuine Progress Index, natural resources are valued as finite capital stocks, subject to depreciation like produced capital. Genuine progress is measured by our ability to live off the income, or services, produced by our resources without depleting the capital stock that is the basis of wealth for both our children and ourselves.

The GPI acknowledges the full range of ecological and social services provided by these resources. The GPI Forest Account, for example, counts not only timber production, but also the value of forests in protecting watersheds, habitat, and biodiversity; guarding against soil erosion; regulating climate and sequestering carbon; and
(continued on next page....)

(Measuring Real Progress continued...)

providing for recreation and spiritual enjoyment. Healthy soils and the maintenance of multi-species, multi-aged forests in turn provide multiple economic benefits, by enhancing timber productivity, increasing the economic value of forest products, protecting against fire, disease, and insects; and supporting the burgeoning eco-tourism industry.

Valuing time

Like natural resources, time is also finite and similarly limits economic activity. We all have 24 hours a day and a limited life span. How we pass that time, and how we balance our paid and unpaid work, our voluntary service, and our free time, are measures of our well-being, quality of life, and contribution to society. The GPI uses time use surveys to measure and value time over a full 24-hour period and assess the balance between its alternative uses. Measuring time as time, rather than as money, also cuts through the myth of limitless growth.

What happens when we start valuing time? The policy implications are profound. For example, GPI Atlantic found that Nova Scotians have the highest rate of voluntary activity in the country, giving 134 million hours a year, the equivalent of 81,000 jobs, or \$1.9 billion in services,

equal to ten percent of our GDP – a reservoir of generosity completely invisible in our conventional accounts. Unmeasured and unvalued, the voluntary sector has not received the support it needs to do its work well.

Shifting the viewpoint

None of this means that there should be no growth of any kind. Some types of economic growth clearly enhance well-being, increase equity, and protect the environment. There is vital work to be done in our society – raising children, caring for those in need, restoring our forests, providing adequate food and shelter for all, enhancing our knowledge and understanding, and strengthening our communities.

But we will never shift our attention to the work that is needed if we fail to value our natural resources, our voluntary service, and our child rearing, and if we place no value on equity, free time, and the health of our communities. And we will never escape from the materialist illusion that has trapped us for so long, or even know whether we are really better off, if we continue to count costs like crime and pollution as benefits, and if we measure our well-being according to the GDP and economic growth statistics.

We can begin to fashion more self-reliant and self-sufficient forms of community economic development that provides a real alternative to increasing reliance on the international market that puts our destiny in the hands of forces beyond our control. Knowing that more possessions are not the key to happiness and well-being, we can still take back our future, and perhaps even life a little more simply.

The cusp of the millennium is a rare moment in history when long-term practical vision can actually overpower our habitual short-term preoccupations. The time has never been better to contemplate the legacy we are leaving our children and the society we want to inhabit in the new millennium. It is a moment that invites us to lay the foundation of a genuinely decent society for the sake of our children and all the world's inhabitants.

GPI Atlantic is a non-profit research group, founded in 1997, to develop an index of sustainable development and well being – the Genuine Progress Index.

Application of the Genuine Progress Index to Nova Scotia can serve as a pilot project for Canada. To that end, Statistics Canada has provided in-kind support in the form of data access, ongoing advice and consultation, and review of drafts. Wide interest in the GPI reports to date has led to projects developing Genuine Progress indicators at the community level.

WEBSITES FOR YOUR INFORMATION SITES INTERNET POUR VOTRE INFORMATION



- Canadian International Development Agency/Agence Canadienne de Developpement Internationale. <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index.htm>
- GPI Atlantic: www.gpiatlantic.org
- Grameen Bank: <http://grameen-info.org/bank>
- Jubilee Plus: www.jubileeplus.org
- LETSystems: www.gmlets.u-net.com/
- New Economics Foundation: www.neweconomics.org
- New Internationalist Issue 310 March 1999. Theme: Poverty. www.newint.org/indez4.html
- Redefining Progress: www.rprogress.org
- Resurgence Magazine: www.gn.apc.org/resurgence/home.htm

WEALTH ALLEVIATION

By: Jean Arnold, Falls Brook Centre

This is the tenth year after the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil, and another global conference is being held to mark the anniversary. Organizers are calling it Rio+10.

Governments will be gathering to promote all the great strides ahead they've made on their international commitments in the past decade. Papers will be presented and people will be lobbying for a place on the plane to Johannesburg, where the United Nations-sponsored event will take place in September 2002.

Rumour has it that Rio+10 will have a poverty alleviation agenda. Canadian NGOs will be clamouring to have the Overseas Development Assistance budget ratcheted up to 0.7% of the Gross National Product agreed as in years gone by. We should be asking the question of whether increasing the budget will do much more than increase the flow of resources into the pockets of the middle men, the international consultants and brokers who know how to talk the western donor lingo?

Poverty is a symptom of systems not working....whether they be environmental or social, urban or rural. Is it possible to tackle the symptom without tackling the underlying problem?

The problem is often population pressure combined with lifestyle and technology/science ideas imported and promoted from outside, disrupting the local balance. Western ideas of development assistance are often outside of the local context, treating the symptom not the cause. For example, we might decide that a community has a need for electrification: local firewood is depleted, and using diesel or kerosene for cooking or heating is causing respiratory problems and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Electrification solutions proposed by donors will be large dams or power grid feasibility studies, when the local community could be better served by having small scale solar energy

systems installed and maintained by local people, at far less cost and with far less slippage of funds into the pockets of consultants, external advisory committees and boards. Most external solutions come with an underlying push towards further economic growth.

Canada exports nuclear technology when we could be promoting solar, wind or other renewables...training local villagers to install solar systems, creating a stronger rural workforce. Instead of exporting western ideas of tree farms and chemical agriculture we could be supporting local knowledge of restoration. Developing markets for local products instead of producing for export. Encouraging sustainability and having that mindset instead of promoting economic growth. Can the world stand more economic growth?

In 1947 when India won independence from the British, Gandhi was asked whether India could now expect to achieve the same economic affluence as Britain and he replied "The British used half the world resources to achieve their current standard of living, it is unlikely that India would be able to do the same". Yet here we are now over 50 years later and with economic growth as the primary goal of most nations, to such an extent that when the World Trade Towers were struck in New York, one of the first responses from President Bush was to urge Americans and their allies to go out and buy, buy, buy.

Once, the official story was that 'development' would cure poverty, so development was promoted as the path to global social justice. This script was changed in the 1987 Brundtland Report and the 1992 UN Conference on Environment & Development in Rio. The new script portrayed poverty as a principal 'cause' of the ecological crisis, to be cured through more development. As the Brundtland Report put it; "it is essential that global economic growth be revitalized". In practical terms, this means more rapid economic growth in both industrialized and developing countries - the international economy must speed up world growth while respecting environmental constraints...a new era of growth in the world economy can widen the options available to developing countries.

This is an ingenious twist. On the face of it, world poverty stands as a decisive refutation of the development project, in that development created a world of increasing economic inequality. It is argued by some historians that in 1750 the per capita incomes of what are now called developed countries and the per capita incomes of what are now called underdeveloped countries were about equal. In 1930 the developed per capita incomes were four times higher. This trend continues. In 1989 the richest fifth of the world's population consumed 83% of the global GNP and the poorest fifth consumed only 1.4%. By 1991, figures moved to 84.2% for the top fifth and down to 0.9% for the bottom fifth. Instead of occasioning a rethinking of the ideology of development, poverty is now the reason for the continuing of it. This time, the promise goes, the development will be 'sustainable'. However there are strong arguments that the current regime is neither equitable nor sustainable.

Another result of the development era has dramatically come to the fore in recent years. Much of the glorious rise in productivity and economic growth is fueled by a gigantic throughput of fossil energy which requires mining the Earth on the one side and covering her with waste on the other. By now, however, the global economy has outgrown the capacity of the Earth to serve as a mine and dumping ground. If all countries followed the industrial example, five or six planets would be needed to serve as 'sources' for the inputs and 'sinks' for the waste of economic progress. Therefore, a situation has emerged where the certainty which ruled two centuries - that growth is a show with an open end - has been exposed as a serious illusion. Economic expansion has already come up against its bio-physical limits:

Money that taxpayers send overseas should no longer be for poverty alleviation, but rather for restoration; respecting the diversity of peoples, landscapes, ecology, social and spiritual. Learning and understanding a different way of sharing our wealth. Development, I suspect, usually disrupts and destroys local initiatives and ways of life. However, I strongly believe that as Canadians we can take a place as part of the global commons and share and learn ourselves in the process, but we need a new way, *(continued on next page...)*

(Wealth Alleviation continued...)

we need our government to encourage open forums for discussion like this one. We can no longer stick band-aids all over the world and claim that we are involved in poverty reduction, while at the same time supporting mining companies, nuclear power plants, large dams, plantation forestry and chemical agriculture and industrial expansion. We need to understand local communities, the ecology of the area, the need for local employment, local sustainability, local diversity, small projects, understanding local initiatives and respectful behaviour (this can be rural or urban). We also need to learn about our place as Canadians and how we can each reduce our ecological footprint "to live simply so that others can simply live".

In addition to poverty alleviation, we very urgently need to focus on **wealth alleviation**. Wealth and poverty are the opposites. Could we tackle poverty through examining wealth? How might we go about this? When our focus has been deliberately trained to be concerned about poverty and not about wealth, changing our focus requires a conscious sustained effort. What is the ratio of salaries between highest and lowest paid worker in any given company or organization? Why do so many companies go bankrupt? Often because among other reasons the chief executive is receiving a salary far higher than the company can afford.

Wages and expectations of wealth are the prime obstacles for social justice and ecological sustainability. Our forests, our land, our minerals are being drained from the earth to give astronomical wages to a few at the top while leaving the masses to continue in poverty. All across the world people are being displaced by corporate greed.

Lets not keep talking about poverty alleviation which is a terminology just used to get donor money. International donors in their turn use the poverty alleviation motivation merely as a cover up for their more central interests of keeping the Western model percolating into the far flung corners of the EARTH. If NGOs are going to make any difference then we need to begin to talk about wealth alleviation.

LE SOULAGEMENT DE LA RICHESSE

Par: Jean Arnold, Falls Brook Centre

C'est la dixième année depuis le Sommet de la Terre de 1992 au Brésil et une autre conférence mondiale aura bientôt lieu pour souligner cet anniversaire. Les organisateurs l'ont nommée "Rio+10".

Les gouvernements vont se rassembler pour faire état de toutes les grandes démarches positives qu'ils ont accomplies dans le cadre de leurs engagements internationaux durant la dernière décennie. Des mémoires seront présentés et des gens vont faire bien du lobbying pour avoir un siège sur l'avion en direction de Johannesburg, où l'événement parrainé par les Nations Unies aura lieu en septembre 2002.

Selon la rumeur, Rio+10 va aborder le soulagement de la pauvreté. Les ONG canadiennes vont faire pression pour que le budget de l'Aide publique au développement soit élevé jusqu'à 0.7 % du produit national brut (PNB) tel que décidé par les années passées. On devrait se poser la question à savoir si l'augmentation du budget va faire plus que de tout simplement augmenter le flot des ressources dans les poches des intermédiaires, des consultants et des courtiers internationaux qui savent comment parler le jargon des bailleurs de fonds de l'occident?

La pauvreté est un symptôme de systèmes qui ne fonctionnent pas... qu'ils soient environnementaux ou sociaux, urbains ou ruraux. Est-il possible d'aborder le symptôme sans pour autant aborder le problème sous-jacent?

Ce problème est souvent une combinaison de la pression démographique avec les idées de modes de vie et de la technologie/science importées de l'extérieur et qui perturbent l'équilibre local. Les idées occidentales en matière d'aide au développement sont souvent à l'extérieur du contexte local et elles abordent le symptôme et non la cause. À titre d'exemple, on pourrait décider qu'une communauté a besoin d'électrification: le bois de

chauffage local est épuisé et l'utilisation de diesel ou de kérosène pour la cuisson ou le chauffage causent des problèmes respiratoires et contribuent aux émissions de gaz à effet de serre. Les solutions d'électrification proposées par les donateurs d'aide seront des études de faisabilité sur de gros barrages ou sur un réseau électrique, alors que la communauté locale serait mieux servie en ayant des systèmes d'énergie solaire à petite échelle qui seraient installés et entretenus par des gens de la localité, à un coût beaucoup plus bas et avec beaucoup moins de glissement de fonds dans les poches des consultants, des commissions et des comités aviseurs externes. La plupart des solutions externes sont accompagnées par une poussée sous-jacente pour la croissance économique.

Le Canada exporte la technologie nucléaire alors qu'il pourrait promouvoir l'énergie solaire, éolienne ou autres énergies renouvelables... à former des villageois locaux à installer des systèmes à énergie solaire, à créer une main-d'oeuvre rurale plus solide. Au lieu d'exporter des idées occidentales comme les fermes forestières et l'agriculture chimique, nous pourrions supporter les savoirs locaux en matière de restauration; développer des marchés pour les produits locaux, au lieu de produire pour l'exportation; encourager la durabilité et ce genre d'attitude, au lieu de promouvoir la croissance économique. Est-ce que le monde peut vraiment endurer plus de croissance économique?

En 1947, lorsque l'Inde a gagné son indépendance des Britanniques, on avait demandé à Gandhi si l'Inde pouvait maintenant s'attendre à atteindre la même abondance économique que celle de la Grande-Bretagne; il avait répondu que: "Les Britanniques ont utilisé la moitié des ressources mondiales pour atteindre leur niveau de vie actuel; il est peu probable que l'Inde serait capable de faire la même chose". Et pourtant, nous voici 50 années plus tard et la croissance économique est encore l'objectif fondamental de la plupart des nations; à un point tel que lorsque les tours du World Trade Center de New York furent démolies, l'une des premières réactions du président Bush fut d'encourager fortement les Américains et leurs alliés à sortir et acheter, acheter, acheter.

Autrefois, la version officielle était que le “développement” allait guérir la pauvreté; donc, le développement fut encouragé comme étant le moyen d’atteindre la justice sociale à l’échelle planétaire. Ce scénario fut changé par le Rapport Brundtland en 1987 et par la Conférence de l’ONU sur l’environnement et le développement en 1992 à Rio. Le nouveau scénario présentait la pauvreté comme étant la cause principale de la crise écologique, et qu’il fallait la guérir par plus de développement. Comme l’indiquait le Rapport Brundtland: “Il est essentiel de dynamiser la croissance économique mondiale”. En pratique, cela signifie plus de croissance économique rapide à la fois dans les pays industrialisés et en développement; l’économie internationale doit accélérer la croissance mondiale, tout en respectant les contraintes environnementales... une nouvelle ère de croissance de l’économie mondiale pourrait élargir les options disponibles aux pays en développement.

Il s’agit d’une contortion ingénieuse. À prime abord, la pauvreté mondiale est, en tant que telle, une réfutation décisive du projet de développement parce que le développement a créé un monde avec une inégalité économique croissante. Certains historiens affirment qu’en 1750, les revenus par habitant de ce que l’on appelle maintenant les pays développés et les revenus par habitant des pays en développement étaient à peu près égaux. En 1930, les revenus par habitant des pays développés étaient quatre fois plus élevés. Cette tendance continue. En 1989, le cinquième le plus riche de la population mondiale consommait 83 % du PNB mondial et le cinquième le plus pauvre en consommait seulement 1.4 %. Dès 1991, les chiffres avaient grimpé à 84.2 % pour le cinquième en haut et baissé à 0.9 % pour le cinquième le plus bas. Au lieu d’occasionner un nouveau regard sur l’idéologie du développement, la pauvreté est maintenant la raison pour la continuer. Cette fois-ci, la promesse est que le développement sera “soutenable”. Cependant, il y a de bons arguments à l’effet que le régime actuel n’est ni équitable, ni soutenable.

Un autre résultat de l’ère du développement s’est fait sentir d’une manière dramatique durant les dernières années.

La majeure partie de l’amélioration glorieuse de la productivité et de la croissance merveilleuse de l’économie est alimentée par un appétit gigantesque d’énergie fossile qui exige d’une part l’extraction minière de la terre, et de l’autre part de couvrir cette terre avec des déchets. Cependant, l’économie mondiale a maintenant dépassé la capacité de la Terre à servir simultanément comme mine et comme dépotoir. Si tous les pays imitaient l’exemple industriel, il nous faudrait cinq ou six planètes pour servir comme “sources” de matériaux de base et comme “puits” pour les déchets du progrès économique. C’est donc pourquoi une situation a fait surface où l’incertitude qui a dominé deux siècles (que la croissance est un jeu dramatique ouvert) a été révélée comme étant une illusion sérieuse. L’expansion économique a déjà frappé le mur de ses limites biophysiques.

Les fonds que les contribuables envoient à l’étranger ne devraient plus être consacrés au soulagement de la pauvreté, mais plutôt pour la restauration; en respectant la diversité des peuples, des paysages, de l’écologie, sociale et spirituelle. Il nous faut apprendre et comprendre une différente manière de partager nos richesses. Je soupçonne que le développement perturbe et détruit habituellement les initiatives et les modes de vie locaux. Cependant, je crois fermement qu’en tant que Canadiens, nous pouvons avoir une part du patrimoine mondial tout en partageant et en apprenant. Mais, il nous faut un nouveau cheminement; il faut que notre gouvernement encourage des forums de discussions ouverts comme celui-ci. Nous ne pouvons plus poser des pensements symboliques à travers le monde et se vanter que nous participons à la réduction de la pauvreté, tout en supportant des compagnies minières, des centrales nucléaires, de gros barrages, la foresterie par plantations, l’agriculture chimique et l’expansion industrielle. Nous devons comprendre les communautés locales, l’écologie de leur région, leur besoin d’emplois locaux, la durabilité locale, la diversité locale, les petits projets; mieux comprendre les initiatives locales et faire preuve d’un comportement respectueux (cela peut être rural ou urbain). Nous devons également en apprendre plus concernant notre place en tant que

Canadiens et sur comment nous pouvons réduire individuellement notre empreinte écologique de sorte à “vivre simplement afin que d’autres puissent tout simplement vivre”.

En plus du soulagement de la pauvreté, il est urgent que l’on mette l’accent sur le soulagement de la richesse. La richesse et la pauvreté sont des opposés. Pourrions-nous affecter la pauvreté en examinant la richesse? Comment pourrait-on accomplir cela? Lorsque notre attention a été consciemment entraînée à se préoccuper de la pauvreté et non de la richesse, changer nos axes nécessite un effort conscient et soutenu. Quelle est la différence salariale entre les travailleurs les mieux payés et les moins payés dans toute compagnie ou organisation? Pourquoi se fait-il que tellement de compagnies font banqueroute? Il arrive souvent que, parmi les différentes raisons, c’est parce que le premier dirigeant reçoit un salaire beaucoup plus élevé que la compagnie peut se permettre.

Les salaires et les attentes de richesses sont les obstacles primaires à la justice sociale et à la viabilité écologique. Nos forêts, nos terres et nos minéraux sont extraits de la terre afin de fournir des salaires astronomiques à un petit groupe d’individus en haut de l’échelle, tout en laissant les masses continuer dans la pauvreté. Partout à travers le monde, les gens sont déplacés par la course au profit des corporations.

Cessons de parler de soulagement de la pauvreté, qui est en fait seulement une terminologie utilisée pour obtenir des fonds des donateurs d’aide. À leur tour, les donateurs internationaux utilisent la motivation du soulagement de la pauvreté seulement pour dissimuler leurs intérêts plus fondamentaux de continuer à propager le modèle occidental dans tous les coins éloignés de la TERRE. Si les ONG prévoient changer les choses, alors il nous faut commencer à parler du soulagement de la richesse.

MEMBERS REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD MEMBRES TOURNÉS VERS LE MONDE

LA PAUVRETÉ ET LA FAIM DANS LE MONDE Une réalité difficile à expliquer

par Richard Doiron

Dans notre société nord-américaine de surconsommation, il est difficile d'expliquer que d'autres personnes puissent avoir faim. Il est encore plus difficile d'expliquer à des enfants que des millions de personnes meurent de faim chaque année.

J'ai récemment lu un livre fort intéressant qui se lit bien, même si le sujet qu'il traite est complexe. Il s'agit du livre intitulé *La faim dans le monde expliquée à mon fils*, de Jean Ziegler (septembre 1999, aux éditions Seuil). Dans ce livre, l'auteur présente des faits et des statistiques qui portent à réfléchir beaucoup. Il apporte aussi des réponses à plusieurs questions que nous n'osons pas nous poser, parce que «la faim dans le monde» est un sujet tabou, dont nous ne voulons pas discuter, ayant honte de savoir qu'un grand nombre de nos semblables périssent faute de nourriture alors que d'autres tombent malade parce qu'ils mangent trop. Ce scandale honteux est gardé sous silence par les gouvernements, les écoles et la majorité d'entre nous. C'est ce qu'explique Ziegler dans ce livre.

Selon la FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), 30 millions de personnes sont mortes de faim en 1998 et 828 millions de personnes ont été ravagées par une sous-nutrition sévère et permanente. Toujours en 1998, on a estimé à 550 millions le nombre d'êtres humains affamés en Asie de l'Est et du Sud et à 170 millions le nombre de personnes ayant souffert de la faim en Afrique Subsaharienne. Pourtant, tel que cité par l'auteur : «L'agronome René Dumont a calculé que la quantité de maïs absorbée annuellement par la moitié des *feed lots* californiens est plus importante que l'ensemble des besoins d'un pays comme la Zambie où cette céréale est un aliment essentiel et où sévit une sous-alimentation chroni-

que».

Ce sont des réalités difficile à comprendre dans notre pays, le Canada, où on fixe des quotas pour limiter certaines productions alimentaires parce que l'offre dépasserait trop la demande.

Le livre de Ziegler se lit en une heure ou deux, mais il nous porte à réfléchir sérieusement très longtemps.

Richard Doiron est gérant du Centre d'excellence en sciences agricoles et biotechnologiques de Grand-Sault, une constituante du Réseau des Collèges communautaires du N.-B. et une composante du CCNB-Edmundston.

HOUSING CO-OPS IN PHILIPPINES GROW WITH CANADIAN ASSISTANCE

Despite its promise, the Philippines has for decades failed to live up to its development potential. Poverty and inequality continue to plague its people, particularly in the rural areas and outlying islands. Many Filipinos continue to lack adequate employment and income generation opportunities. Co-operatives have been working for decades in the Philippines to fill in the gaps, and to improve the livelihoods of members through a pooling of resources and sharing of economic activities.

It has been just over a year since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was sworn in as the new President of the Philippines. Formerly the Vice-President, and an economist by training, President Arroyo has launched a number of promising economic and social initiatives. She has also created a more favorable climate for co-operatives to thrive and grow. One of the areas that is beginning to take off is the co-operative housing sector.

A number of multi-purpose co-operatives have taken on new housing initiatives. In some cases, new single-

purpose housing co-operatives have formed. These co-ops are moving quickly to enlist members, mobilize internal and external financing, select sites, approve designs, and ultimately to begin construction. Though it is a long process, up to two years to ground-breaking, the Canadian co-operative sector has been able to offer much needed technical assistance to speed up the process.

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), through its Socio-Economic Development Through Co-operatives in the Philippines Project (SEDCOP), has supported the capacity-building of co-operatives in insurance, health, agro-business and other sectors. In housing, CCA has worked with Rooftops Canada and local service providers to help co-operatives in the Philippines navigate through the long process of development. In the past, housing has too often been overpriced, and of substandard quality. With timely Canadian support, the development of affordable co-operative housing is becoming a reality for people of the Philippines.

For more information, contact Chris Johnston at CCA in Ottawa.

Canadian Co-operative Association
275 Bank Street, Suite 400 Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 2L6
Tel: 1-866-266-7677 ext. 219
CCA website: www.coopcca.com



*In the Philippines affordable housing is being developed by local co-op leaders with assistance of The Canadian Co-operative Association.
Photo by Maureen McLean*